

ECOLOGY AND THE BALLOT:  
GREEN PARTY VOTING IN EUROPEAN AND  
NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN BELGIUM, FRANCE,  
GERMANY, GREAT BRITAIN AND LUXEMBOURG,  
1979-1999

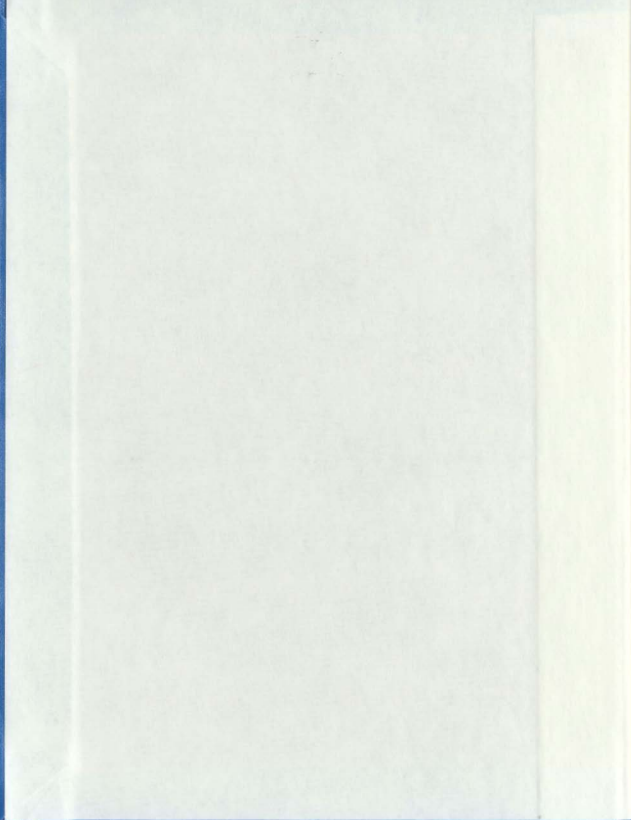
CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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Ecology and the Ballot:  
Green Party Voting in European and National Elections in  
Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain and Luxembourg, 1979-1999

by

Dale C. Haynes

A thesis submitted to the  
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## Abstract

This study is a comparative analysis of Green party voting in national and European elections in Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, France, and Luxembourg. This study examines Green party voting in European Parliamentary (EP) and national elections. The primary purpose of this study is to offer insight into why Green parties in these countries generally do better in EP elections than in national elections.

In determining why Green parties generally do better in European elections than in national elections, three different propositions were applied. The study utilized the second-order election model, looked at the timing of EP elections within national election cycles, and examined differences in the electoral systems used in national and European elections. In explaining why Green parties tend to do better in EP elections, this study found that Green parties made gains in accordance with the second-order election model. The study attempted to determine whether Green parties made larger gains in EP elections that occurred in the early or late stages of the national election cycle. The study found that while Green parties generally made gains, regardless of when these elections occurred in the national election cycle, the greatest gains were in EP elections that were held in mid-term, or late stages of the national election cycle. Finally, this study found that Green parties tended to do better in countries that employed proportional representation in EP elections, but used plurality or majoritarian voting systems in national elections.

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### List of Abbreviations

ADR	Action Committee for Democracy and Justice (Luxembourg)
AGALEV	Anders Gaan Leven
AL-WL	Alternative List (Luxembourg)
BNP	British National Party
CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CE 78	'Collectif Ecologie 78' (France)
CPNT	Chasse, Pêche, Nature, Traditions (France)
CSU	Christian Social Union
CSV	Christian Social Party (Luxembourg)
CVP	Flemish Christian People's Party
DP	Democratic Party (Luxembourg)
EC	European Community
ECOLO	Movement 'Ecolo'- Les Verts (Belgium)
EE	Entente Ecologiste (France)
EE	Europe Ecologie (Belgium)
EE	European Election
EP	European Parliament
ERE	Radical Ecologist Concord (France)
EU	European Union
FDF	Front Democratique des Francophones (Belgium)
FDP	Free Democratic Party (Germany)
FDR	Federal Republic of Germany
FN	Front National (Belgium)
FN	Front National (France)
FPTP	First-past-the-post
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GAL	Green and Liberal Alliance (Luxembourg)
GAP	Green Alternative Party (Luxembourg)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GE	Génération Ecologie (France)
GGEF	Green Group in the European Parliament
GLEI	Greneg Lescht fir Ecologesch Initiativ (Luxembourg)
KPB	Kommunistische Partij van België
KPL	Luxembourg Communist Party
LCR	Communist Revolution League-Trotskyist (France)
LCR	Communist Revolution League (Luxembourg)
LO	Lutte Ouvrière (France)
LSAP	Socialist Workers' Party (Luxembourg)
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional
MRG	Movement of the Radical Left
NE	National Election

NPD	National Democratic Party (Germany)
PCB	Parti Communiste Belgique
PCF	French Communist Party
PCL	Luxembourg Communist Party
PDS	Party of Democratic Socialism (Germany)
PL	Liberal Party (Luxembourg)
POSIL	Luxembourg Socialist Party
PR	Proportional Representation
PRL	Parti Reformateur Liberal (Belgium)
PS	Socialist Party (France)
PS	Francophone Socialist Party (Belgium)
PSC	Francophone Social Christian Party (Belgium)
PsD	Social Democrats (Luxembourg)
PSU	United Socialist Party (France)
PVV	Flemish Liberal Party
REP	Republikaner Party (Germany)
RPF	Rally for France
RPR	Rally for the Republic (France)
RW	Rassemblement Wallon
SDLP	Social Democratic Labour Party (Great Britain)
SDP	Social Democratic Party (Great Britain)
SMP	Single Member Plurality
SNP	Scottish National Party
SP	Socialist Party (Flanders)
SPD	Social Democratic Party (Germany)
SPV	Alternative Political Alliance (Germany)
STV	Single Transferable Vote
UDF	Union for French Democracy
UK	United Kingdom
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
VLD	Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (Flanders)
VU	Volksunie (Flemish National Party-Belgium)
WE	Wallonie Ecologie (Belgium)

# Chapter 1

## Green Parties: An Introduction

Green parties are a relatively new phenomenon which first arrived on the European political scene in the 1970s and early 1980s. Initially, few people noticed when Green parties first entered electoral politics. However, by the time the German Greens entered the Bundestag in 1983, their emergence was noted with keen interest. At the time, many observers questioned the durability of Green parties and argued that they were a novelty that would eventually return to obscurity. Despite predictions of their demise, Green parties have become entrenched in party systems throughout Western Europe and also within the European Parliament.

Elections to the European Parliament were first held in 1979 and have been conducted during five-year intervals since then. In comparison to national elections, the Greens have had more success in elections to the EP. Elections to the EP are unique in the sense that they involve voters from 15 different nations and are the only elections in the world that transcend national boundaries. However, to many voters, the EP has been labeled as largely irrelevant and elections to this institution have been considered of little importance. Despite this perception, the European Parliament has assumed greater political prominence through a series of treaties. In particular, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty has helped to transform the European Parliament from a purely consultative parliament, to a more effective legislative assembly.<sup>1</sup>

The first of this study's two sections is a comprehensive review of literature pertaining to

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<sup>1</sup> Neill Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, 1999, 205.

Green parties. The review begins by examining the rise of new social movements and how such movements gave birth to the establishment of Green parties. The review suggests that while all Green parties are concerned with environmental issues, the subsequent development, political maturation, and electoral success of Green parties has varied from country to country. The first section is also complemented by a propositional inventory that examines findings related to the principal purpose of this study, this purpose being, to explain why Green party voting is more pronounced in European elections than in national elections. The second section applies each of these propositions to Green party voting in Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain and Luxembourg. These countries have been selected for two reasons. First, they were all members of the European Community at the time of the first European elections. Second, Green parties from each of these countries have been contesting both types of elections for a longer period of time than Green parties in other EU nations. Although it is hazardous to make broad generalizations based on observations in five countries, the study hopes to find enough evidence that would suggest that these propositions are applicable to all Green parties that contest both types of elections.

## 1.2 New Parties: The Rise of the Greens

Since the 1960s, there has been a surge of new forms of participatory democracy that have challenged the accepted practices of politics. This surge has been sparked through the rise of new social movements (NSM). New social movements are distinguished by their desire to enhance citizen participation, advocacy of fundamental social change, and focus upon issues that were not as salient in the old political arena. NSMs tended to be involved in unconventional forms of political participation. For example, mass demonstrations and protests were the most

common forms of action amongst these new social movements. Pressure group participation and electoral politics were rejected by NSMs because they were, in part, considered as conventional practices found within the realm of traditional politics. However, over time, factions within each of these groups were no longer content to limit themselves to just these means of activity. Some activists began to spend more time considering conventional political activity through the formation of pressure groups or, more importantly, political parties.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the Greens, their rise can be directly attributed to these new social movements and have worked in conjunction with the environmental, anti-nuclear, peace, and feminist movements among others. Thus, many Green parties were born out of their ability to find a niche within a rapidly developing post-materialist society.

There are many different reasons for the establishment of new parties. The formation of new political parties often occurs because established parties are unresponsive, or slow in assimilating into their own platforms, the issues that social movements have tried to raise in the political arena. Although environmental concerns were included in the programs of many established parties in the 1970s, they were far from being the most salient. Instead, many of Europe's established parties were committed to policies that encouraged unfettered economic growth and this approach was something that Green parties in Europe vehemently opposed. According to Muller-Rommel, this lack of accommodation was one of the most pertinent reasons behind the formation of Green parties.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Russell J. Dalton, *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies*, Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, 1988, 132.

<sup>3</sup> Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists*, Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, ed., London: Westview Press, 1989, 6-7.

New parties also arise because new social movements are considered subordinate to other groups or factions that comprise and support established parties. To elaborate, Muller-Rommel also argued that during the late 1970s and early 1980s, many environmentalists looked to established left-socialist parties as a vehicle through which their concerns could be addressed. According to Muller-Rommel, many environmental activists expected these parties to deal with the problems associated with nuclear energy, unlimited economic growth, and the destruction of the environment. He notes that although these parties were sympathetic to ecological concerns while they served in opposition, many of these same parties became apprehensive about accommodating their demands when they were in power. This trepidation stemmed from the contention that incorporating environmental concerns into government policy would run contrary to the interests of their most ardent supporters, trade unions and their members. By alienating their traditional supporters, these parties feared a loss of both financial and electoral support. Although many established parties have belatedly incorporated environmental programs into their respective platforms, the Greens still take pride in the fact that this is an issue that they can still largely lay claim to. Muller-Rommel argued that as long as issues like the environment remain on the political agenda, and are not fully monopolized by the more established parties, Green parties will continue to remain a force at the national and European levels of government.<sup>4</sup>

Upon their arrival on the political scene, many Green parties were determined to have an impact on policy articulation and were concerned with confronting the policies of the established parties. For example, Papadakis noted that through the activities of Green parties, many established parties have been pressured into outlining in greater detail the means by which they

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<sup>4</sup> Muller-Rommel, *New Politics in Western Europe*, 18.

plan to address environmental issues and solve environmental problems.<sup>5</sup>

Not only have the Greens exerted pressure on established parties to address environmental issues, they have also been successful in forcing these parties to address past mistakes. According to Blondel, the rise of the Greens forced some established parties to reconsider their actions and policies of the past and to publicly admit past mistakes in policy formation. For example, unfettered economic growth was no longer seen as desirable because it came with serious consequences for the environment. Governments, in turn, were forced to deal with the fact that this approach was no longer viable and that large segments of its citizenry would oppose such policies.<sup>6</sup>

While the primary *raison d'être* of Green parties is the promotion and protection of the environment, there is no paradigm when it comes to the development of Green parties. For example, the means by which the Greens have approached electoral politics has varied from one party to the next. According to Richardson, there is no putative norm when it comes to Green parties and electoral politics. For example, the British Green Party and France's *Les Verts* are two parties that have chosen to approach electoral politics based on 'pure' green ideological thinking. In turn, these parties have not been willing to sacrifice their principles in exchange for furthering their goals through more pragmatic means of politics. While such an approach appears admirable, not all Green parties have taken this path. Germany's *die Grünen* is an example of a party that has slowly adopted a more pragmatic approach to electoral politics. They

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<sup>5</sup> Elim Papadakis, "Green Issues and Other Parties: *Themenklau* or New Flexibility?" in *The Greens in West Germany: Organization and Policy Making*, Eva Kolinsky, ed., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989, 81.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Blondel, *Political Parties: A Genuine Case for Discontent?* London: Wildwood House, 1978, 213.



have evolved from a party that originally focused solely on environmental issues, to one that began to develop policies on a wider range of issues and have been increasingly willing to reach consensus with other political parties. This evolution stems from a split between two factions of the party, *Realos* (realists) and *Fundis* (fundamentalists). The *Realos* were pragmatists who wanted to serve as a constructive opposition and to ultimately exercise power in the German political arena. On the other hand, the more radical *Fundis* were committed to restructuring society and politics and did not want to legitimize the existing political system. The devastating loss for the German Greens in the 1990 national election brought the conflict between *Fundis* and *Realos* to an end, with the pragmatic *Realos* emerging as the dominant faction within the party.<sup>7</sup> Thus, over the past twenty years, the German Greens have evolved into one of the most pragmatic Green parties in Europe.

Another interesting difference about Green parties is that they have all taken distinctive paths once established. Kitschelt argues that the development and entrenchment of Green parties into political arenas throughout Western Europe was not an occurrence that transpired instantaneously. Instead, this process took considerable time, and the duration of this process has varied from one party to the next. While Green parties differ from one another in their makeup and their ideological approaches, Kitschelt argues however, that common traits can be noted in the political maturation process of such parties. Kitschelt contends that the rise, development, and subsequent consolidation of the Greens can be examined in two distinct stages.<sup>8</sup> While

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<sup>7</sup> Dick Richardson, "The Green Challenge: Philosophical, Programmatic and Electoral Considerations" in *The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe*, Dick Richardson and Chris Rootes, eds. New York: Routledge, 1996, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Herbert Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation: Ecological Parties in Belgium and West Germany*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989, 75.

Kitschelt applies these stages solely to the case of the Belgian and German Greens, it can be argued that they fit other Green parties, too.

According to Kitschelt, during the first stage, two distinct features stand out. During this incubation period, Green parties make their initial attempts at electoral politics and have done so on the local, national or transnational levels. A second common feature to Green parties during this stage is that little consideration is given to developing permanent political structures. This occurrence was notable in the early stages of Green parties that were created in each of the countries that are included in this study. Instead of developing a party based on traditional party structures, participation in electoral politics was conducted through a heterogeneous network of movements and pressure groups. Together, they created temporary proto-parties in order to contest single elections.<sup>9</sup> Although not overly successful, these parties formed the impetus that led to the formation of permanent Green parties. Such parties existed in Belgium (Agalev-Wallonie Ecologie, Ecolog), France (CE 78<sup>+</sup>, Europe Ecologie, Aujord'hui Ecologie), Germany (SPV), Great Britain (PEOPLE), and in Luxembourg (AL-WI).

Kitschelt also argued that in the second stage, the Greens began to consider developing their original political arrangements into more conventional political parties, and pursue strategies based on traditional electoral politics. Kitschelt contended that Green parties enter this stage only after the party wins some form of parliamentary representation. For Green parties included in this study, reaching this stage has been accomplished at different points in time. For example, the milestone of parliamentary representation was first reached by the Belgian, German, and Luxembourg Greens during the early 1980s, the French Greens in 1989, while the British

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<sup>9</sup> Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation*, 75-76.

Greens only reached this stage in 1999. According to Kitschelt, upon winning parliamentary representation, Green parties attempt to consolidate their electoral support by developing political strategies that help to broaden their appeal amongst voters.<sup>10</sup> However, this stage was often a tempestuous time for many Green parties as serious, and at times, hostile, divisions between various ideological factions that comprised these parties came to the forefront. According to Kitschelt, these divisions were most notable between the realist and fundamentalist branches of Agalev and Ecolo, and *die Grünen*.<sup>11</sup> In latter years, similar clashes between different factions also arose amongst ecologist parties in Luxembourg and France.

While many sources are devoted to the study of Green parties, there is also a considerable amount of literature devoted to the nature of Green party voters. Parkin's seminal work noted that many Green parties receive a considerable amount of their electoral support from voters who choose to lodge protest votes against the more established parties and in particular, governing parties. According to Parkin, protest voters comprise a considerable portion of Green party support, especially during European elections. However, Parkin argued that if the Greens are forced to compete with other minor parties for votes in national and European elections, they run the risk of disappearing from the political scene.<sup>12</sup> To date, Parkin's concern about the viability of Green parties has proven groundless. Green parties continue to do well despite the rise of nationalist and extreme right-wing parties throughout many countries in Western Europe. This would suggest that Green parties fill a distinctive ideological niche for many voters. The fertile soil for the emergence and sustainable viability of Green parties, has been provided by unlimited

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<sup>10</sup> Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation*, 75-76.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 75-76.

<sup>12</sup> Sara Parkin, *Green Parties: An International Guide*, London: Heretic Books, 1989, 20.

economic growth, nuclear energy concerns, and an ever depleting environment. These conditions are increasingly present in industrialized nations that continue to undergo social, economic, and political changes. Studies have also found that Green party voters are relatively young, well educated, white collar individuals that often reside in urban areas and who have bought into post-materialist thinking and place environmental concerns above personal income and security.<sup>13</sup>

Other studies have also either focused on Green party voting in European elections, or Green party voting in specific national elections.<sup>14</sup> Instead of analyzing Green party voting at the individual level, this study provides a comparative analysis of Green party voting in national and European elections. The interest of this study is based on the observation that Green parties have a tendency to receive a greater percentage of the vote in European elections than in national elections. What factors explain this tendency? This study argues that the Green do better in elections to the European Parliament due to a combination of variables and can not be solely attributed to any one factor.

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<sup>13</sup> Muller-Rommel, *New Politics in Western Europe*, 46.

<sup>14</sup> Mark Franklin and Wolfgang Rudig, "On the Durability of Green Politics: Evidence from the 1989 European Election Study", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol.28, no.4, 1995, 414.

## Chapter 2

# Elections and Voting Behaviour in Europe

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets forth a number of theories and propositions about voting behaviour and how they relate to the differences in Green party voting in European and national elections. The chapter begins by discussing a theoretical model pertaining to second-order elections. The chapter then examines vote switching and electoral cycles and how they relate to voting behaviour in the five countries included in this study on Green party voting. Finally, the chapter discusses different aspects of electoral systems and how they may play a role in explaining the discrepancies in Green party in European and national elections.

### 2.2 The Second-Order Election Model

The dominant paradigm for differentiating between national and European elections was first conceived by Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt shortly after the 1979 European election. According to Reif and Schmitt, there are first-order elections and second-order elections. Reif and Schmitt argue that a national legislative election can be considered as an example of a first-order election. The outcome of a first-order election national election determines the allocation of seats within the legislature, and hence determines the party or parties that ultimately govern the country. Reif and Schmitt considered national elections as the most salient to political parties and voters and are thus, the most important electoral contests.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt, "Nine Second Order National Elections: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results" *European Journal of Political*

Reif and Schmitt also argue that European elections constitute an example of a second-order election. They claim that these elections are second-order in nature and are less important because they do not result in government formation. They are considered less important because power is not at stake and they do not determine the direction in which a country or how Europe as a whole, will be governed. Since the inception of the first European elections, voters have reached this conclusion based on the perception that the EP has few powers and that the election does not lead to the formation of a legitimate government.<sup>16</sup> As Table 2.1 demonstrates, with the exception of Belgium and Luxembourg, where voting is mandatory, a strong indicator that European elections are perceived to be less important is that voter turnout is lower than in national elections.

**Table 2.1- Voter Turnout Percentages in European and National Elections; 1979-2001**

Country	Average Turnout in European Elections	Average Turnout in National Elections	Difference
Luxembourg <sup>a</sup>	87.5	88.0	-0.5
Belgium <sup>a</sup>	91.2	92.7	-1.5
France	53.1	70.5	-17.4
Germany	58.0	83.6	-25.6
Great Britain <sup>b</sup>	32.2	72.1	-39.9

Source: Alain Guyomarch, "The June 1999 European Parliament Elections" *West European Politics*, vol.23, no.1, 2000, 165 and Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, *Voter Turnout from 1945 to Date*, [www.idea.int/voter\\_turnout/index](http://www.idea.int/voter_turnout/index)  
<sup>a</sup>-Voting is compulsory. <sup>b</sup>-Includes 2001 General Election

One difference in the two types of elections is that many voters choose one party in a national election, but cast ballots for a different party in a European contest. What motivates the electorate to do this? Reif and Schmitt present a number of observations that illustrate differences between European elections and national elections. Other than a lower voter turnout,

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*Research*, vol.8, no.1, 1980, 3-9.

<sup>16</sup> Reif and Schmitt, "Nine Second Order Elections", 3-9.

Reif and Schmitt claim that in European elections, governing parties will suffer losses while principal opposition and smaller parties tend to do better. According to Reif and Schmitt, this occurs because some voters abandon their normal voting tendencies in European elections. Voting in second-order elections can be considered a means of evaluating the performance of governing parties. This is due to the fact that inevitably, a segment of the electorate become disillusioned with these parties and become more open to voting for a smaller party in a European election.<sup>17</sup> When national elections take place, however, many voters that support smaller parties in a European election, will revert to voting for a party they perceive to have a legitimate chance at forming the government. This premise, however, is not an issue in European elections because government formation is not involved. Instead, the electorate is merely voting for a candidate or party to represent them in the European election.<sup>18</sup>

Oppenhuis, van der Eijk, and Franklin, also try to account for why voters choose one party in a national election, but switch to another party in a European election. Building on the arguments of Reif and Schmitt, they contend that a segment of the European election switches from one party to another for tactical reasons. Voters who opt for one party, even though they may have preferred to vote for another party, are said to have cast an insincere vote. Voters who behave in this manner, often do so on the basis that they perceive the party they selected as having a legitimate chance of forming the government and prefer to avoid “wasting” their votes. The “wasted vote syndrome” is especially prevalent in Great Britain, France and on the first ballot in Germany, where the plurality system is in operation. In these countries, the plurality

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<sup>17</sup> Karlheinz Reif, ed., *Ten European Elections: Campaigns and Results of the 1979/81 First Direct Elections to the European Parliament*, Aldershot: Gower, 1985, 8-9.

<sup>18</sup> Reif and Schmitt, “Nine Second Order Elections”, 9-10.

and majoritarian electoral systems make it difficult for smaller parties. As a result, potential voters switch from smaller parties like the Greens and often vote strategically for a larger or governing party. They have labeled this practice as “voting with the head.”<sup>19</sup>

While larger and governing parties are the beneficiaries of insincere voting in national elections, the converse often holds true in European elections. Oppenhuis, van der Eijk and Franklin also suggested that voters use second-order elections in one of two ways. First, many voters wish to deliver messages to governing or larger parties. In European elections, some voters are more inclined to choose a party that they do not normally vote for in a national election because they wish to voice their displeasure with the party they normally support. This form of voting is especially prevalent when EP elections are held shortly before a national election and this point will be elaborated further in Chapter 2.3. Second, in European elections, voting becomes more expressive and therefore, is consistent with the central notion that less is at stake. In contrast to national elections, in which the electorate “votes with the head,” in European elections, voters are freed from concerns about government formation and will “vote with the heart.”<sup>20</sup> However, the propensity to vote for a smaller party is more pronounced in European elections, regardless of whether the electorate chooses to cast a protest or expressive ballot.

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<sup>19</sup> Erik Oppenhuis, Cees van der Eijk and Mark Franklin, “The Party Context: Outcomes” in *Choosing Europe?: The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of Union*, Cees van der Eijk, Mark Franklin et al., Ann Arbor: The Michigan University Press, 1996, 304.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 301-302.



### 2.3 National Election Cycles and European Elections

According to many observers, smaller parties do better in EP elections because many voters tend to switch their votes. Vote switching in this case means voting for one party in a national election, but for another party in a European election. Marsh argues that the degree of vote switching largely depends on when the European election takes place within the national electoral cycle. The electoral cycle is the timing of the European election within the term defined by the preceding national election and the next national election. For example, Marsh argues that much of the difference in the results in the two types of elections can be explained by public mood swings that can be predicted by looking at where EP elections fall with respect to the national election cycle and this position in the electoral cycle matters for the choices made by voters. Marsh then goes on to contend that there is a correlation between the rise and fall of support for larger and smaller parties and the location of the EP election within the national election cycle.<sup>21</sup>

Building on Marsh's revelations, Franklin argues that voters' behave differently when a national election is imminent than when one has occurred.<sup>22</sup> Like Franklin, Curtice agrees that the results of an EP election held just after a national election can also have a very different outcome from one held during another stage of the national electoral cycle. Curtice contended that in the immediate aftermath of a national election, the transfer of votes from larger to smaller parties would be less pronounced. This can be attributed to the fact that governing parties would

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Marsh, "Testing the Second-Order Election Model after Four European Elections", *European British Journal of Political Science*, vol.28, no.4, 606.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Franklin, "European Elections and the European Voter" in *European Union: Power and Policy Making*, Jeremy J. Richardson, ed., London: Routledge, 194.

be permitted a brief honeymoon period, a period in which voters may not have had much time to become disillusioned with such parties.<sup>23</sup> However, it should be noted that honeymoon periods will vary from country to country and from election to election. For the purposes of this study, EP elections that fall under this category are those that have occurred within 18 months of the last national election. Mid-term EP elections are those that are held 18 months after the last national election, but not 18 months before the next national election. Late stage elections are those held within 18 months of the next national election.<sup>24</sup>

While voters are often less critical of governing parties in the early stages of the national election cycle, as the cycle advances however, and the next EP election occurs in the mid, or late stages of the national election cycle, two things happen to affect the behaviour of voters should a European election take place. First, when a EP election takes place during these two stages, a considerable portion of the electorate will take the opportunity to give the established parties a piece of their mind by casting a protest vote. Second, voters may cast an expressive vote for a smaller party.<sup>25</sup>

As stated earlier, since European elections are held at the same time in all countries, but national elections are not, it follows that there would be a lack of synchronization between the two types of elections. Sometimes the European elections take place shortly after a national

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<sup>23</sup> John Curtice, "The 1989 European Election: Protest or Green Tide?", *Electoral Studies*, vol.8, no.3, 1989, 224.

<sup>24</sup> Classifying EP elections that fall in the early, mid, or late stages of the national election cycle is problematic and open to interpretation of the individual. This is because there are no universally accepted definitions of what constitutes a early, mid-term, or late stage election. For the purposes of this study, the operationalization of stages divides the electoral cycle into three approximately equal time periods and allows for an analysis of outcomes in all three stages.

<sup>25</sup> Franklin, "European Elections and the European Voter", 195.

election and sometimes in the mid, or late stages of the national election cycle. This study will attempt to determine whether the timing of European elections within the national electoral cycle is a factor in explaining discrepancies in Green party voting in the two types of elections.

## 2.4 Electoral Systems

Another proposition that this study examines is electoral systems and how they may relate to Green parties doing better in EP elections than in national elections. While all members that comprise the EU send representatives to sit in the European Parliament, the means in which they do so varies from country to country. This is because there is no uniform electoral system for European elections, leaving member states to employ different electoral rules and formulas at their discretion. In many cases, differences in the electoral rules used by each country for national and European elections are marginal. In other cases, very different electoral systems are used. It would be expected that countries that use very different rules in the two types of elections would lead to very different results in these contests.

In each of the countries included in this study, elections are conducted under the plurality or proportional representation electoral systems. A widely accepted hypothesis derived from the study of electoral systems is that the plurality method favours the development of a two-party system, while proportional representation encourages a multi-party system.<sup>26</sup> According to Duverger, this proposition is one that approximates a true sociological law. Duverger explains the differential effects of the electoral system in terms of ‘mechanical’ and ‘psychological’ factors. The mechanical effect of the plurality system is that all but two of the more hegemonic

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<sup>26</sup> Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, London: Meuthen, 1955, 204-205.

parties are under-represented because they tend to lose in each district. The British Green Party is one such example of a party that has to date, been unsuccessful in winning parliamentary representation in national elections because of the plurality system. Reinforcing the mechanical factor is the psychological factor. According to Duverger, the psychological factor is based on the notion that voters are cognizant of the fact that a vote for a smaller party often becomes a 'wasted vote'. Rather than vote for a party that is deemed to have little, or no chance of winning, a voter will cast a ballot for a party that is perceived to have a better chance. As such, the plurality system rewards larger parties and is often a serious detriment to the success of smaller parties.<sup>27</sup>

While plurality and majoritarian systems tend to discourage smaller parties, the converse can be argued in systems based on proportional representation. According to Duverger, PR encourages the development of smaller parties. This is because of the fact that the percentage of the seats a smaller party receives is supposed to be reflective of the percentage of the vote that the party garners.<sup>28</sup>

While many small parties do poorly in the two types of elections, regardless of what type of electoral system is employed, Richardson and Rootes agree that Duverger's proposition can be applied to the case of many Green parties. They argue that the national electoral systems in countries like Great Britain and France, provides few opportunities for Green parties to have much of an impact on the results of national elections. This is because many voters may be hesitant to cast a ballot for a party that is perceived as having no realistic chance of winning.

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<sup>27</sup> Duverger, *Political Parties*, 217.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 252.

This ties in with Duverger's notion of the psychological factor and such thinking is especially apparent in national elections in Great Britain, where the Green Party has traditionally done poorly.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, it would appear that Green parties would perform better in European elections conducted under PR, than in national elections conducted under majoritarian or plurality systems. This would be expected to be particularly true in countries like Great Britain and France, where very different types of electoral systems are used for the two types of elections. However, in Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg, PR, or elements of PR, are used in both types of elections. While it would be expected that the electoral systems in these three countries would have little impact on Green Party voting, slight differences do in fact exist that make Green party voting more favourable in EP elections than in national elections.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Currently, there has been little dispute over the validity of each of the propositions that will be tested over the course of this study. European parliamentary elections are widely accepted as falling under the 'second-order' category. Smaller parties tend to win a larger percentage of the vote in European elections and this is more pronounced when these elections are held in the mid, or late stages of the national electoral cycle. Finally, smaller parties have a tendency to do better in countries in which PR is used, rather than in countries that employ plurality or majoritarian electoral systems.

While each of these propositions are valid, and the subsequent literature is widely

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<sup>29</sup> Dick Richardson and Chris Rootes, eds. *The Development of Green Parties in Europe*, New York: Routledge, 1996, 16-17.

supportive of them, there are a number of questions that this study will attempt to address. For example, the literature only makes generalizations about small parties and makes no distinction between factional or interest based parties and movement based parties with a strong ideology like the Greens. As well, the literature does not adequately test these propositions to see to what extent they are applicable to Green parties and Green party voting. For example, do Green parties do better at the expense of more established parties, or other smaller parties? Do the Greens do better in EP elections that are held in the early, or in the mid to late stages of the election cycle? Do differences in the electoral rules in the two types of elections play a role in determining how large a percentage of the vote a Green party will receive, and if so, in which countries is this most evident? In an attempt to respond to these questions, careful consideration must be given before conclusions on Green party voting can be reached. With these questions in mind, the study now applies these propositions to each of the countries selected.

## Chapter 3

### Belgium: Agalev and Ecolo

#### 3.1 Belgian Politics and the Greens

Belgium's political environment is unique in the sense that the country is divided into two distinct regions. These differences are especially evident within the Belgian party system, where the major parties have divided themselves into two groups based on the cleavages of regionalism and language.<sup>30</sup> The practice of dividing political parties along these lines extends to Belgium's two ecology parties. The Flemish Green party, Agalev, only contest elections in Flanders and in the city of Brussels, while its Francophone counterpart, Ecolo, only contests elections in Wallonia and Brussels.

In Belgium, the electoral histories of Agalev and Ecolo have closely mirrored each other. In the early years of both parties, electoral politics was conducted on an election by election basis, with little consideration given to establishing permanent political organizations based along the lines of traditional parties.<sup>31</sup> The early years of Agalev and Ecolo were also marked by a rapid entry into the inner sanctum of the national political arena. In 1981, both Agalev and Ecolo entered the Belgian Parliament, marking the first time that any Green party had accomplished the feat. Since that time, both parties have attempted to establish themselves as

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<sup>30</sup> Anthony Mughan, "Belgium" in *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries*, Mark Franklin, Thomas T. Mackie and Henry Valens, eds., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 83; Arend Lijphart, ed., *Conflict and Coexistence in Belgium: The Dynamics of a Culturally Divided Society*, Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1981, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation*, 75-76.

viable alternatives to Belgium's established parties.<sup>32</sup> Finally, since the 1999 national election, both parties are the third largest party groups in their respective regions and currently find themselves in the enviable position of being coalition partners in the current national government.

### 3:1:1 The Greens in Flanders: The Electoral History of Agalev

The origins of Agalev date back to the Catholic revival movement, *Anders Gaan Leven*, (To Live Differently). The early years of *Anders Gaan Leven* were entirely non-political and the initial aim of the movement was to adhere to the principles of solidarity, sobriety, and silence. By the early 1970s, *Anders Gaan Leven* slowly began to turn its attention to politics. This initial involvement with politics was based on supporting candidates from Belgium's existing parties who were sympathetic to the concerns of environmentalists. However, this approach often proved to be groundless because most of the candidates that *Anders Gaan Leven* supported failed to deliver on the promises that they made to the movement.<sup>33</sup>

In the late 1970s however, *Anders Gaan Leven* had grown disillusioned with the practice of supporting the candidates of the established parties. As a result, the *Anders Gaan Leven* movement made the explicit decision to present their own party lists for national elections. While Agalev can be considered one of the most successful Green parties in Europe today, the initial performances of Agalev were hardly impressive. In the national election campaigns of

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<sup>32</sup> Herbert Kitschelt and Staf Hellemans, *Beyond the European Left: Ideology and Political Action in the Belgian Ecology Parties*, London: Duke University Press, 1990, 41; John Fitzmaurice, *The Politics of Belgium: Crisis and Compromise in a Plural Society*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983, 183.

<sup>33</sup> Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation*, 77.



1977 and 1978, Agalev presented candidates in the Flemish province of Antwerp, receiving 0.3 and 0.7 percent of the vote respectively.<sup>34</sup> While these two national campaigns made Agalev more visible, electoral politics was not supposed to be the primary concern of the movement. This was because the founders of *Anders Gaan Leven* agreed that contesting elections was only supposed to serve as a temporary political arrangement and were vehemently opposed to becoming mired with all of the trappings that a permanent political party would generate.<sup>35</sup>

Building on their performance in the 1977 and 1978 national elections, the founders of the party decided to present candidates for the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979. The primary purpose for their involvement in European elections was to raise environmental issues with the established parties, while winning seats was a secondary concern. Agalev's performance in the election served as a breakthrough, as they garnered an impressive 2.3 percent of the vote and helped contribute to the establishment of a permanent Green party in Flanders.<sup>36</sup>

Although Agalev was originally a temporary political party, many supporters within the party supported the idea of contesting future elections as a permanent political entity. However, this notion was not universally accepted within all factions of the party. When the founders of *Anders Gaan Leven* decided to present candidates in the 1977 and 1978 national elections, these

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<sup>34</sup> Kris Derschouwer, "Belgium: The Ecologists and Agalev" in Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, ed., *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists*, London: Westview Press, 1989, 41.

<sup>35</sup> Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation*, 77.

<sup>36</sup> Michael O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe: New Politics, Old Predicaments*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997, 101.

temporary political arrangements had been controlled by the movement and not by political activists. Careful consideration was given to ensuring that power remained in the hands of the grassroots and efforts were made to avoid all means of a traditional party hierarchy. For example, if a potential candidate wanted to run in an election under the Agalev label, permission was required from the national bureau of *Anders Gaan Leven*. This arrangement was fine while Agalev did not have representation in the Belgian or European Parliaments. However, the crucial turning point for Agalev came in 1981, when the party polled 3.9 percent of the vote, and subsequently elected two members to sit in the Belgium Chamber of Deputies.<sup>37</sup> With entry into the national political arena, it became apparent that Agalev was compelled to organize themselves somewhat along the lines of a traditional political party, with an organized political structure.<sup>38</sup> Without having made an explicit decision, *Anders Gaan Leven*, the movement, had evolved into Agalev, the political party.

During the mid and late 1980s, Agalev attempted to consolidate their support. Building on their success in the 1981 national election, Agalev looked to the 1984 EP election as a means to continue spreading their message on the European stage. In this election, Agalev captured 7.1 percent of the Flemish vote. More importantly, the party was able to win its first seat in the European Parliament.<sup>39</sup> In the 1985 and 1987 national elections, Agalev looked to convince Flemish voters that they were a viable alternative to the established parties and that the party's success in 1981 was not an anomaly. By polling 3.7 percent of the vote in the 1985 national

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<sup>37</sup> Kitschelt and Hellemans, *Beyond the European Left*, 42.

<sup>38</sup> Derschouwer, "Belgium: The Ecologists and Agalev", 43.

<sup>39</sup> Guido van der Berghe, "Belgium", *Electoral Studies*, vol.3, no.3, 1984, 267.

election, Agalev again won seats in the Belgian Parliament, this time by doubling their representation by winning four seats.<sup>40</sup> In 1987, Agalev once again improved upon their performance from the previous national election. This time, the party captured 4.5 percent of the vote and captured two additional seats, giving them a total of six.<sup>41</sup>

The year 1989 is often remembered by ecologists throughout Europe, as a year in which the environmental movement made considerable progress throughout the European Community. The Flemish Greens were also benefactors of this ‘green tide’. For the second consecutive EP election, Agalev improved on their performance from the previous EP election. By winning 7.6 percent of the regional vote, Agalev was also successful in defending their one seat in the European Parliament.<sup>42</sup>

While Agalev made consistent gains in their electoral performances throughout the 1980s, by the early 1990s, their electoral support began to stagnate. This stagnation can be attributed to the fact that after contesting a series of national and European elections, voters now considered Agalev as established members of Belgium’s party system. For example, in the 1991 national election, Agalev was able to only slightly improve on their performance from the 1987 election. In this election, the party made only modest gains, capturing 4.9 percent of the vote but

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<sup>40</sup> John Fitzmaurice and Guido van der Berghe, “The Belgian General Election of 1985”, *Electoral Studies*, vol.5, no.1, 1986, 76.

<sup>41</sup> Marc Hooghe and Benoit Rihoux, “The Green Breakthrough in the Belgian General Election of June 1999”, *Environmental Politics*, vol.9, no.3, 130.

<sup>42</sup> O’Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 104-105.

still raised their overall representation in the national parliament to seven members.<sup>43</sup> The period of stagnation that Agalev first witnessed in the early 1990s continued in the 1994 European election and the national election of 1995. While retaining representation in the EP, the party dropped to 6.7 percent of the vote in Flanders.<sup>44</sup> In the 1995 national election, their share of the vote shrank by half a percentage point and even worse, Agalev lost two of its seven seats.<sup>45</sup>

By the late 1990s, Agalev was successful in reversing the trend towards a shrinking share of the vote. In the 1999 EP election, Agalev secured 12 percent of the Flemish vote, 7.5 percent nationally. This was the largest share of the vote that the party had ever garnered. More importantly, Agalev also captured an additional seat, giving them two in the EP.<sup>46</sup> In the concurrent national election, Agalev won 7.0 percent of the vote and claimed a party record, nine seats in the national legislature. This impressive performance went even further as they were invited for the first time to join in forming a coalition government.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Hooghe and Rihoux, "The Green Breakthrough in the Belgian General Election of June 1999", 130.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union*, New York: Routledge, 1998, 97.

<sup>45</sup> Hooghe and Rihoux, "The Green Breakthrough in the Belgian General Election of June 1999", 130.

<sup>46</sup> Neil Carter, "The Greens in the 1999 European Parliamentary Elections" *Environmental Politics*, vol.8, no.4, 16

<sup>47</sup> Hooghe and Rihoux, "The Green Breakthrough in the Belgian General Election of June 1999", 130.

### 3:1:2 The Greens in Wallonia: The Electoral History of Ecolo

Unlike its counterpart in Flanders, Ecolo's origins was, from the outset, an unambiguous attempt at forming a political party. The roots of Ecolo can be traced to various movements and ideological factions that originated from within the Belgian political arena. In the late 1970s, many Green activists were determined to bring the Wallonian Green movement under a single political banner.<sup>48</sup> The first foray in national politics occurred in the 1977 national election, where under the party label *Wallonie-Ecologie*, Green lists were presented in eight regions of Wallonia, while another Green party, *Ecolog*, also presented candidates in Brussels. In this initial entry into electoral politics, both lists were only able to muster 1.1 percent of the vote. While hardly encouraging, the founders of these two lists could find solace, when in 1978, the party began to emerge from its transitory beginnings into a more permanent political organization. In the 1978 national election, *Wallonie-Ecologie* made gains from the previous year by winning 3.7 percent of the vote. While this was an improvement, they remained on the periphery of Belgian politics because they failed to win parliamentary representation.<sup>49</sup>

Although the party had made only modest inroads in national politics, it was on the European stage that the Wallonian Greens made its first real breakthrough. In the 1979 EP, ecologists who had previously contested national elections under the *Wallonie-Ecologie* or *Ecolog* banners, presented a single list under the label *Europe Ecologie*. This list polled a respectable 5.1 percent of the French-speaking vote. While *Europe Ecologie* did not win any

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<sup>48</sup> Derschouwer, "Belgium: The Ecologists and Agalev", 42.

<sup>49</sup> Rihoux, "Belgium: Greens in a Divided Society", 93.

seats, this surprising result served as a catalyst for a formal Green party when in March 1980, Ecolo officially became a permanent political party.<sup>50</sup>

During the early to mid 1980s, Ecolo experienced a string of successive electoral contests where the party expanded on the size of their electoral support and parliamentary representation. Like Agalev, the 1981 national election served as an important breakthrough for the party. In this election, the party polled 5.9 percent of the vote in Wallonia and more importantly, they elected two members to sit in the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>51</sup> Instantly, Ecolo was transformed from a party on the periphery of the political spectrum, to one that was now a part of the inner sanctum of the Belgian political arena. Three years later, the 1984 EP election signified a breakthrough for Ecolo at the European level. This election saw the party win 9.9 percent of the Wallonian vote and the party also elected their first member to sit in the European Parliament. In the 1985 national election, the party once again increased their share of the vote and also increased their membership in the Belgian legislature from two to five.<sup>52</sup>

By the late 1980s, Ecolo's performance in elections was marked with mixed results. For example, the 1987 national election was a bitter disappointment as the party lost two of its seats in the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>53</sup> The 1989 EP election also signified further stagnation as Ecolo's share of the vote in Wallonia slipped from its 1984 level. However, they still were successful in

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<sup>50</sup> Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union*, 85.

<sup>51</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 103.

<sup>52</sup> Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union*, 90.

<sup>53</sup> Hooghe and Rihoux, "The Green Breakthrough in the Belgian General Election of June 1999", 130.

winning 6.3 percent of the vote and also seized a seat from the PRL, giving them an additional member in the European Parliament.<sup>54</sup>

On the national scene, by 1991, the party was able to rebound from its disappointing performance in 1987. The 1991 national election was held during a period in which Belgium was in the brink of economic recession and the established parties were hit with a high level of voter dissatisfaction. Combined, these two factors allowed the party the opportunity to garner 5.1 percent of the national vote and helped them capture 10 seats in the national legislature.<sup>55</sup>

During the mid 1990s, the party once again was subjected to a couple of electoral setbacks. First, in the 1994 EP election, Ecolo was disappointed by their performance which subsequently led to the party losing one of its seats in the EP. This downward trend continued into the 1995 national election as Ecolo's share of the vote dropped by a full percentage point from the 1991 national election. In this contest, the party won only 4.0 percent of the vote and this led to the party losing four of its 10 seats in the Belgian parliament.<sup>56</sup>

By the late 1990s, Ecolo, like their Flemish counterparts, were successful in taking advantage of a series of problems and scandals that were linked to Belgium's governing parties. For example, in the 1999 EP election, Ecolo secured a very impressive 22 percent of the regional vote and won three seats.<sup>57</sup> In the concurrent national election, Ecolo garnered 7.4 percent of the

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<sup>54</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 105.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>56</sup> Hooghe and Rihoux, "The Green Breakthrough in the Belgian General Election of June 1999", 130.

<sup>57</sup> Carter, "The Greens in the 1999 European Parliamentary Elections", 160.

national vote and this enabled the party to claim a record 11 seats. This breakthrough went even further as they were invited for the first time to join in a government coalition.<sup>58</sup>

### 3:2 The Belgian Electoral System

Unlike the national electoral systems used in France (Chapter Four) and Great Britain (Chapter Six), the national electoral system used in Belgium is much more favourable to smaller parties. This is due to the fact that under Belgian electoral law, the allocation of seats in national elections must be accorded based on proportional representation.<sup>59</sup>

One of the most interesting features about the Belgian electoral system is that voting is compulsory. In national elections, each political party submits an ordered list of candidates to the electorate and voters may cast their ballots in a variety of different ways. First, the electorate may vote for the party list as a whole. A vote in this manner implies that the voter accepts the order of the list in which the candidates have been placed by the party. Second, the voter can cast a ballot for any given candidate or party by indicating their preference. Since 1995, this choice has been expanded so that the voting in Belgium is now based on a multiple preferential voting system. Third, the voter can vote for any given candidate or alternate candidate. Finally, they can cast a preference vote for an alternate candidate.<sup>60</sup>

In Belgium, the distribution of seats in national elections is based on the d'Hondt system of PR and is arrived at in two different stages. First, in each *arrondissement* (administrative

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<sup>58</sup> Hooghe and Rihoux, "The Green Breakthrough in the Belgian General Election of June 1999", 130.

<sup>59</sup> Government of Belgium, *The Constitution of Belgium*, [http://www.fed-parl.be/constitution\\_uk.html](http://www.fed-parl.be/constitution_uk.html), Accessed on September 1, 2000.

<sup>60</sup> Fitzmaurice, *The Politics of Belgium*, 90-91.



region), an electoral divisor is calculated using the largest remainder formula. Figure 3.1 demonstrates how seats are allocated in Belgium in this manner.

**Figure 3.1- First Round of Allocating Seats in Belgian Parliament**

$\frac{\text{Total Votes Cast}}{\text{Seats to be Filled}} = A$ <p>For Each Party an Electoral Quotient is calculated as follows:</p> $\frac{\text{Votes Cast for Party List}}{A} = B$
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Source: Bernard Grofman and Arend Lijphart, *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences*, 173.

The method of allocating seats in the first round is relatively straightforward. First, the total number of votes cast is divided by the total number of seats that are to be filled. Second, the number of votes cast for each party is divided by the sum of votes casts, by the number of seats that are to be filled. After this initial round of distribution, not all seats have been allocated and some seats remain to be filled. However, only parties that have surpassed the electoral quotient of 0.66 in at least one *arrondissement* are eligible to participate in the second round of seat distribution. The allocation of seats in the second round are calculated for each list as indicated in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2- Second Round of Allocating Seats in Belgian Parliament**

$\frac{\text{Electoral Quotient in the Arrondissement}}{\text{First Distribution of Seats} + 1, 2, 3, \dots}$
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Source: Bernard Grofman and Arend Lijphart, *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences*, 173.

For each qualifying party, the number of votes in the whole region is divided successively by the number of seats already awarded plus, one, then two, then three and so on. The quotients

are classified in descending order and seats for each party are then allocated to an *arrondissement* in accordance with the size of the local quotients of that party in descending order.<sup>61</sup> This form of proportional representation makes one-party government unlikely. As such, the national government has traditionally been based on coalition building, comprised of at least two parties from Wallonia and two from Flanders.

While the electoral system employed in national elections is beneficial to smaller parties, the electoral formula used in European elections is slightly more favourable to smaller parties. Similar to national elections, the Belgian electorate has the option to cast their ballot in a number of different ways.<sup>62</sup> However, unlike in national elections, where candidates are elected from 30 different multi-member constituencies, in European elections, the number of constituencies is reduced to three, one for Flanders and one for Wallonia, while voters living in Brussels comprise their own constituency and have the option of voting for either a Flemish or Francophone list of candidates.<sup>63</sup> A benefit of having fewer constituencies is that it enables smaller parties a better opportunity to penetrate all areas of the country. Agalev and Ecolo, being less organized and with fewer resources than larger parties, would find it more difficult in presenting a full slate of candidates in each national constituency. While organizational problems of this nature have become less arduous as they have grown in national prominence, it was prevalent during their

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<sup>61</sup> Fitzmaurice, *The Politics of Belgium*, 91-92.

<sup>62</sup> John Fitzmaurice, "Belgium", *Electoral Studies*, vol.8, no.3, 1989, 233.

<sup>63</sup> Tom Mackie, "The Results of the 1989 and 1994 European Elections" in *Choosing Europe?: The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of Union*, Cees van der Eijk et al., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, 452.

developing years.<sup>64</sup> European elections, however, allow smaller parties the opportunity to overcome such problems because they can concentrate their efforts on three, as opposed to 30 separate campaigns.

With fewer constituencies, Agalev and Ecolo also require fewer nationally, or at least regionally, renowned candidates to head their respective party lists. In national elections, Agalev and Ecolo would conceivably have great difficulty in recruiting enough good candidates to head up party lists in all 30 constituencies. In national elections, the personal appeal of a popular candidate can only be used in one constituency, whereas in a European election, that same candidate can be used to help the party's fortunes throughout the region and thus, may contribute to the party winning a greater share of the vote.

While organizational problems are less contentious in European elections, some factors exist that would conceivably make it more difficult for the Belgian Greens to win a larger share of the vote in EP elections. One such factor involves the effective threshold a party needs to surpass in order to win representation in both national and European elections. In Belgian elections, the larger the number of seats available, the lower the percentage of the vote a party needs to garner in order to win seats.<sup>65</sup> Due to the fact that there are more seats contested in national elections, one would expect a lower threshold in these elections. With a lower threshold, it would be possible to expect that the notion of the wasted vote would be more prevalent in European elections than in national elections because it would be more difficult for Agalev and Ecolo to pass the effective threshold in a European election. If Belgian voters are

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<sup>64</sup> Derschouwer, "Belgium: The Ecologists and Agalev", 41.

<sup>65</sup> Parkin, *Green Parties*, 169.

cognizant of this distinction, then it would be possible to expect that Belgium's Green parties would receive a larger share of the vote in national elections and not European elections. However, if such a distinction does in fact exist, it has not had an impact on the overall performance of the two parties in either election.

### 3:3 Vote Switching and Electoral Cycles in Belgian European Elections

Over the past 24 years, Agalev and Ecolo have contested eight national elections and five EP elections. Table 3.1 summarizes the electoral performance of the two Green parties during the years 1977-1999. Table 3.1 also shows that Agalev and Ecolo have consistently received a larger share of the vote in European elections than in national elections. The only exception to this tendency occurred in 1994, when Ecolo won a smaller percentage of the vote compared to the 1991 national election.

**Table 3.1- Agalev and Ecolo Electoral Results in National and European Elections, 1977-1999**

Agalev				Ecolo			
National Elections		European Elections		National Elections		European Elections	
1977	0.3	1979	2.3	1977 <sup>a</sup>	1.1	1979 <sup>b</sup>	5.1
1978	0.7	1984	4.4	1978 <sup>a</sup>	3.7	1984	3.9
1981	3.9	1989	7.6	1981	2.2	1989	6.3
1985	3.7	1994	6.7	1985	2.5	1994	4.8
1987	4.5	1999 <sup>a</sup>	7.5	1987	2.6	1999 <sup>a</sup>	8.4
1991	4.9			1991	5.1		
1995	4.4			1995	4.0		
1999	7.0			1999	7.4		

Source: Table constructed from Neil Carter, "The Greens in the 1999 European Parliamentary Elections" *Environmental Politics*, vol.8, no.4, 161, Kris Derschouwer, "Belgium: The Ecologists and Agalev" in Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, ed., *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists*, 41, Marc Hooghe and Benoit Rihoux. "The Green Breakthrough in the Belgian General Election of June 1999", *Environmental Politics*, vol.9, no.3, 130, and Oskar Niedermayer, "European Elections 1989" *European Journal of Political Research*, vol.19, no.1, 149.

a- Wallonie Ecologie b- Europe Ecologie

\* Elections held concurrently.

It is important to remember that the manner in which voters cast a ballot for a particular

party in a European election may depend on where that election falls within the national electoral cycle. On one occasion, the 1979 EP election occurred in the early stages of the Belgian government's mandate, on three other occasions (1984, 1989, 1994), the European elections took place during the late stages of the electoral cycle, while in 1999, the European election was held simultaneously with the national election. Tables 3.2 to 3.6 shows the percentage of the vote cast for Belgian parties that contested national and European elections from 1978 to 1999. The tables also indicate the gains and losses incurred by parties in EP elections compared to their performance in preceding national elections and ranks these parties in accordance with these gains or losses.

### 1979

The first European election occurred just six months after the last national election of December 1978. Moreover, the formation of a coalition government, comprised of the CVP, PSC, SP, PS, and FDF had not been formally announced until April of 1979.<sup>66</sup> Thus, the 1979 European election was conducted a mere two months after the government had been formed, leaving little time for the Belgian electorate to have become dissatisfied.

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<sup>66</sup> Paul Claeys, Edith de Graeve-Lismont and Nicole Loeb-Mayer, "Belgium" in *Ten European Elections: Campaigns and Results of the 1979/81 First Direct Elections to the European Parliament*, Karlheinz Reif, ed., Aldershot: Gower Publishing, 1985, 37.

**Table 3.2- Performance of Belgian Parties in the 1979 European Election\* Compared to the 1978 National Election\* (Gains and Losses in %**

<b>Flanders</b>	<b>1979 EE</b>	<b>1978 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
CVP <sup>a</sup>	29.5	26.1	+3.4
Agalev	2.3	0.7	+1.6
SP <sup>a</sup>	12.8	12.3	+0.5
PVV <sup>b</sup>	9.4	10.3	-0.9
VU	5.9	7.0	-2.1
<b>Wallonia</b>	<b>1979 EE</b>	<b>1978 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
Ecologie	5.1	3.7	+1.4
PRL <sup>b</sup>	6.8	5.9	+0.9
FDF <sup>a</sup>	7.6	7.0	+0.6
PSC <sup>a</sup>	8.1	10.1	-2.0
PS <sup>a</sup>	10.5	13.0	-2.5

Source: Karlheinz Reif, ed. *Ten European Elections*, 202.

\* Percentages composed of national and not regional percentages. Other Flemish and Wallonian parties, 1979 EP: 2.0%, 1978 NE: 3.9%.

a- Governing parties. b- Principal opposition parties.

In the 1979 European election, three members of the governing coalition, the CVP, SP, and FDF actually made gains compared with their performance in the 1978 national election. Amongst smaller parties, both Agalev and Ecolo made the largest gains. Agalev gained 1.6 percent and in Flanders, this gain was second only to the CVP. Gains made by Europe Ecologie, at 1.4 percent were the largest made by any party in the Walloon region.

## 1984

The 1984 European election occurred more than half way through the mandate of the Christian Democrats and Socialists, who had formed a coalition government shortly after the 1981 national election. Unlike in 1979, the governing parties were not the beneficiaries of a post-election euphoria, and would have been expected to suffer some losses in comparison to their performance in the last national election.

**Table 3.3- Performance of Belgian Parties in the 1984 European Election\* Compared to the 1981 National Election\* (Gains and Losses in %)**

<b>Flanders</b>	<b>1984 EE</b>	<b>1981 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
SP <sup>b</sup>	17.1	12.4	+4.7
Agalev	4.3	2.4	+1.9
CVP <sup>a</sup>	19.8	19.3	+0.5
VB	1.3	1.1	+0.2
VU	8.5	9.8	-1.3
KPB	0.4	2.3	-1.9
PVV <sup>a</sup>	8.6	12.9	-4.3
<b>Wallonia</b>	<b>1984 EE</b>	<b>1981 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
Ecolo	3.9	2.4	+1.5
PRL	9.4	8.6	+0.8
PS	13.3	12.7	+0.6
PSC	7.6	7.1	+0.5
PCB	1.1	2.3	-1.2
FDF-RW	2.5	4.2	-1.7

Source: Table constructed from Derek Heurl and Christopher Rudd, "The Belgian General Election of 1981: A Preliminary Report", *Electoral Studies*, vol.1, no.1, 1982, 102 and Guido van der Berghe, "Belgium" *Electoral Studies*, vol.3, no.3, 1984, 267.

\* Percentages based on national and regional figures. Other Flemish and Wallonian parties, 1984 EP:2.2%, 1981 NE 2.5 %.

a- Governing parties. b- principal opposition parties.

Despite being a mid-term evaluation, several larger parties, including several members of the governing coalition, actually made gains from the 1981 national election. Amongst the smaller parties listed in Table 3.3, Agalev and Ecolo once again made the largest gains. Agalev gained 1.9 percent from the 1981 national election, second only to the principal opposition party, the SP. The gains made by Ecolo, at 1.5 percent, once again was the largest gains of any party in Wallonia.

## 1989

In 1989, the European election took place a little more than 18 months after the last national election that had been held in December 1987, and can be considered a mid-term

evaluation. By this time, a considerably greater segment of the Belgian electorate would potentially transfer their votes from larger to smaller parties. Similar to the 1984 EP elections, Belgium's governing parties would once again be unlikely to benefit from a honeymoon period with the electorate.

**Table 3.4- Performance of Belgian Parties in the 1989 European Election\* Compared to the 1987 National Election\* (Gains and Losses in %)**

<b>Flanders</b>	<b>1989 EE</b>	<b>1987 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
Agalev	7.6	4.5	+3.1
Vaams Blok	4.1	1.9	+2.2
CVP <sub>a</sub>	21.1	19.5	+1.6
PVDA	0.4	0.8	-0.4
PVV <sub>b</sub>	10.6	11.5	-0.9
SP <sub>a</sub>	12.4	14.9	-2.5
VU <sub>a</sub>	5.4	8.0	-2.6
<b>Wallonia</b>	<b>1989 EE</b>	<b>1987 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
Ecolo	6.3	2.6	+3.7
FDF/RW	1.5	1.2	+1.3
PSC <sub>a</sub>	8.1	8.0	+0.1
PTB	0.2	0.2	0.0
POS	0.2	0.2	0.0
PCB	0.5	0.8	-0.3
PS <sub>a</sub>	14.5	15.7	-1.2
PRL <sub>b</sub>	7.2	9.4	-2.2

Source: Oskar Niedermayer, "European Elections 1989" *European Journal of Political Research*, vol.19, no.1, 149.

\* Percentages based on national and regional figures. Other Flemish and Wallonian parties, 1984 EP: 2.2%, 1981 NE 2.5 %.

a- Governing parties. b- principal opposition parties.

From Table 3.4, it is clear that the 1989 European election in Belgium can be classified as a second-order election in the manner in which Reif and Schmitt predicted. Unlike the 1979 and 1984 EP elections, most of the larger parties this time experienced losses from the preceding national election in 1987. However, unlike in 1979 and 1984, this anti-government swing was not to the benefit of Belgium's principal opposition parties. Instead, it was spread out amongst



smaller parties including Agalev and Ecolo. In Flanders, Agalev gained 3.1 percent from what they had garnered in the 1987 national election. This was also the largest gain made by any party in the Flemish region. Ecolo's share of the vote in the 1989 election increased slightly more than Agalev's, jumping 3.7 percent and, for the third consecutive EP election, made the largest gains of any party in Wallonia..

#### 1994

The 1994 European election took place more than halfway through the mandate of the Belgian government and can be considered a mid-term evaluation. By this time, a considerably greater segment of the Belgian electorate would switch from the party they voted for in the 1991 national election and the party they would vote for in the 1994 EP election.

**Table 3.5- Performance of Belgian Parties in the 1994 European Election\* Compared to the 1991 National Election\* (Gains and Losses in %)**

<b>Flanders</b>	<b>1994 EE</b>	<b>1991 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
Agalev	6.6	4.9	+1.7
VB	7.8	6.6	+1.2
SP <sup>a</sup>	12.0	10.9	+1.1
CVP <sup>a</sup>	17.0	16.8	+0.2
VLD <sup>b</sup>	11.4	12.0	-0.6
VU	4.4	5.9	-1.5
<b>Wallonia</b>	<b>1994 EE</b>	<b>1991 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
FN	2.9	1.7	+1.2
Ecolo	4.9	5.1	-0.2
PRL/FDF <sup>b</sup>	9.1	9.6	-0.5
PSC <sup>a</sup>	7.0	7.7	-0.7
PS <sup>a</sup>	11.4	13.5	-2.1

Source: *Electoral Studies*, vol.11, no.2, 1992, 185 and John Fitzmaurice, "Belgium", *Electoral Studies*, vol.13, no.4, 1994, 333.

\* Percentages based on national and regional figures. Other Flemish and Wallonian parties, 1984 EP:2.2%, 1981 NE 2.5 %.

a- Governing parties. b- principal opposition parties.

The 1994 EP election was one that brought mixed results for Belgium's Green parties.

For Agalev, the party gained 1.7 percent from the 1991 national election and, for the second

consecutive EP election, made the largest gains of any party in Flanders. In Wallonia, Ecolo failed to benefit from a widespread protest vote that tended to punish larger parties. Most of the protest vote went to the far right extremist party, the Front National. Instead of gaining support from the previous national election, as had been the case in the 1979, 1984, and 1989 EP elections, Ecolo actually experienced a loss, dropping from 5.1 percent in 1991, to 4.9 percent in 1994. This results is surprising for two reasons. First, Ecolo's performance does not fit Reif and Schmitt's proposition that small parties will gain in a second-order election. Secondly, the 1994 EP election took place in the late stages of the Belgian national election cycle, a period when voting for a party like Ecolo would be expected to be more pronounced.

### **1999**

The 1999 EP election was held concurrently with the national election. In this case, smaller parties would not be expected to make large gains because protest voting would make little sense under these circumstances. Instead, gains made by smaller parties in this type of situation would be out of purely expressive voting, in which voters are freed from any concerns of government formation.

**Table 3.6- Performance of Belgian Parties in the 1999 European Election\* Compared to the 1999 National Election\* (Gains and Losses in %)**

<b>Flanders</b>	<b>1999 EE</b>	<b>1999 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
VU	7.6	5.6	+2.0
Agalev	7.4	7.0	+0.4
CVP <sup>a</sup>	13.9	14.1	-0.2
VB	9.4	9.9	-0.5
SP <sup>a</sup>	9.0	9.6	-0.6
VLD <sup>b</sup>	13.5	14.3	-0.8
<b>Wallonia</b>	<b>1999 EE</b>	<b>1999 NE</b>	<b>Gains or Losses</b>
Ecolo	8.3	7.3	+1.0
FN	1.6	1.5	+0.1
PRL-FDF <sup>b</sup>	10.0	10.1	-0.1
PS <sup>a</sup>	9.6	10.1	-0.5
PSC	5.1	5.9	-0.8

Source: University of Düsseldorf, *Parties and Elections in Europe*, <http://www-public.rz.uni-duesseldorf.de/~nordsview/index.html> and John Fitzmaurice, "The Belgian Elections of 13 June 1999" *West European Politics*, vol.23, no.1, 2000, 175.

\* Percentages based on national and regional figures. Other Flemish and Wallonian parties, 1984 EP: 2.2%, 1981 NE 2.5 %.

a- Governing parties. b- principal opposition parties.

From the table above, it is clear that the governing groups, the Socialists and Christian Democrats, along with the principal opposition, the Liberals, suffered losses in both Flanders and Wallonia. As such, an increase for smaller parties was evident in both regions. In Flanders, Agalev made the second largest gains, second only to *Volksunie*. However, at 0.4 percent, this was the smallest gain made by the party in any European election up to this point.

In Wallonia, Ecolo's share of the vote in the 1999 EP election rebounded from its dip in the 1994 EP election as they gained 1.0 percent from the percentage of the vote they claimed in the concurrent national election. As had been the case in 1979, 1984, and in 1989, Ecolo made the largest gains of any party in the region.

Tables 3.2 to 3.6 indicate that with the exception of Ecolo in 1994, Belgium's two Green parties have consistently done better in European elections than they have in preceding national

elections. This suggests that the results tend to follow in accordance with the second-order election model, where smaller parties receive a greater share of the vote in EP elections than in the preceding national election.

Analysis of the three EP elections that have been held during the mid/late stages indicates that Agalev has made an average gain of 1.9 percent. In the one EP election held in the early stages of the national election cycle, Agalev made a gain of 1.6 percent, and in the concurrent election, a gain of 0.4 percent. While the difference between gains made by Agalev in elections held in the early stages and those held during the mid or late stages is marginal, the results still comply with the election cycle model. In the case of Ecolo, the Wallonian Greens have made an average gain of 1.7 percent in the three elections held during the mid/late stages. In the one early stage EP election, Ecolo made a gain of 1.4 percent and in 1999, Ecolo made a gain of 1.0 percent. Analysis of the results indicate that, at 0.7 percent, differences in results between the three stages, while marginal, leaves the study to conclude that like their Flemish counterparts, gains made by Ecolo also fit in accordance with the election cycle model.

## Chapter 4

### France: Les Verts

#### 4:1 An Electoral History of the French Greens

The French environmental movement has long been involved in national electoral politics and like their cohorts in Belgium and Germany, they too currently find themselves in the position of being a coalition partner in the national government. Similar to other Green parties in western Europe, the electoral history of *Les Verts* has been one marked by a series of electoral disappointments and on several occasions, they have been forced to compete with rival Green parties.

While the French Greens have participated in electoral politics since the 1974 presidential election, they were slow to organize into a permanent political party. It was not until the late 1970s, that ecologists in France finally came to the realization that contesting national elections was necessary in order to promote green ideas and issues. The first ecologist party in France was formed in 1977 by a series of ecological groups who established a proto-party known as *Collectif Ecologie 78'*. The primary purpose of CE 78' was to present candidates in the 1978 French national election. Campaigning with the goal of educating the French electorate about the importance of environmental issues, CE 78' attracted 201 candidates and polled 2.2 percent of the vote. The results were disappointing because CE 78' had hoped to draw much support from the considerable portion of the French electorate who opposed France's nuclear energy industry.

Shortly after the 1978 national election the party disbanded.<sup>67</sup>

The 1979 EP elections offered the French Greens another opportunity to better their poor showing in the 1978 national election. An umbrella group similar to CE 78', labeled *Europe Ecologie*, improved on the results of CE 78' by claiming 4.4 percent of the vote. This was the best showing of any Green party in the 1979 European elections. However, despite this performance, they did not win any seats because they fell short of the 5 percent threshold required under French electoral law. As had been the case in 1978, with the passing of the 1979 EP election, *Europe Ecologie* ceased to operate as a party.<sup>68</sup>

In 1981, French ecologists once again established a temporary political party in time for the 1981 national election. This proto-party, labeled *Aujourd'hui' Ecologie*, failed to leave much of an impression with the electorate. Similar to earlier campaigns, the primary goal of *Aujourd'hui' Ecologie* was to educate French voters about the salience of environmental issues. However, the party mustered only 1.1 percent of the vote on the first ballot. As had been the case in 1978, no candidate garnered enough support to pass on to the second round and once again failed to win any seats in the National Assembly.<sup>69</sup>

While temporary political parties had been established for the 1978 and 1981 national elections, and the 1979 European election, the French environmental movement was late in

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<sup>67</sup> Jeff Bridgeford, "The Ecological Movement and the French General Election of 1978", *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol.31, no.3, 1978, 317.

<sup>68</sup> Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union*, 84.

<sup>69</sup> Brendan Prendiville, "France: "Les Verts" in *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists*, Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, ed., London: Westview Press, 1989, 89.

establishing a permanent political party. As in other countries, there had been some debate about the merits of creating such an outlet within the French political arena. Despite some reservations, *Les Verts*, France's primary ecologist party, was established in 1984.<sup>70</sup> Unlike other parties that have competed in French elections under a 'green label', *Les Verts* have been noted for its 'pure' green ideology. Standing on principles of 'autonomy, ecology and solidarity', *Les Verts* has traditionally tried to keep its distance from adopting pragmatic practices towards politics.<sup>71</sup>

The 1984 European election marked the first time that *Les Verts* contested a nationwide election. However, the 1984 election served as yet another bitter disappointment for French ecologists. This was due to the fact that *Les Verts* had been forced to compete with a rival Green list, the *Entente Radicale Ecologiste*. Despite attempts at forming a common list between the two parties, consensus could not be reached due to deep ideological differences.<sup>72</sup> With two competing lists, winning parliamentary representation in the European parliament became even more difficult. The results illustrated the costs of factionalism as *Les Verts* polled 3.4 percent of the vote while the ERE polled 3.3 percent. If the two parties had amalgamated, they would have in all likelihood, garnered enough support to surpass the five percent threshold, and elected France's first Green MEP's.<sup>73</sup>

In the 1986 national election, *Les Verts* had hoped that they could finally make the breakthrough they had been looking for since their inception. This sense of optimism was due to

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<sup>70</sup> John Frears, *Parties and Voters in France*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991, 106.

<sup>71</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 183.

<sup>72</sup> Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union*, 90.

<sup>73</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 187.

the fact that it was the first, and only occasion, during the course of the Fifth Republic, that proportional representation was used in a national election.<sup>74</sup> Under more favourable electoral conditions, *Les Verts* aspired to finally win representation in the National Assembly. Despite their expectations, *Les Verts* suffered a tremendous electoral setback by garnering just 1.2 percent of the vote. Even though PR was used in this election, their disappointing showing can be attributed to the fact that voters still perceived a vote for the Greens as a wasted ballot.<sup>75</sup>

After the disappointment of the 1986 national election, there was speculation that the *Les Verts* would disband. While the party did present a candidate for the 1988 presidential election, *Les Verts* made the explicit decision not to contest the parliamentary elections of that same year. The only grounds they gave for boycotting this election was that they felt it was not necessary to contest every election in order to confirm their existence as a political party.<sup>76</sup>

While most of the 1980s was a disappointment for France's Green parties, the 1989 EP election proved to be one of the best performances for the French Greens. In this election, *Les Verts* did not have to compete for votes with rival Green parties. They secured an impressive 10.6 percent of the popular vote and more importantly, captured nine seats and entered the European Parliament for the first time.<sup>77</sup>

Confident in the wake of their success in the 1989 European election, *Les Verts*, in

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<sup>74</sup> Frears, *Parties and Voters in France*, 181-182.

<sup>75</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 187.

<sup>76</sup> Frears, *Parties and Voters in France*, 108-109.

<sup>77</sup> Nick Hewlett, *Modern French Politics: Analyzing Conflict and Consensus Since 1945*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1989, 82; Anne Stevens, *The Government and Politics of France*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, 264.



conjunction with another Green party, *Generation Ecologie* formed an electoral alliance. This party, unlike the fundamentalist *Les Verts*, took a much more pragmatic approach to electoral politics. Together, these two parties contested the 1993 national election under the banner *Entente Ecologiste*. Their alliance was built around a strategy that attempted to concentrate on constituencies that they considered winnable.<sup>78</sup> Despite garnering 7.8 percent of the national vote, their strategy proved fruitless, as only two of their 547 candidates passed on to the second round of balloting and neither candidate was elected.<sup>79</sup>

Like many other Green parties throughout Western Europe, the history of *Les Verts* is one that has been marked by internal divisions and competition from other Green parties. As a result of this, the French Greens have at times, been their own worst enemies. These problems can be no better illustrated than during the 1994 EP election. Unable to agree on a campaign alliance and split over the issue of European integration, *Generation Ecologie* and *Les Verts* presented separate lists.<sup>80</sup> With two Green parties to choose from, potential Green party supporters subsequently split their votes between *Les Verts* and GE. *Generation Ecologie* polled a mere 2 percent of the popular vote while *Les Verts* obtained 2.9 percent.<sup>81</sup> What made the results of the 1994 EP election all the more discouraging was the fact that their split led to the Greens losing all nine seats that they had won in the 1989 EP election.

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<sup>78</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 195-197.

<sup>79</sup> Andrew Appleton, "Parties Under Pressure: Challenges to Established French Parties", *West European Politics*, vol.18, no.1, 59.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

The defeat in the 1993 national election, coupled with the loss of all of their seats in the 1994 EP election, provided *Les Verts* with the impetus for adopting a more pragmatic approach to electoral politics. For years, the party had contemplated allying themselves with the Socialists. The decision to take such an approach had been considered throughout much of the 1980s and 1990s. However, the French Green movement had long been suspicious of the PS. This was especially true during the tenure of the 1981-1986 government of Francois Mitterand , when the PS continued to pursue policies of unchecked economic growth, while also supporting nuclear energy programs. Despite these longstanding reservations, the French Greens finally endorsed an electoral alliance with the Socialists in time for the 1997 national election. The electoral pact agreed upon would saw the PS withdraw candidates in 29 constituencies. In exchange, *Les Verts* and *Generation Ecologie* agreed not to campaign against the PS in 77 districts. This alliance proved beneficial for both Green parties. Combined, they captured 4.1 percent of the national vote and more importantly, entered the National Assembly for the first time by winning seven seats. An additional bonus to the French Green movement came in the form of an invitation to become coalition partners in the Jospin government. This achievement marked the first time that a Green party had become members in a governing coalition.<sup>82</sup>

Hoping to build on their successes in the 1997 national election, France's two Green parties once again presented a common list in time for the 1999 European election. This alliance once again proved to be beneficial. Combined, the two parties captured 9.7 percent of the vote and reclaimed all nine seats that they had lost after the debacle of the 1994 European election.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 206-208

<sup>83</sup> Carter, "The Greens in the 1999 European Parliament Elections", 162.

The French Greens have made considerable progress from their early, marginal role in French electoral politics. Similar to the *Grünen* in Germany, and *Agalev* and *Ecolo* in Belgium, *Les Verts* and *Generation Ecologie* are currently members of a national governing coalition. Whether they can enlarge their electoral support depends largely on the circumstances that prevail in national politics during their tenure as members of the current French government. In European elections, they should have little trouble in continuing to win seats, provided electoral alliances continue to be forged between the two Green parties.

## 4.2 The French Electoral System

Prior to the establishment of the Fifth Republic, the French party system had been marked with instability and severe fragmentation. When framing the constitution of the Fifth Republic, General Charles de Gaulle insisted that in order to avoid the shortcomings of the electoral systems of the Third and Fourth Republics, the implementation of certain precautions would be imperative. De Gaulle contended that because of the employment of proportional representation, the National Assembly had become immobilized and dominated by small parties.<sup>84</sup>

In an effort to avoid the problems associated with a fragmented party system, the national electoral system introduced by De Gaulle confronts smaller parties with considerable obstacles. One of the most problematic obstacles for smaller parties is the majoritarian double-ballot system. A well known effect of the majoritarian system is that smaller parties have a greater

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<sup>84</sup> Vincent Wright, *The Government and Politics of France*, London: Hutchinson, 1986, 16.

tendency to be defeated.<sup>85</sup> This system has been used in national elections in France since 1958. The only exception to this came in 1986, when the French government temporarily dropped the double ballot system in favour of proportional representation. This measure had been introduced by Francois Mitterand's Socialists Party because they were concerned that the double ballot would severely hinder the party's chances of being reelected. Immediately after the 1986 election, the Mitterand government reintroduced the double ballot system and it has been employed ever since.<sup>86</sup>

The double ballot majoritarian system requires two rounds of voting. On the first round of balloting, only candidates who obtain a majority of votes, comprising one quarter of all registered voters, are elected.<sup>87</sup> If a candidate receives such a majority on the first ballot, there is no need for a second round of voting. However, due to the number of parties that contest elections in France, such incidents are rare. In the 1993 national election for example, only 80 out of 577 constituencies elected a candidate on the first ballot.<sup>88</sup>

Prior to 1978, French electoral law stipulated that only two candidates could pass on to the second round of balloting. However, since that time, more than two candidates are permitted to advance to the second round, provided the candidate obtains a minimum of 12.5 percent of all

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<sup>85</sup> Duverger, *Political Parties*, 204-205.

<sup>86</sup> Frears, *Parties and Voters in France*, 185.

<sup>87</sup> Matthew Cossolotto, *European Politics: 1995*, Washington: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1995, 101.

<sup>88</sup> David M. Farrell, *Comparing Electoral Systems*, London: Prentice Hall, 1997, 41.

registered voters.<sup>89</sup> As Table 4.1 indicates, while it is common to require a second round of balloting, up until the 1997 national election, it was extremely rare for more than two candidates to be placed on the ballot in the second round.

**Table 4.1- Second Round Ballots in National Elections with more than two Candidates, 1978-1997\***

<b>Election Year</b>	<b>Number of Second Round Ballots</b>	<b>Second Round Ballots with More than two Candidates</b>
1978	418	1
1981	320	1
1988	442	8
1993	483	15
1997	548	79

Source: D.B. Goldey, "The French General Election of 25 May-1 June 1997" *Electoral Studies*, vol.17, no.4, 1998, 146.

\* Note: 1986 national election conducted under proportional representation.

While the campaign leading up to the first round of balloting gives the French Greens an opportunity to publicize their political platform, they tend to fall by the wayside as larger parties are the ones that usually pass through to the second round. As such, voting for the Greens is often considered a nominal gesture that usually only occurs in the first round. An interesting feature of this system is that it has come to effectively impose a modified primary system between the major parties on the left and the right. This is because the two leading candidates who usually meet in the second round of balloting often represent the major parties of the left and right, a tradition that has come to dominate French electoral politics.<sup>90</sup>

In subsequent runoff elections held a week after the first ballot, the choice for French voters is narrowed to two, or sometimes, three candidates. No new candidates are permitted on

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<sup>89</sup> Alistair Cole and Peter Campbell, *French Electoral Systems and Elections Since 1789*, Aldershot: London, 1989, 191.

<sup>90</sup> Cossolotto, *European Politics*, 101.

the second ballot and each candidate must surpass the 12.5 percent threshold in order to be placed on the second ballot. However, if only one candidate surpasses the threshold, then the candidate that came in second on the first ballot is permitted to pass on through to the second round. In the second round of balloting, the candidate that wins the most votes is declared the winner.<sup>91</sup>

While national elections have proven arduous for small parties like the Greens to enjoy much electoral success, the rules involving European Parliamentary elections has offered a much more conducive environment for small party success. This is because of the electoral system that is used. Unlike in national elections, seats in EP elections are allocated on the basis of proportional representation. Proportional representation on the other hand, encourages a multi-party system and thus, the French Greens have a better opportunity to win representation and garner a larger percentage of the vote. The success of the French Greens in the 1989 and 1999 European elections, for example, appears to have been a consequence of the electoral system. However, it is still important to note that the electoral system has at times, been inconsequential in having an effect on the percentage of the vote that the Greens have won. For example, in the 1986 national election, *Les Verts* could still only muster 1.2 percent of the national vote even though proportional representation was employed.

While the two electoral systems are different, there are common features in both systems that are more conducive to smaller parties in European elections. One such similarity is the surpassing of electoral thresholds that is necessary in order to win parliamentary representation. Under the PR system, a five percent threshold is required in order to win any seats and is much

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<sup>91</sup> Frears, *Parties and Voters in France*, 167.

easier to surpass than the 12.5 threshold that is present in national elections.

A further benefit to smaller parties in European elections is that it is much easier to present themselves as national parties. To elaborate, it is much easier for smaller parties to field a full slate of candidates in European elections than national elections. In European elections, France is made up of one large nationwide constituency. As such, each party only has to present one list with a maximum of 87 candidates, one for each seat that has been allocated to France in the EP. In national elections however, the French Greens would require 577 candidates in order to field a full slate. As Table 4.2 illustrates, this is a feat that the French Greens have never been able to accomplish.

**Table 4.2-Green Candidates in National Elections as a Percentage of Contested Seats\*, 1978-1997**

Seats		Number of Candidates	Percentage of Seats Contested
1978	474	199	42.0
1981	474	167	35.2
1986	555	34	6.1
1988	555	40	7.2
1993	555	547	98.6
1997	555	412	71.4

Source: D.B. Goldey, "The French General Election of 25 May-1 June 1997" *Electoral Studies*, vol.17, no.4, 1998, 544.

\* Metropolitan France only.

Thus, it is obvious that in national elections, many voters in France cannot vote for the Greens for the simple reason that no Green candidate is running in their district. As Table 4.2 indicates, in each national election that the French Greens have presented candidates, a significant percentage of the electorate has not been given the opportunity to vote for a Green party candidate. In European elections, smaller parties like the Greens are, in theory, on an even level with larger, more established parties in the sense that all voters have at least the opportunity

to vote for the Greens. A party may receive a small share of the vote because of organizational problems associated with not running full slate of candidates. In European elections however, these problems are more easier to solve and they stand a better chance in winning a larger share of the vote because of it.

### 4:3 Vote Switching and Electoral Cycles in French European Elections

Since 1978, the French Greens have contested six national elections and five European elections under various party labels. Table 4.3 summarizes the performance of the French Greens in elections during the years 1978-1999. Table 4.3 also indicates that the French Greens have consistently received a greater share of the vote in European elections than in national elections. The only anomaly to this tendency occurred in the 1994 EP election, when the Greens won a smaller percentage of the vote than in the 1993 national election.

**Table 4.3-French Green Party Vote Percentage in National and European Elections; 1978-1999**

National Elections		European Elections	
1978	2.8 <sub>a</sub>	1979	4.4 <sub>b</sub>
1981	1.1 <sub>c</sub>	1984	6.7 <sub>d</sub>
1986	1.2	1989	10.6 <sub>e</sub>
1988	0.4	1994	4.9 <sub>d</sub>
1993	7.6 <sub>c</sub>	1999	9.7 <sub>e</sub>
1997	6.8 <sub>c</sub>		

Source: Table constructed from Florence Faucher, "Is There Hope for the French Ecology Movement?", *Environmental Politics*, vol. 7, no.3, 48 and Neil Carter, "The Greens in the 1999 European Parliament Elections", *Environmental Politics*, vol.8, no.4, 1999, 162.

a- CE'78 b- Europe Ecologie c-Aujourd'hui Ecologie d-No alliance, aggregated total. 1984-Les Verts 3.4, ERE 3.3; 1994-Les Verts 2.9, GE 2.0 e-Combined list.

France is no different from any other EU country in that a segment of its electorate chooses to vote for one party in a national election, but votes for another party in a European election. Due to the fact that many French voters are inclined to vote differently in European



elections than in national elections, larger parties and in particular, governing parties, are susceptible to losing support to smaller parties. Tables 4.4 to 4.8 shows the percentage of the vote cast for French parties that have contested national and European elections between 1978 and 1999. Each table indicates the gains and losses in EP elections as compared to the preceding national election, and each party is listed in rank order in accordance with these gains and losses.

#### 1979

**Table 4.4- Performance of French Parties in the 1979 European Election Compared to the 1978 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1979 EE	1978 NE	Gains or Losses
UDF <sup>a</sup>	27.6	21.4	+6.2
Les Verts <sup>c</sup>	4.4	2.2	+2.2
PCF <sup>b</sup>	20.5	20.6	-0.1
LU/LCR/PSU	3.1	3.3	-0.2
PS/MRG	23.5	24.7	-1.2
RPR <sup>a</sup>	16.3	22.6	-6.3
Others	4.6	4.5	-

*Source: Karlheinz Reif, Ten European Elections, 205.*

a- Governing parties b- Principal opposition parties c- As CE'78 in 1978. As Europe Ecologie in 1979.

The 1979 European election was held 15 months after the last national election that had been held in March of 1978. Of the two coalition government parties, the UDF made gains from the 1978 national election, while the RPR, witnessed a loss of 6.3 percent. On the other hand, France's principal opposition parties all witnessed losses. Amongst smaller parties, the Ecologists were the only party to make gains as they jumped from 2.2 percent of the vote in 1978, to 4.4 percent in 1979. This marked a doubling of their support and at 2.2 percent, was the second largest gain made by any party in France.

#### 1984

The 1984 European election was a mid-term election because the last national election had been held in June of 1981, and the next election did not take place until March 1986.

**Table 4.5- Performance of French Parties in the 1984 European Election Compared to the 1981 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1984 EE	1981 NE	Gains or Losses
FN	11.0	0.2	+10.8
RPR/UDF <sub>b</sub>	43.0	40.1	+2.9
Les Verts	3.4	1.1 <sub>c</sub>	+2.3
PCF <sub>a</sub>	11.2	16.1	-4.9
SP <sub>a</sub>	20.8	37.8	-17.0
Others	10.6	4.7	-

Source: Table constructed from John Frears, *Parties and Voters in France*, 181; and Anne Stevens, "France" in *Direct Elections to the European Parliament: 1984*, 108.

a-Governing party. b-Principal opposition party. c-Contested by independent Green candidates.

As Table 4.5 indicates, it is clear that the 1984 European election in France was a classic example of the second-order election hypothesis. The ruling parties, the PCF and SP, did lose a considerable amount of support. In particular, the loss of support for the Socialists indicates that a considerable segment of their 1981 supporters had been willing to vote another party in 1984. However, *Les Verts* was not the primary benefactor of this swing from the Socialists. While the Greens did jump from 1.1 to 3.4 percent, the largest gains went instead to the *Front Nationale*, an extremist right-wing party.

## 1989

The 1989 EP election took place one year after the last national election that had been held in June, 1988. According to Table 4.6, it was again clear that the 1989 EP election was consistent with the second-order election hypothesis because the ruling party did lose considerable support to smaller parties.

**Table 4.6- Performance of French Parties in the 1989 European Election\* Compared to the 1988 National Election\* (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1989 EE	1988 NE	Gains or Losses
Les Verts	10.6	0.4 <sub>c</sub>	+10.2
CPNT	4.1	-	+4.1
FN	11.7	9.7	+2.0
PCF	7.7	11.3	-3.6
RPR/UDF <sub>b</sub>	28.9	37.7	-8.8
PS <sub>a</sub>	23.6	37.5	-13.9
Others	13.4	3.4	-

Source: Oskar Niedermayer, "European Elections 1989", *European Journal of Political Research*, vol.19, 1991, 150.

a-Governing party. b-Principal opposition party c-Contested by independent Green candidates.

France's larger parties, the RPR-UDF and Socialists, were both victims of a sharp decrease of support, losing 8.8 and 13.9 percent respectively. This meant that a substantial portion of the electorate was willing to vote for one of France's other parties. The greatest benefactor of such a shift was this time the French Greens, whose share of the vote jumped from 0.4 percent in the 1988 national election to 10.6 in the 1989 EP, an increase of 10.2 percent. This increase was also the largest gain that the French Greens have experienced to date.

## 1994

The 1994 EP election took place in the early stages of the national electoral cycle as the last national election had been held in March of 1993. From Table 4.7, the second-order hypothesis once again was evident as France's larger parties, the PS and UDF/RPR were subjected to a significant drop in support. Their aggregated 40.1 percent of the vote marked their worst performance in a European election.

**Table 4.7- Performance of French Parties in the 1994 European Election\* Compared to the 1993 National Election\* (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1994 EE	1993 NE	Gains or Losses
Another Europe	12.3	-	+12.3
Radical Energy	12.0	-	+12.0
CPNT	4.0	-	+4.0
Extreme Left <sup>c</sup>	2.7	1.7	+1.0
FN	10.5	10.5	0
PCF	6.9	9.2	-2.3
PS <sup>b</sup>	14.5	19.2	-4.7
Les Verts <sup>c</sup>	4.9 <sup>c</sup>	10.7 <sup>d</sup>	-5.8
UDF-RPR <sup>a</sup>	25.6	38.3	-12.7
Others	6.6	10.4	-

Source: Table constructed from Gerard Grunberg, "France", *Electoral Studies*, vol.13, no.4, 1994, 337 and *Electoral Studies*, vol.12, no.3, 286.

a- Governing parties b- Principal opposition party c- Aggregated total. Les Verts 2.9, Generation Ecologie 2.0.

d- Entente Ecologiste e- Composed of two lists. Pour l' Europe des Travailleurs and Democratique et Lutte Ouvriere.

Despite the losses experienced by larger parties, the French Greens also experienced losses. Combined, *Les Verts* and *Generation Ecologie* lost 5.8 from the total they had accumulated as a combined list under the *Entente Ecologiste* banner in the 1993 national election. This in part can be explained by the fact that two new parties scored remarkably well. The anti-Maastricht party, Majority for Another Europe, and Radical Energy, a centre-left party led by popular candidate Bernard Tapie, garnered 12.3 and 12.0 percent respectively.

## 1999

The 1999 EP election took place halfway through the national electoral cycle as the last national election had been held in May of 1997. From Table 4.8, it appears that the election in some regards was an anomaly as a second-order election.

**Table 4.8- Performance of French Parties in the 1999 European Election\* Compared to the 1997 National Election\* (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1999 EE	1997 NE	Gains or Losses
RPF	13.0	-	+13.0
CPNT	6.8	-	+6.8
LO	5.2	-	+5.2
Les Verts/GE <sub>a</sub>	9.7	6.8	+2.9
PS <sub>a</sub>	22.5	23.5	-1.0
RPR <sub>b</sub>	12.8	15.7	-2.9
PCF <sub>a</sub>	6.8	9.9	-3.1
UDF <sub>b</sub>	9.3	14.2	-4.9
FN	5.7	14.9	-9.2
Others	8.2	15.0	-

Source: Table constructed from D.B. Goldey "The French General Election of 25 May-1 June 1997" *Electoral Studies*, vol.17, no.4, 1997, 544, and University of Düsseldorf, *Parties and Elections in Europe*, <http://www://www.-public.rz.uni-duesseldorf.de/~nordsvew/index.html>

a- Governing parties. b- Principal opposition parties.

Unlike in past European elections, governing parties were not subjected to substantial losses in support. Of particular interest is the performance of the two Green parties. According to the second-order hypothesis, the two parties would have been prone to a drop in support because they were members of the government at the time of the election. In the 1997 national election, the joint *Les Verts/GE* list collected 6.8 percent of the vote but in the 1999 EP, they garnered 9.7 percent. This gain of 2.9 percent, while it may prove to be anomalous, runs contrary to the second-order election model.

As Tables 4.4 to 4.8 indicate, in the 1979, 1984, and 1989 EP elections, the French Greens made gains that fit the second-order hypothesis. However, on two occasions, the performance of the French Greens did not fit in accordance with the second-order election model. In the 1994 election, the Greens experienced losses despite being in opposition and a significant drop in support for France's major parties. The converse of this was apparent in the 1999 EP, when the Greens were members of the government, but still made gains from the previous

national election.

On four out five occasions, the Greens have made larger gains in EP elections compared to their performance in the previous national election. While these gains have come regardless of when EP elections have transpired in the national election cycle, it is worth noting that the *size* of these gains have depended largely on when these elections have taken place within the cycle. In two EP elections that took place in the early stages of the cycle, the Greens made gains of 2.2 and 10.2 percent respectively, for an average gain of 6.2 percent. In 1994 and 1999, two EP elections held during mid-term, the Greens made gains of 2.9 and 2.3 percent respectively, for an average increase of 2.6 percent. According to the election cycle hypothesis, voting for smaller parties is supposed to be more pronounced during the mid, to late stages of the cycle. The difference in average gains, at 3.6 percent, is significant enough to conclude that the evidence indicates that voting for the Greens has been more evident in EP elections that have been held in the early stages of the cycle, running contrary to the election cycle model.

## Chapter 5

### Germany: *Die Grünen*

#### 5:1 An Electoral History of the German Greens

The German Greens have come a long way since their early beginnings. Originally *die Grünen* considered themselves an “anti-party” party, different from the traditional parties and determined to exploit the opportunities of German electoral politics without falling into the traps of professionalization.<sup>92</sup> However, over the course of the past twenty years, the party has slowly evolved into a pragmatic political force which is the largest and, arguably, the most successful Green party in Europe.

The rise of *die Grünen* is impressive because they were successful in carving out a niche in a party system dominated by three parties, the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP. While the party system was highly fragmented in the early years of the Federal Republic, by the 1970s, the party system had come to be monopolized by these parties. For example, in the 1976 national election, 99 percent of the West German electorate cast ballots for one of these three parties.<sup>93</sup> Due to the dominance of Germany’s main parties, new parties that entered German electoral politics had little impact on the results of elections. The entry of the Greens into the German national parliament, the *Bundestag* in 1983 was a rare event and their emergence posed a challenge to the

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<sup>92</sup> Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union*, 28.

<sup>93</sup> Gordon Smith, “The Changing West German Party System: Consequences of the 1987 Election”, *Government and Opposition*, vol.22, no.2, 1987, 32.

hegemonic stature of Germany's established parties.<sup>94</sup>

Electoral participation by the Greens represented the final stage of a process in which the ecological movement had evolved. For years, German ecologists had focused on movement politics and were not directly involved with electoral politics. However, with the introduction of EP elections, the German Greens, made their first effort to enter electoral politics. This entry was composed of a heterogeneous alliance consisting of environmental activists, minor parties, and alternative groups that came together to form the forerunner to *die Grünen*, the Alternative Political Alliance (*Sonstige Politnigung Die Grünen-SPV*).<sup>95</sup> In the ensuing 1979 EP election, the SPV collected 3.2 percent of the vote.<sup>96</sup> While they did not win any seats, their share of the vote was significant for a new party that was not a member of the established party system.

While the German Greens failed to win parliamentary representation in the 1979 European election, the experience served as the catalyst to form an organized political party at the national level. By winning 3.2 percent, the party secured 4.5 million *deuschmarks*. They were awarded this money because under German electoral law, any party securing a minimum 0.5 percent qualifies for campaign reimbursements from public funds.<sup>97</sup> This badly needed

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<sup>94</sup> Thomas Scarf, *The German Greens: Challenging the Consensus*, Providence: Oxford: University Press, 1994, 1.

<sup>95</sup> Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Kim Holmes, Clay Clemens and Werner Kaltefleiter, *The Greens of West Germany: Origins, Strategies, and Transatlantic Implications*, Washington: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1983, 32.

<sup>96</sup> E. Gene Frankland, "The Federal Republic of Germany: *Die Grünen*", *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists*, Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, ed., London: Westview Press, 1989, 62.

<sup>97</sup> E. Gene Frankland, "Germany: The Rise, Fall and Recovery of Die Grunen" in *The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe*, Dick Richardson and Chris Rootes,



funding was used to help form *die Grünen* in 1980. Shortly thereafter, *die Grünen* contested its first national election. In their inaugural election, the Greens only received 1.5 percent of the vote. While their first national campaign was not impressive, they did use it as an opportunity to voice their concerns for the environment and, as such, laid the groundwork that would help to expand their appeal with the German electorate in future elections.<sup>98</sup>

During the early 1980s, Germany's established parties still had not adequately responded to the non-materialist needs of the new post-materialist movements. The failure on the part of the established parties to respond to growing ecological concerns helped to serve as a window of opportunity for the Greens in the 1983 national election. Stressing environmental protection and the potential dangers of the nuclear energy industry, *die Grünen* constituted the clearest alternative to the CDU/CSU on these issues.<sup>99</sup> On the basis of this platform, *die Grünen* won 5.6 percent of the vote and more importantly, the party claimed 27 seats in the *Bundestag*.<sup>100</sup> This achievement was significant because they were the first party since 1953 to have succeeded in breaking into the established party system.<sup>101</sup>

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eds., New York: Routledge, 1996, 26.

<sup>98</sup> Horst Mewes, "A Brief History of the German Green Party" in *The German Greens: Paradox Between Movement and Party*, Margit Mayer and John Ely, eds., Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998, 36.

<sup>99</sup> Max Kaase, "The West German Election General Election of March 6, 1983", *Electoral Studies*, vol.2, no.2, 1983, 162.

<sup>100</sup> Frankland, "The Rise, Fall and Recovery of *die Grünen*", 29.

<sup>101</sup> Lutz Mez, "Who Votes Green?: Sources and Trends of Green Support" in *The German Greens: Paradox Between Movement and Party*, Margit Mayer and John Ely, eds., Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998, 72.

The success of the German Greens in the 1983 *Bundestag* election carried over into the 1984 European election. However, this success did not come easily because they had to compete with two socialist-pacifist parties, the Ecological-Democratic Party and the Peace List.<sup>102</sup> Despite competition from these two parties, *die Grünen* still did better than any other Green party in Europe, winning 8.2 percent of the vote and claimed seven seats in the European Parliament.<sup>103</sup>

To many observers, the electoral success of *die Grünen* was considered as a momentary occurrence that would eventually fade. For example, the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, went so far as to predict that they would lose all of their seats the next time that German voters went to the polls in a nationwide contest.<sup>104</sup> The 1987 national election gave *die Grünen* the chance to prove their critics wrong and demonstrate to the German electorate that they intended on remaining in the German Parliament. Not only did the Greens prove this to the chagrin of Kohl, their 8.3 percent of the vote was good enough for the party to increase their presence in the Bundestag from 27 to 42 seats.<sup>105</sup>

While *die Grünen*'s electoral history until 1987 had been marked by steady improvements, their showing in the 1989 EP election indicated that the Green vote had hit a plateau of sorts. Although Green parties throughout Western Europe were the benefactors of a 'green tide', *die Grünen*, who had made the most substantial electoral and political progress of

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<sup>102</sup> Wolfgang Rudig, "The Greens in Europe: Ecological Parties and the European Elections of 1984", *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol.38, no.1, 1985, 58.

<sup>103</sup> Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union*, 90.

<sup>104</sup> Karl Hugo Pruys, *Kohl: Genius of the Present*, Berlin: Edition, 1996, 211.

<sup>105</sup> Peter Pulzer, "The West German Federal Election of 25 January 1987", *Electoral Studies*, vol.6, no.2, 1987, 152.

any Green party in Europe, did little more than retain their previous level of support. Although the party did win 8.4 percent of the vote, they only made marginal improvements on past elections.<sup>106</sup>

The 1980's was a decade in which the German Greens garnered a steady increase in support in both national and European elections. However, Germany's first unification election would subsequently challenge and put into question the overall viability of the party. The setback that seriously jeopardized *die Grünen*'s place within the national political arena can be attributed to two major factors. The first was the party's unpopular opposition to re-unification despite the widespread support for re-unification in both the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic. *Die Grünen* did not fully embrace the idea of unification and were opposed to automatic extensions of West German economic and political principles to the former GDR.<sup>107</sup>

A second factor that contributed to the fall of *die Grünen* concerned their relationship with their counterparts in eastern Germany, *Bundis 90* (Alliance 90). The West German Greens opposed an alliance with *Bundis 90* prior to the first all-German election. They argued that they did not want to amalgamate with, and dominate, their partners in the former GDR like other parties had already done.<sup>108</sup> As well, *Bundis 90* claimed that *die Grünen*'s agenda was based on a series of different priorities that ran counter to their own platform. As such, a partnership between the two parties failed to materialize in time for the election, and this ran counter to most

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<sup>106</sup> Rudolph Hrbek, "Germany", *Electoral Studies*, vol.8, no.3, 1989, 259.

<sup>107</sup> Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union*, 30.

<sup>108</sup> Manfred Gortemaker, *Unifying Germany: 1989-1990*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

other parties who did unify.<sup>109</sup>

Combined, these two factors seriously hurt the Greens. In West Germany, *die Grünen* received 4.8 percent of the vote and because they fell below the five percent threshold, they were denied representation in the *Bundestag*. This was a serious blow to a party that had won 42 seats just three years prior. While this was disappointing, German ecologists could find some solace in the fact that *Bundis 90* performed a little better, garnering six percent of the vote and winning eight seats.<sup>110</sup>

In an effort not to repeat the mistakes of 1990, the two parties merged in 1993. With their problems with unification settled, and agreeing to consolidate their resources, the alliance between the two parties resulted in the formation of *Bundis 90/die Grünen*.<sup>111</sup> The decision to amalgamate the two parties was an opportunity to convince the German electorate that they were a viable alternative. In the 1994 European election, *Bundis 90/die Grünen* did just that by winning 10.1 percent of the vote and claiming 12 seats, becoming the largest group in the contingent of European Greens.<sup>112</sup>

The 1994 national election was another opportunity for the Greens to convince the German electorate that they were a viable alternative. By capturing 7.3 percent of the vote and

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<sup>109</sup> G.E. Edwards, ed. *German Political Parties: A Documentary Guide*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1999, 163.

<sup>110</sup> Thomas Poguntke, "Goodbye to Movement Politics?: Adaption of the German Green Party", *Environmental Politics*, vol.2, no.3, 382-386.

<sup>111</sup> Frankland, "The Rise, Fall and Recovery of *die Grünen*", 38-39.

<sup>112</sup> Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union*, 30.

49 seats, they vaulted past the FDP as the third largest party in the legislature.<sup>113</sup> This second strong showing on the part of the Greens proved that the debacle of the 1990 national election was an anomaly rather than reflecting general disillusionment with the party.

The 1998 *Bundestag* election brought an end to 16 years of government under the leadership of Helmut Kohl, it also marked the pinnacle of *die Grünen's* rise to power. Borrowing an idea from their French counterparts, the Greens decided to ally themselves with Gerhard Schroeder and the Social Democratic Party. The decision to ally themselves with the SPD was one that had long been supported by a majority of Green voters and factions within the party.<sup>114</sup> While their share of the vote slipped from their 1994 totals and they lost two seats, their consolation was an invitation to form a coalition government with the SPD.<sup>115</sup> While the 1998 national election marked the culmination of *die Grünen's* rise to power, the Greens were reminded nine months later that voters have the potential to be volatile entities. In the 1999 EP election, the party lost five seats and their share of the vote shrank to 6.4 percent, the lowest total the Greens had won since the 1990 national election.<sup>116</sup>

## 5:2 The German Electoral System

In 1949, when writing the Basic Law, the Constitution of the Federal Republic, the framers paid strict attention to contentions over what type of electoral system Germany would

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<sup>113</sup> Hans-Georg Betz, "Alliance 90/Greens: From Fundamental Opposition to Black-Green" in *Germany's New Politics: Parties and Issues in the 1990s*, David P. Conradt, Gerald Kleinfeld, George Romoser and Christian Soe, eds., Oxford: Berghan Books, 1995, 214.

<sup>114</sup> Papadakis, "Green Issues and Other Parties: *Themenklau* or New Flexibility?", 82.

<sup>115</sup> Daniel Mittler, "Eclipse of the German Greens", *The Ecologist*, vol.29, no.8, 461.

<sup>116</sup> Carter, "The Greens in the 1999 European Parliamentary Elections", 164.

use in the post-War period. The debate concerned whether to reinstate the proportional representation system, or to introduce single member districts with a first-past-the-post method of electing members to sit in the *Bundestag*. This notion was based on the idea that the FPTP system would alleviate the problems of a fragmented party system, a problem that had plagued the old Weimar Republic.<sup>117</sup> However, several political parties opposed the introduction of this system on the grounds that it would work to their disadvantage. For example, at the time, the Social Democrats had less support than the Christian Democrats and thus, were worried that a plurality system would allow the CDU the chance to govern with a majority in the legislature. The SPD, in conjunction with the FDP and several other minor parties, were successful in preventing the plurality system from being adopted.<sup>118</sup>

In an effort to reach consensus, a solution was enacted that saw a compromise between adopting features from the plurality and PR electoral systems. Under German electoral law, half of the seats in the *Bundestag* are elected by plurality and half by proportional representation. This system has come to be known as the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system, and combines a personal vote in single-member districts with the principles of PR. As well, to avoid severe fragmentation of the party system, a threshold clause is employed. Under German electoral law, in order for a party to win representation, a party must garner a minimum of five percent of the vote.

Since 1953, the primary feature of the German electoral system is that each voter has the

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<sup>117</sup> Geoffrey K. Roberts, *Party Politics in the New Germany*: London: Pinter Publishers, 1997, 22.

<sup>118</sup> Kathleen Bawn, "The Logic of Institutional Preferences: German Electoral Law as a Social Choice Outcome" *American Journal of Political Science*, vol.37, no.4, 972.

opportunity to cast two ballots. The first vote (*Erststimme*), is a personal vote, given to a particular candidate in one of 328 single-member districts. The candidate with a plurality of votes in each district is declared the winner of that seat and half of the members that sit in the Bundestag are elected in this manner. With the second ballot (*Zweitstimme*), voters cast ballots for the party of their preference. These second votes are tabulated nationwide and parties are allocated seats proportional to the percentage of votes they receive. If a party wins 25 percent of the total number of second ballots, they are awarded 25 percent of all seats that are to be allocated in this manner.<sup>119</sup>

An interesting feature of the MMP system is that additional seats are awarded and the size of the Bundestag is temporarily expanded. This is done to ensure that each party has seats proportional to their share of the vote they won. These additional seats, known as overhanging mandates (*Überhang mandat*), are distributed according to the lists that are presented by each party prior to the national election.<sup>120</sup> While this procedure appears unusual, it is a frequent occurrence in German elections. For example, in the 1994 national election, 10 additional seats were added to the *Bundestag*.<sup>121</sup>

Another interesting characteristic of the two-ballot system is that it enables voters to split their votes strategically between different parties. Vote splitting can be defined as the practice of when a voter casts ballots for a candidate of one party on the first ballot, but votes for a different

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<sup>119</sup> Russell J. Dalton, *Politics in Germany*, New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1993, 314-315.

<sup>120</sup> Frankland, "The Rise, Fall and Recovery of *Die Grünen*", 42.

<sup>121</sup> Cossolotto, *European Politics*, 123.

party on the second ballot.<sup>122</sup> This is a practice that many voters adhere to for many different reasons. For example, a Green party supporter may do this because they may feel that because of the plurality system used on the first ballot, Green Party candidates have little chance of winning and they do not want to 'waste' their *Erststimme*. As such, potential *die Grünen* supporters choose a candidate from a larger party on the first ballot. As Table 5.1 indicates, *die Grünen* is a party that usually falls victim to this practice.

**Table 5.1-Percentages of Green Party First Votes Compared with Second Votes**

Election	First Votes	Second Votes	Difference
1980	1.9	1.5	+0.4
1983	4.1	5.6	-1.5
1987	7.0	8.3	-1.3
1990	4.4	5.0	-0.6
1994	6.5	7.3	-0.8
1998	5.0	6.7	-1.7
Average	4.8	5.8	-1.0

Source: Table constructed from Max Kaase, "The West German General Election of 6 March 1983" *Electoral Studies*, vol.2, no.2, 1983, 160; Peter Pulzer, "The West German General Election of 25 January 1987" *Electoral Studies*, vol.6, no.2, 152; and Peter Pulzer, "The German Federal Election of 1988" *West European Politics*, vol.22, no.3, 1999, 246.

With the exception of the 1980 election, *die Grünen* has consistently won more second votes than first votes. As Table 5.1 illustrates, it is evident that many Green voters are cognizant of the fact that *die Grünen* is unlikely to win seats on the first ballot. However, knowing that PR is used on the second ballot Green party voters know the party has a chance better chance of electing candidates to the *Bundestag*.

Conversely, voters that cast ballots for larger parties on the first ballot, 'may' lend their second vote to smaller parties. This usually happens when parties announce coalition agreements

<sup>122</sup> Eckhard Jesse, "Split-voting in the Federal Republic of Germany: An Analysis of the Federal Elections from 1953 to 1987", *Electoral Studies*, vol.7, no.2, 1988, 115.



prior to the election. This is done in an attempt to guarantee that the smaller party passes through the five percent threshold. For example, in the 1998 national election, *die Grünen* was a beneficiary of this practice because many SDP voters 'lent' their second ballots to the Greens.<sup>123</sup> If this red-green coalition continues in future elections, *die Grünen*, in all likelihood, will benefit from SPD supporters who will 'lend' their second ballot to the Greens.

In producing highly proportional outcomes, the national electoral system makes one-party government very unlikely and indeed it has never occurred in the history of the Federal Republic. Governments have been coalitions and are usually very stable in nature. In the post-war era, regime change only comes about from changes in the configuration of the coalition.<sup>124</sup>

Unlike national elections, elections to the European Parliament do not involve the MMP system. Instead, elections are conducted by solely using PR. In this sense, it is the same version of PR that is used in national elections. However, there are several differences in EP elections that make these types of elections more favourable to smaller parties like the Greens.

As in France, one obvious benefit for the German Greens is that it is much easier to present themselves as a national party. To elaborate, it is much easier for smaller parties to field a full slate of candidates in European elections than national elections. In European elections, Germany is composed of one large constituency and the party only has to present one list with a maximum of 99 candidates, one for each seat that has been allocated to Germany in the EP. In national elections however, the Greens would require at least 328 candidates in order to field a

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<sup>123</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 56.

<sup>124</sup> Michael Keating, *The Politics of Modern Europe: The State and Political Authorities in Major Democracies*, London: Edward Elgar, 1993, 273.

full slate.<sup>125</sup> Due to the fact that organizational problems of this nature are a lesser concern for *die Grünen*, they have a better chance of winning a larger share of the vote in European elections.

For *die Grünen*, a further benefit of this system is that it frees voters from the notion of strategic voting. In the MMP system, voters may not choose *die Grünen* because they fear they have little chance of winning seats on the first ballot. However, this element is not present in the PR system and voters are less likely to waste 'waste' their votes. As such, this makes the PR system more conducive to the Greens and the party is in a better position to win a larger percentage of the vote.

### 5:3 Vote Switching, Electoral Cycles and European Elections in Germany

Since 1979, the German Greens have contested six national elections and five European elections. Table 5.2 summarizes the performance of *die Grünen* in elections during the years 1979-1999. From Table 5.2, it is evident that the Greens have consistently received a larger share of the vote in European elections than in national contests. The only exception to this tendency occurred in the 1999 EP election, when the Greens won a smaller percentage of the vote compared to the 1998 national election.

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Mackie, "The Results of the 1989 and 1994 European Elections", 273.

**Table 5.2- Green Party Vote Percentage in National and European Elections; 1979-1999**

National Elections		European Elections	
1980	1.5	1979	3.2 <sup>a</sup>
1983	5.6	1984	8.2
1987	8.3	1989	8.4
1990	5.0 <sup>b</sup>	1994*	10.1
1994*	7.3	1999	6.4
1998	6.7		

Source: Table constructed from Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, "Explaining the Electoral Success of Green Parties: A Cross National Analysis", *Environmental Politics*, vol.7, no.4, 1998, 154 and Neil Carter, "The Greens in the 1999 European Parliamentary Elections", *Environmental Politics*, vol.8, no.4, 1999, 161.

a- Contested election as the SPV *die Grünen*

b-In the first all German elections, the Greens ran two separate parties. In the Federal Republic, *die Grünen* won 4.8 percent of the vote while in the former GDR, *Bundis 90'* claimed 6.1 percent. The overall vote percentage is aggregated.

\* European election held in June. National election held in October.

Due to the fact that national elections are not held on prescribed dates, European elections occur during different periods of the national election cycle. On two occasions, in 1984 and 1999, they occurred in the early stages of the national election cycle. The 1994 EP election took place just four months before the national election of that same year, while the only mid-term evaluation came in the 1989 EP election. Tables 5.3 to 5.6 shows the percentage of the vote cast for German parties that have contested national and European elections between 1980 and 1999. Each table indicates the gains and losses in EP elections as compared to the preceding national election and each party is listed in rank order in accordance with these gains and losses.

## 1984

1984 marked the first time that the German Greens contested an EP election under the *die Grünen* banner. It also was the first opportunity for German voters to evaluate the performance of the national government led by Chancellor Helmut Kohl. While not a mid-term evaluation as operationalized in this study, 15 months had passed since the last national election held in March of 1983, leaving the electorate some opportunity to gauge the performance of the government.

**Table 5.3 Performance of German Parties in the 1984 European Election Compared to the 1983 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1984 EP	1983 NE	Gains or Losses
Die Grünen	8.2	5.6	+2.6
NPD	0.8	0.2	+0.6
SPD <sub>b</sub>	37.4	38.2	-0.8
FDP <sub>a</sub>	4.8	6.9	-2.1
CDU/CSU	46.0	48.8	-2.8
Others	2.8	0.3	-

Source: Rudolf Hrbek, "Germany" *Electoral Studies*, vol.3, no.3, 1984, 280.

a- Governing parties. b- Principal opposition party.

As Table 5.3 indicates, Germany's three major parties all witnessed slight decreases in support from the 1983 national election. With only marginal losses for larger parties, gains made by smaller parties were also marginal. Amongst these parties, *die Grünen*'s share of the vote jumped from 5.6 to 8.2 percent. This gain, at 2.6 percent was the largest increase for any party.

## 1989

The 1989 EP election occurred midway through Helmut Kohl's second administration. The last national election had taken place in January of 1987 and during the course of two and a half years, voters would have become a little more critical of larger parties than they had been in 1984.

**Table 5.4 Performance of German Parties in the 1989 European Election Compared to the 1987 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1989 EP	1987 NE	Gains or Losses
Republikaner	7.1	-	+7.1
SPD <sub>b</sub>	37.3	37.0	+0.3
Die Grünen	8.4	8.3	+0.1
FDP <sub>a</sub>	5.6	9.1	-3.5
CDU/CSU	37.7	44.3	-6.6
Others	3.9	1.3	-

Source: Table constructed from Thomas Mackie, *Europe Votes* 3, 116 and Oskar Niedermayer, "European Election 1989", *European Journal of Political Research*, vol.19, 1991, 151.

a- Governing parties. b- Principal opposition party.

From the table above, it is clear that the results of the 1989 EP election fall in accordance with the election cycle model in the sense that governing parties experienced losses. The results of the 1989 EP election was very different from the results of the 1984 EP election in two ways. First, the German electorate was much more critical of the governing parties, the CDU/CSU and their coalition partners, the FDP. Second, *die Grünen* did not make the largest gains of any party in Germany. Unlike 1984, the Greens failed to capitalize on the losses incurred by governing parties. As such, their share of the vote only jumped 0.1 percent with the largest gains going to the Republikaner Party, an extremist right-wing party.

#### 1994

The year 1994 was a unique and very busy year for German politics. It marked *Superwähler*, a year in which German voters had the opportunity to cast ballots at the Land, national and European levels of government. In addition, the 1994 European election also marked the first time that a unified Germany would participate in a EP contest. Within the national election cycle, the 1994 EP election took place three and a half years after the last national election that had been held in December of 1990. However, the next national election was imminent and the June election was held just four months before the October national contest.

**Table 5.5 Performance of German Parties in the 1994 European Election Compared to the 1990 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1994 EP	1990 NE	Gains or Losses
Die Grünen	10.1	5.1	+5.0
PDS	4.7	2.4	+2.3
Republikaner	3.9	2.1	+1.8
SPD <sup>b</sup>	32.2	33.5	-0.7
CDU/CSU	38.8	43.8	-5.0
FDP <sup>a</sup>	4.1	11.0	-6.9
Others	6.2	2.1	-

Source: Hans-Dieter Klingemann, "Germany", *Electoral Studies*, vol.13, no.4, 1994, 339; and Ann L. Phillips, "The German Political Party System and the Elections of 1994", *West European Politics*, vol.18, no.3, 1995, 221.

a- Governing parties. b- Principal opposition party.

In Table 5.5 the CDU/CSU and FDP were once again victims of the electorate's tendency to vote with the 'boot' in a second-order election. Amongst smaller parties, the PDS, *Republikaner*, and *die Grünen* all made gains. In particular, the Greens made larger gains in this election than they had in any other EP election to date. At 10.1 percent, *die Grünen* doubled their performance from the 1990 national election and made the largest gains of any party.

## 1999

While the 1994 EP election marked the largest gains that the Greens have made in a EP contest, the 1999 election marked the converse. Traditionally, the German Greens received a higher share of the vote in EP elections when compared to the preceding national election. However, this trend had always been the case when the party had been a member of the opposition. By 1999, the Greens had become partners of the national governing coalition and according to the second-order election model, became subject to the possibility that they would witness losses.

**Table 5.6 Performance of German Parties in the 1999 European Election Compared to the 1998 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1999 EP	1998 NE	Gains or Losses
CDU/CSU <sub>b</sub>	48.7	35.1	+13.6
PDS	5.8	5.1	+0.7
Republikaner	1.7	1.8	-0.1
Die Grünen <sub>a</sub>	6.4	6.7	-0.3
FDP	3.0	6.2	-3.2
SPD <sub>a</sub>	30.7	40.9	-10.2
Others	3.7	4.2	-

Source: University of Dusseldorf, Parties and Elections in Europe, <http://www-public.rz.uni-duesseldorf.de/~nordsview/index.html>, and Thomas Poguntke, "Germany" *European Journal of Political Research*, vol.36, no.3, 1999, 395.

Nine months after becoming a partner in the SPD led coalition, the Greens were reminded that voters can be highly volatile. While only a short period of time had passed since the last national election, the Greens were not granted a reprieve by the electorate. While the party had gained 6.7 percent of the vote in the September 1998 national election, they were only successful in winning 6.4 percent in the 1999 EP election, a decrease of 0.3 percent. At first glance, this drop in support does not seem all that significant, especially compared to the losses incurred by their SPD coalition partners. However, the Greens prior to 1999 had always won a larger share of the vote compared to the preceding national election. Instead of enjoying their status as a smaller party as they had in previous EP contests, the electorate instead lodged a protest vote of sorts against the Greens. The results of the election as it relates to the new position that the Greens find themselves in, is in accordance with the national election cycle model.

While the German Greens have made gains in EP elections regardless of when they have occurred in the election cycle, it is interesting to note that the *size* of these gains has depended on when they occur in the cycle. In two EP elections that took place in the early stages of the cycle, the Greens made gain of 2.6 percent and a loss 0.3 percent. This marks an average gain of 1.2

percent. In the two EP elections held in the mid and late stages of the cycle, the Greens have made gains of 0.1 and 5.0 percent, for an average gain of 2.6 percent. These findings leaves the study to conclude that gains made by the Greens has been in the late stages of the national election cycle and is in compliance with the election cycle model.



## Chapter 6

### Great Britain

#### 6.1 An Electoral History of the British Green Party

Great Britain has one of the best organized and widely supported environmental movements in Europe.<sup>126</sup> However, if widespread concern for the environment is considered an indicator of support for a Green party, then the electoral history of the British Green Party can be considered paradoxical. In comparison to Green parties throughout western Europe, the electoral history of the British Green Party is one marked by few successes.

Although the oldest Green party in Europe, the British Greens were slow to develop into a conventional political party. This can be attributed to the fact there are few incentives for the creation of new political parties in Great Britain. The primary deterrence to new political parties is due to the fact that the British electoral system is based on the plurality system. As such, because electoral success under this method is unlikely, many environmental activists have argued that electoral politics should have been avoided. A political party, it was insisted, would be viewed negatively by the British government and it would jeopardize their position within the sphere of influence.<sup>127</sup> Despite these concerns, the British Green Party was formally incorporated as a political party in 1973 and were originally known as PEOPLE.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> John McCormick, *British Politics and the Environment*, London: Earthscan, 1991, 34.

<sup>127</sup> Chris Rootes, "Environmental Consciousness, Institutional Structures and Political Competition in the Formation and Development of Green Parties" in *The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe*, Richardson and Rootes eds., New York: Routledge, 1996, 238.

<sup>128</sup> Parkin, *Green Politics*, 218-219.

In the general election of 1979, the British Greens ran under the label, the Ecology Party. Prior to the election, the party decided to contest at least 50 seats in the next general election so that they could qualify for funds for campaign advertising on national television. They did qualify for the all important funding by fielding 53 candidates, capturing 1.6 percent of the vote. Although Ecology's performance was to signal a series of poor electoral showings in national elections, the 1979 election was significant because the party's campaign ads helped make them a little better known in Great Britain.<sup>129</sup>

Like many other Green parties in the EC, the 1979 EP election gave the Ecology Party the opportunity to call attention to their concerns and run a campaign designed to educate the public about the severity of environmental problems that were beginning to plague Great Britain. However, the party organizers did a poor job of recruiting candidates to run under the Ecology Party banner. In the three seats that they did contest, the party polled an average of 3.7 percent and did not win any seats.<sup>130</sup>

In the 1983 national election, the British Greens faced stiff competition for voters that did not want to support either the Labour Party or the Conservatives, Great Britain's two principal political parties. This competition came in the form of an alliance between the SDP and Liberals, which cut into potential support for the Ecology Party. The perception of a more viable alternative to Great Britain's established parties, coupled with the popularity of the Thatcher government in the wake of the Falklands conflict, once again served to make it difficult for the

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<sup>129</sup> Wolfgang Rudig and Philip D. Lowe, "The Withered Greening of British Politics: A Study of the Ecology Party", *Political Studies*, vol.34, 268.

<sup>130</sup> David Butler and David Marquand, *European Elections and British Politics*, London: Longman, 1981, 176.

Ecology Party to make much of an impression on the electorate.<sup>131</sup> The 106 candidates that stood for election under the Ecology Party banner were only successful in winning 1.0 percent of the vote in these districts. The party also had the dubious distinction of losing more campaign deposits than any other party.<sup>132</sup>

In the second European Parliamentary elections, the Greens hoped to improve upon their previous performance in the 1979 EP election. To do this, the party was successful in attracting more candidates. However, the party continued to be beset by internal problems. For example, there were many within the environmental movement that continued to question the viability of electoral politics. Despite the aspirations that the party could make inroads, they once again failed to leave an impression on the results of the election. In the 16 districts in which the Ecology Party presented candidates, the party could still only muster 2.7 percent of the vote in these constituencies.<sup>133</sup>

In 1985, the Greens once again changed their name, this time to the British Green Party. However, a change in party label did little to help further their cause. In the British general election of 1987, the party put up 133 candidates for election, but could only muster 1.3 percent of the vote and once again failed to win parliamentary representation.<sup>134</sup>

Until 1989, the British Greens could only secure a derisory percentage of the vote in

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<sup>131</sup> Paul Byrne, "Great Britain: The Green Party" in *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists*, Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, ed., London: Westview Press, 1989, 102.

<sup>132</sup> Rudig and Lowe. "The Withered Greening of British Politics", 267.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>134</sup> Byrne, "Great Britain: The Green Party", 104.

either national or European elections. Their only consolation was that they consistently fared better than parties that represented the extreme left and right.<sup>135</sup> However, the 1989 European election was, and continues to serve, as the most impressive performance for the British Greens in either a national or European election. In this election, the British Greens polled a surprising 14.9 percent of the vote and it marked the first time that they were able to field a full slate of candidates.<sup>136</sup> Their share of the vote was also the largest that any Green party has ever captured in Europe. From an electoral standpoint, the election instantly transformed one of the weakest Green parties in Europe, into one of the strongest. As well, they temporarily replaced the Social and Liberal Democrats as the principal third party. However, despite a performance that would have proven beneficial to virtually every other Green party in Europe, it was still not enough for the party to win a seat in the European Parliament. The surprise performance of the Greens in the 1989 European election sent a message to the Conservative and Labour parties. Shortly after this election, both parties attempted to promote and expand on their respective policies on the environment and include these ideas in future campaign platforms.<sup>137</sup>

The euphoria of the 1989 EP election, coupled with greater environmental awareness, led many ecologists to believe that electoral success was possible. However, throughout most of the 1990s, the party continued to wallow near the bottom of the electoral standings. In 1992, the national election was a bitter disappointment after the optimism that the 1989 EP election had

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<sup>135</sup> R. Taylor, "Green Parties and the Peace Movement" in *A Socialist Anatomy of Britain*, D. Coates, G. Johnston and R. Bush eds., Cambridge: Polity, 1985, 162.

<sup>136</sup> Andrew Adonis, "Great Britain", *Electoral Studies*, vol.8, no.3, 1989, 266.

<sup>137</sup> Tom Burke, "The Year of the Greens: Britain's Cultural Revolution", *Environment*, vol.31, no.9, 1989, 20.

provided. Given the nature of the British electoral system, the election left the British Green Party with yet another dismal performance at the polls. Although the party was successful in fielding a record 256 candidates, they once again could only capture 1.3 percent of the vote.<sup>138</sup> Despite the collapse of most of its membership and support after the 1992 national election, the Greens once again put up a full slate of candidates in the 1994 European election. However, the election was yet another crushing blow for the party's fortunes. The Greens were also not helped when a leading environmentalist supported a Plaid Cymru candidate over a Green Party candidate in Wales. While the party had hoped to build on, or at least maintain their vote, they could only garner 3.4 percent.<sup>139</sup> In the 1997 national election, the Greens adopted a strategy based on the reality of their political situation and adopted an approach in which only a few select districts were contested by the party. In the 84 seats where they did present candidates, the party turned in one of their worst ever performances by only winning a minuscule 0.2 percent of the vote.<sup>140</sup>

The most successful moment in the history of the Greens came in the 1999 European election, when for the first time, they won two seats in the European Parliament. A critical factor in the success of the party in 1999 can largely be attributed to the fact that proportional representation was used for the first time in Great Britain. The introduction of PR had long been advocated by the Greens and when it was introduced, they advertised the fact that a vote for the

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<sup>138</sup> Chris Rootes, "Britain: Greens in a Cold Climate" in *The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe*, Richardson and Rootes eds., New York: Routledge, 1996, 238.

<sup>139</sup> Roger Mortimore, "Great Britain" *Electoral Studies*, vol.13, no.4, 1994, 343.

<sup>140</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 312.

party was now much more important.<sup>141</sup> By winning 6.3 percent of the vote and capturing two seats, the Greens had at long last, entered the inner sanctum of British electoral politics.

In 2001, the Greens had its best showing ever in a national election. In the 145 seats where the party presented candidates, the party won 2.9 percent of the vote. While they did not win any seats, by winning considerable percentages of the vote in 10 constituencies, the Greens for the first time were able to save some of their election deposits.<sup>142</sup>

Overall, the poor performance of the British Green Party, whether in national or European elections, has deeper roots. Unlike many other Green parties throughout western Europe, the British Greens did not emerge from a widespread grassroots base of protest movements even though Great Britain has the largest environmental movement in Europe. Ever since their inception in 1973, they have tried to persuade members of the environmental movement to recognize them as their political representatives. However, there has been little success in this regard and they have drawn little electoral support from these movements.<sup>143</sup> Despite over 20 years of campaigning at the national level that has harvested few successes and a series of setbacks, the Greens appear ready to continue contesting national elections. However, it appears that the only realistic means of continuing to remain in the British political arena will be at the

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<sup>141</sup> British Green Party, *1999 European Election Website*, <http://www.greenparty.org.uk>, Accessed on July 1, 2001.

<sup>142</sup> British Green Party, *2001 General Election Website*, <http://www.vote.green.org.uk>, Accessed on July 1, 2001.

<sup>143</sup> Ferdinand Muller-Rommel and Thomas Poguntke, "The Unharmonious Family: Green Parties in Western Europe" in *The Greens in West Germany: Organization and Policy Making*, Eva Kolinsky, ed., Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1989, 18.

European level, especially since the introduction of PR makes it easier for smaller parties like the Greens to win seats.

## 6:2 The Electoral System in Great Britain

Although the British Green Party contest elections at all levels of government, they have enjoyed little electoral success. Moreover, while Green candidates from countries throughout western Europe have been elected to sit in their respective national parliaments, the British Greens have to date, been shut out of representation at Westminster. Even in the 1989 European election when they captured nearly 15 percent of the vote, they still failed to win a seat in the European Parliament.

The primary reason for this poor showing can largely be attributed to Great Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system. Under this system, Great Britain is divided into hundreds of smaller constituencies. For example, in the most recent national election in June of 2001, Great Britain was comprised of 659 such districts. The voting process and the allocation of transferring seats into votes is a relatively straightforward procedure. Voters in each constituency are given the opportunity to place a vote for the candidate of their choice. The fact that the British voter has only one choice means that the FPTP ballot structure is categorical and not ordinal in its composition. To win a seat under this system, a candidate does not require a majority of the votes cast. Instead, each seat is awarded to the candidate that has garnered the most votes. As illustrated below in Figure 6.1, the Labour candidate wins the seat, even though the candidate did not obtain a majority of the votes that were cast.

**Figure 6.1- Sample of the First Past the Post System in Great Britain**

Party of Candidate	Votes	Percentage
Labour	7,500	44.1
Conservative	5,000	29.4
Liberal Democrat	3,500	20.6
Green	1,000	5.9
Total	N= 17,000	100.0

*Note:* Hypothetical figures devised by author.

In repeating this process throughout Great Britain, the party that goes on to win the majority of these contests is normally asked to form the government. Due to the single member plurality system, the governing party usually wins the majority of the seats and governs alone.<sup>144</sup> However, a consequence of this system is that it does not allocate seats proportional to the percentage of votes cast for each party. As such, Great Britain's larger parties have benefited greatly from this system at the expense of smaller parties.

While the FPTP system has proven to be discouraging to smaller parties, the electoral rules involved in electing members to sit in the European Parliament are now much more advantageous. This is especially true since the 1999 EP elections. With the introduction of the *European Parliamentary Act 1999*, the allocation of transferring votes into seats changed from the FPTP system to one based on proportional representation. The change to PR had long been advocated by the British Green party because they were cognizant of the fact that they had a better chance to win seats under this system.<sup>145</sup> For example, if PR had been used in the 1989 EP election, the party would have won twelve seats, provided that their vote share of 14.9% was not

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<sup>144</sup> Keating, *The Politics of Modern Europe*, 77.

<sup>145</sup> Byrne: "Great Britain: The Green Party", 109.



affected by the electoral system change.

In June of 1999, voters in Great Britain took part in the first EP election to be contested under PR. In this new system, Great Britain was divided into eleven different regions comprising 84 seats. The number of seats in each region is proportional to the population of that region and this ranged from four to eleven seats.<sup>146</sup> Seats were then subsequently allocated according to the d'Hondt method of proportional representation. This system was selected because it comes close to ensuring that in each region, parties will win a share of the seats that is essentially proportional to their share of the vote in that region.<sup>147</sup>

Besides the introduction of PR, there are a number of advantages in EP elections that were present before the 1999 EP election. One obvious advantage that existed even before 1999 was the fact that there are fewer seats to contest in EP elections than in national elections. With fewer seats to contest, it is easier for the Greens to field a full slate of candidates. As Table 6.1 indicates, it has been much easier for the party to accomplish this feat in European elections.

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<sup>146</sup> Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher, "Assessing the Significance of the Elections of 1999" *Talking Politics*, vol.12, no.2, 301.

<sup>147</sup> David Butler and Martin Westlake, *British Politics and European Elections: 1999*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, 32-35.

**Table 6.1- Green Party Candidates in National and European Elections as a Percentage of Contested Seats, 1979-2001**

No. of National Candidates		Percentage of Contested Seats	No. of European Candidates		Percentage of Contested Seats
1979	53	8.4	1979	3	3.9
1983	106	16.3	1984	16	20.5
1987	133	20.5	1989	78	100.0
1992	256	39.4	1994	84	100.0
1997	84	12.7	1999	84	100.0
2001	145	20.0			

Source: Table constructed from Wolfgang Rudig and Philip D. Lowe, "The Withered Greening of British Politics: A Study of the Ecology Party", *Political Studies*, vol.34, 267-268; John Burchell, "Here Comes the Greens Again: The Green Party in Britain" *Environmental Politics*, vol.9, no.3, 145; and British Green Party, 2001 General Election, <http://www.vote.green.org.uk>

In national elections, the Greens would need 659 candidates in order to have a full slate of candidates. As table 6.1 demonstrates, this is an accomplishment that the Greens have never come close to fulfilling. If most constituencies do not have Green candidates, then most voters cannot vote for the Greens simply because no candidate is present in their district. However, as Table 6.1 also illustrates, organizational problems of this nature are much easier to handle in EP elections. In the 1989, 1994, and 1999 elections, all voters in Great Britain were at least given the opportunity to vote for the Greens, leaving the party a better chance to win a larger share of the vote in these elections.

With the introduction of PR, further advantages can also be cited that makes it easier for the Greens to win a larger share of the vote in EP elections. For example, Green Party voters no longer have to be as geographically concentrated as under the plurality system. When a smaller party's support is geographically concentrated, it is more likely to win seats than a party that has its support dispersed throughout the country. The Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru are two such parties that have been able to win seats because of the geographic concentration of their

electoral support.<sup>148</sup> For example, in the 1994 EP election, both the SNP and the Greens won 3.2 percent of the vote. However, the SNP won two seats while the Greens failed to elect any candidates.

A further benefit of the PR system is that it also frees the electorate from having to vote strategically. Under the plurality system, a vote for the British Green party has consistently proven to have been a wasted vote. As a result of this, many voters while wanting to vote for the Greens, will revert to voting strategically and cast a ballot for a party that they perceive to have a better chance of winning the seat. PR on the other hand, encourages a multi-party system where fewer votes are wasted, leaving the Greens with a better chance at winning seats and thus, a larger share of the vote.

### 6:3 Vote Switching and Electoral Cycles in British European Elections

During the course of the past 22 years, the British Greens have contested six national elections and five European elections. Table 6.2 summarizes the performance of the British Greens in elections during the years 1979-2001. An analysis of the vote percentage in national and European elections indicates that they have consistently received a significantly greater share of the vote in European elections.

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<sup>148</sup> Jorgen Rasmussen, "They Also Serve: Small Parties in the British Political System" in *Small Parties in Western Europe*, F. Muller-Rommel ed., London: Sage Publications, 1991, 171.

**Table 6.2- Green Party Vote Percentage in National and European Elections; 1979-2001**

British National Elections		European Elections	
1979	1.6 <sub>a</sub>	1979	3.7 <sub>a</sub>
1983	1.0 <sub>a</sub>	1984	2.7 <sub>a</sub>
1987	1.4	1989	14.9
1992	1.3	1994	3.2
1997	0.2	1999	6.3
2001	2.9		

Source: Table constructed from Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, "Explaining the Electoral Success of Green Parties" 154, Neil cater, "The Green in the 1999 European Parliamentary Elections", 161 and University of Dusseldorf, *Parties and Elections in Europe*, <http://www-public.rz.uni-duesseldorf.de/~nordswiew/index.html>

a- Contested election as the Ecology Party

Similar to other European countries, European elections in Great Britain have occurred during different times in the national election cycle. In 1979 and 1984, they occurred in the early stages, while the 1989, 1994, and 1999 EP elections occurred midway through the mandates of the Thatcher, Major and Blair governments. Tables 6.3 to 6.7 shows the percentage of the vote cast for British parties that have contested national and European elections between 1979 and 1999. Each table indicates the gains and losses in EP elections as compared to the preceding national election and each party is listed in rank order in accordance with these gains and losses.

## 1979

The first directly elected vote campaign for the European Parliament was held just one month after Margaret Thatcher's Conservative party formed a majority government in May of 1979. During such a short period of time, the British electorate would not have had much time to have grown disillusioned with the government.

**Table 6.3- Performance of British Parties in the 1979 European Election Compared to the 1979 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1979 EE	1979 NE	Gains or Losses
Conservative <sup>a</sup>	48.4	43.9	+4.5
Ecology Party	3.7	1.6	+2.1
SDLP	1.0	0.4	+0.6
SNP	1.9	1.6	+0.3
Plaid Cymru	0.6	0.4	+0.2
Liberal	12.6	13.8	-1.2
Labour <sup>b</sup>	31.6	36.9	-5.3
Others	0.2	1.4	-

*Source:* Karlheinz Reif, *Ten European Elections*, 205

As Table 6.3 indicates, a number of interesting findings become apparent. First of all, the Conservatives were the obvious benefactors of a post-election euphoria. This was because they had only been in power for one month and they actually won a larger share of the vote in the European election than they had in the national contest. On the other hand, Great Britain's principal opposition parties, the Liberals and Labour, witnessed drops in support. Amongst smaller parties listed, the SDLP, SNP and the Ecology Party also made gains. In particular, the largest gains went to the Greens, as they jumped from 1.6 percent of the vote in the national election, to 3.7 percent of the vote in the European election.

## 1984

The 1984 European election occurred one year after Margaret Thatcher's Conservative party formed their second majority government in June of 1983. Due to the fact that the 1984 EP election was held only one year after the last general election, the British electorate would still have had little time to have grown disillusioned with the ruling Conservatives.

**Table 6.4- Performance of British Parties in the 1984 European Election Compared to the 1983 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1984 EE	1983 NE	Gains or Losses
Labour <sup>b</sup>	36.6	28.3	+8.3
Ecology Party	2.7	1.0	+1.7
SNP	1.7	1.1	+0.6
Plaid Cymru	0.8	0.4	+0.4
Conservatives	40.8	43.5	-2.7
Lib/SDP	13.0	19.5	-6.5
Others	4.4	6.2	-

Source: Hugh Berrington, "The British General Election of 1983", *Electoral Studies*, vol.2, no.3, 1983, 266; Paul Jewitt, "Great Britain" *Electoral Studies*, vol.3, no.3, 1984, 284.

While the results of the 1984 EP election are consistent with the second-order election model, the British electorate was still not as critical of the Conservatives as they would prove to be in latter EP elections. The Conservatives only lost 2.7 percent of the support from the 1983 national election, while the overwhelming benefactor was the Labour Party. Amongst Great Britain's smaller parties, the SNP, Plaid Cymru and Ecology Party all made gains. With a gain of 1.7 percent, the Greens were second only to the Labour Party in this capacity and made the largest gains of any small party for the second consecutive EP election.

## 1989

The 1989 European election occurred two years after the last national election, making it the first to be conducted at any distance from the preceding national election. As a mid-term evaluation, the governing Conservatives would be subjected to much harsher criticism than they had in 1979 or in 1984.

**Table 6.5- Performance of British Parties in the 1989 European Election Compared to the 1987 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1989 EE	1987 NE	Gains or Losses
British Green Party	14.9	1.4	+13.5
Labour <sup>b</sup>	40.1	31.5	+8.6
SNP	2.6	1.3	+1.3
Plaid Cymru	0.8	1.2	-0.4
Liberal Democrats	6.6	8.6	-2.0
Conservatives <sup>a</sup>	34.7	42.3	-7.6
Others	0.3	13.7	-

Source: Table constructed from Tom Mackie, *Europe Votes* 3, 322; Oskar Niedermayer, European Elections 1989\* *European Journal of Political Research*, vol.19, no.1, 155.

According to Table 6.5, it is evident that the Conservatives lost more support than they had in 1984. However, what stands out the most is the gains earned by the Greens. By far, the party was the overwhelming benefactor of disillusionment. In this election, the Greens gained 14.9 percent, an increase of 13.5 percent and was the largest gain made by any Green party to date. For the third consecutive EP election, the Greens also had the largest gains of any other smaller party.

## 1994

Similar to the 1989 EP election, the 1994 contest was also a mid-term evaluation as the last national election had been held in 1992. At this time the Conservatives continued to remain in power, however, they were now led by a new leader, John Major.

**Table 6.6- Performance of British Parties in the 1994 European Election Compared to the 1992 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1979 EE	1979 NE	Gains or Losses
Labour <sup>b</sup>	44.2	34.4	+9.8
British Green Party	3.2	1.1	+2.3
SNP	3.2	1.9	+1.3
Plaid Cymru	1.1	0.5	+0.6
Liberal Democrats	16.7	17.9	-1.2
Conservatives <sup>a</sup>	27.9	41.9	-14.0
Others	0.7	2.3	-

Source: Table constructed from *Electoral Studies*, vol.11, no.4, 1992; Roger Mortimore, "Great Britain" *Electoral Studies*, vol.13, no.4, 1994, 342.

a-Governing party. b- Principal opposition party.

As Table 6.6 indicates, the electorate was once again very critical of the Conservative government. Moreover, the drop in support for the Conservatives under Major, at 14 percent was much larger than it had been in previous EP elections. Despite falling short in comparison to the gains that were made in 1989, the Greens were second only to Labour. As well, for the fourth consecutive EP election the Greens made the largest gains of all smaller parties.

## 1999

The 1999 European election promised to be a break-through campaign for the British Greens. As mentioned earlier, the introduction of PR made it likely that the Greens would capture a larger share of the vote in European elections. As well, the 1999 EP election was also a mid-term election as the last national election had been held in May of 1997 and the next did not take place until June of 2001. Combined, these two factors would allow the Greens the opportunity to make considerable gains from their performance in the last national election.



**Table 6.7- Performance of British Parties in the 1999 European Election Compared to the 1997 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1999 EE	1997 NE	Gains or Losses
UKIP	7.0	0.3	+6.7
British Green Party	6.3	0.2	+6.1
Conservatives <sup>a</sup>	35.8	30.7	+5.1
Plaid Cymru	1.9	0.5	+1.4
SNP	2.8	2.0	+0.8
BNP	1.0	1.4	+0.4
SDLP	1.0	0.6	+0.4
Liberal Democrat	12.2	16.7	-4.5
Labour <sup>a</sup>	28.0	43.2	-15.2
Others	4.0	4.4	-

Source: University of Dusseldorf, *Parties and Elections in Europe*, <http://www.-public.rz.uni-duesseldorf.de/nordsview/index.html>

a- Governing party. b- Principal opposition party.

As Table 6.7 illustrates, the governing Labour Party was given a strong reprimand from the electorate as they dropped over 15 percent from the 1992 national election. This drop in support meant that a considerable number of Labour voters looked to other parties, including the British Green Party. For the fifth consecutive EP election, the Greens received a larger share of the vote than they had in the previous national election. However, unlike in past EP elections, the Greens did not make the largest gains amongst smaller parties. Instead, this distinction went to the UKIP, a party that was vehemently opposed to the European Union and further integration. Regardless, their share of the vote still increased significantly, as they jumped from 0.2 percent of the vote in the 1997 national election, to 6.3 percent.

As Tables 6.3 to 6.7 indicate, the performance of the British Green Party fits in accordance with the second-order election model because they have consistently received a larger share of the vote in European elections. While these gains have come regardless of when EP elections have transpired in the national election cycle, it is worth noting that the *size* of these

gains have depended largely on when the EP election fell into the cycle. In the two elections that took place in the early stages of the cycle, in 1979 and 1984, the Greens made gains of 2.1 and 1.7 percent respectively, for an average gain of 1.9 percent. In 1989, 1994, and 1999, three elections held during mid-term, the Greens made gains of 13.5, 2.3, and 6.1 percent, for an average increase of 7.3 percent. According to the election cycle hypothesis, voting for smaller parties is supposed to be more pronounced during this stage. The difference in the average gain made by the Greens during the two stages of the election cycle, at 5.4 percent, indicates that voting for the Greens has been more evident during the late stages and coincides with the election cycle model.

## Chapter 7

### Luxembourg: Dei Greng

#### 7.1 An Electoral History of the Luxembourg Green Party

Despite a population that numbers in the thousands rather than the millions, Luxembourg can also boast of a strong ecological movement. While the origins of the ecologists movement dates back to the early 1970s, it was not until 1979 that ecologists in Luxembourg first came together to participate in electoral politics. The origins of the Luxembourg Green Party can be traced to the concurrent national and European elections of 1979, when dissident members of Luxembourg's Socialist and Communist parties formed a new party known as the Alternative Lescht-Wiert Lech (AL-WL).<sup>149</sup>

The AL-WL was not a political party based on traditional lines, but rather a temporary electoral arrangement set up to contest the 1979 elections. The primary purpose of AL-WL was to use both campaigns as an opportunity to express their opposition to the construction of a nuclear power station in Luxembourg.<sup>150</sup> Despite optimistic predictions that the party could mobilize voters that opposed Luxembourg's nuclear energy program, support for the party failed to materialize. This failure came about for two primary reasons. First, like most new parties, AL-AL had trouble breaking into Luxembourg's political arena. Second, the LSAP, a major socialist party, had also adopted an anti-nuclear stand and this only served to take away many potential supporters. After polling a meagre 1.0 percent in both elections, the AL-WL disbanded

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<sup>149</sup> Parkin, *Green Parties*, 169-170.

<sup>150</sup> Wolfgang Rudig, "The Greens in Europe: Ecological Parties and the European Elections of 1984", *Parliamentary Affairs*, 1985, vol.38, no.1, 61.

immediately after the campaigns.<sup>151</sup>

For some ecologists, the poor results in the 1979 elections reinforced the notion that abandoning the traditional means of movement politics for electoral politics was not a viable option. However, it was also obvious to many that a permanent political party would be more effective than merely establishing temporary political parties.<sup>152</sup> In 1983, an agreement was reached by a plethora of environmental groups, former members of AL-WL, and members of the feminist, peace and anti-nuclear groups to form a permanent Green party. Inspired by the success of the German and Belgian Greens, Dei Greng Alternative (The Green Alternative) was founded on June 23, 1983.<sup>153</sup>

The first foray by the Green Alternative into electoral politics was met with mixed results. Although the party polled a more impressive 6.2 percent of the vote in the 1984 EP election, they did not win any seats.<sup>154</sup> Although the Greens failed to win any representation in this election, the national election proved to be more profitable. In this election, while the party polled less than they had in the European election, their 5.2 percent of the vote was enough to capture two seats in the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>155</sup>

By 1989, the Green Alternative had hoped to make further inroads at both the national

<sup>151</sup> Mario Hirsch, "Luxembourg", *Ten European Elections*, 144.

<sup>152</sup> Thomas Koebler, "Luxembourg: The Green Alternative" in *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green parties and Alternative Lists*, Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, ed., London: Westview Press, 1989, 131.

<sup>153</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 132.

<sup>154</sup> Rudig, "The Greens in Europe", 61.

<sup>155</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 132.

and European levels. However, a serious split amongst different factions of the party severely hurt their electoral chances in both elections. A splinter group from within the party, broke away and presented their own list under the banner *Greng Lescht Ekologesch Initiative* (Green List for Ecological Initiative). GLEI was founded by Jup Weber, who had been elected to Luxembourg's Chamber of Deputies as a member of the Green Alternative in 1984, but broke ranks with the party over ideological differences.<sup>156</sup> Combined, the two parties garnered 8.9 percent in the national election and each party won two seats. However, the two parties would have been better served if they had presented a united list of candidates. This was especially evident in the EP contest, as GLEI won 6.1 percent and the Green Alternative captured 4.3 percent.<sup>157</sup> Unfortunately for supporters of Luxembourg's green movement, no Green MEP's were elected. However, a unified Green party would have won over 10 percent of the vote and this would have almost certainly guaranteed at least one of Luxembourg's six seats.

Realizing that these divisions were seriously hurting both parties' electoral chances, GLEI and the Green Alternative settled their political differences. In reaching a consensus on party policy, the two groups presented a united list in time for the 1994 elections. This time around, the fortunes of the Green movement were greatly improved. In the European contest, the Greens won 10.9 percent of the vote and seized a seat from Luxembourg's largest party, the CSV. In the national election, the Greens polled 10.1 percent and captured five seats.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe*, 132.

<sup>157</sup> Mackie, *Europe Votes* 3, 199.

<sup>158</sup> Michael Smart, "Luxembourg: European and National Elections of 1994", *West European Politics*, vol.18, no.1, 1995, 194.

In the 1999 elections, the Greens lost some of the support they had garnered in the 1994 contests. In the national election, the Greens only won 8.5 percent, but were still able to hold on to their five seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The Greens also lost support in the EP election, polling 10.7 percent, but still retained their one seat in the European Parliament.<sup>159</sup>

## 7.2 The Electoral System of Luxembourg

A feature unique to Luxembourg is that EP and national elections are held at the same time. This was not a deliberate arrangement, rather, it came about after the United Kingdom failed to ratify legislation that would have enabled EP elections to have been held in May/June 1978. The new date selected for the first EP elections, June of 1979, happened to coincide with the national election. Due to the fact that both Parliaments are on a fixed, five year cycle, elections have been held concurrently ever since. Currently, there is little demand to change the simultaneous holding of the two types of elections. The only means of doing so would require a premature dissolution of the national legislature, or an amendment to the constitution and this would prove arduous.<sup>160</sup>

Similar to Belgium, Luxembourg uses proportional representation for both types of elections. Luxembourg's method of PR in national elections, known as Hagenbach-Bischoff system, is a combination of voting for candidates and party lists. In national elections, in order to elect the 60 members that sit in the Chamber of Deputies, Luxembourg is divided into four multi-member districts that are in turn, comprised of a number of seats proportional to each district's

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<sup>159</sup> Carter, "The Greens in the 1999 European Parliamentary Elections", 161.

<sup>160</sup> Derek Hearl, "Luxembourg" *Electoral Studies*, vol.13, no.4, 1994, 349-350, 357.

share of the electorate.<sup>161</sup> For example, the national legislature is composed of nine seats in the North, 21 in the Center, seven in the East and 23 in the Southern district. In each of these districts, parties have the option to present lists with as many candidates as there are seats to be contested in that district. For example, if a district has 23 seats, then each party can place up to 23 names on its list.<sup>162</sup>

In national elections, when it comes to casting ballots, voters have the option of lodging as many votes as there are seats to be filled. Also in national elections, *panachage* is permitted. *Panachage* is a procedure that permits voters to distribute their votes over different candidates and even have the option to cast more than one vote for a single candidate. Alternatively, voters may cast a vote for the party list and this is the same as giving one preference vote to each candidate that appears on the party's list of candidates. These votes, also known as list votes, help to determine the total number of seats that a party wins, but are irrelevant in determining which of its candidates are elected. This is due to the fact that the election of candidates is determined by the difference in the number of votes cast for each candidate. In contrast to Belgium, parties in Luxembourg are powerless in determining which of their candidates are elected.<sup>163</sup>

In EP elections, PR is also used, but on a national and not a district basis. Luxembourg

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<sup>161</sup> Gordon L. Weil, *The Benelux Countries: The Politics of Small Country Democracies*, New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1970, 205.

<sup>162</sup> Cees van der Eijk and Hermann Schmitt, "Luxembourg: Second-order Irrelevance" in *Choosing Europe?: The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of Union*, Cees van der Eijk and Mark Franklin, eds. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, 202.

<sup>163</sup> van der Eijk and Schmitt, "Luxembourg", 202.

consists of a single constituency and seats are in turn, allocated by the d'Hondt method. Unlike in national contest, parties are permitted to include more candidates (to a maximum of 12) than there are seats to be filled (six). This provision is necessary because many candidates that appear on party lists in EP elections are also on the ballot for national elections. In turn, many candidates that are elected to sit as MEP's resign in order to sit in the national legislature.<sup>164</sup>

As in the case of national elections, *panachage* is permitted, but voters must distribute their votes over different candidates, or cast a vote for the list as a whole. Unlike national elections however, voters are not permitted to cast more than one vote for a single candidate. This leads to voters having to disperse their votes amongst the various party lists and the candidates on those lists. To summarize, a voter may cast a ballot for the entire list, vote for candidates from more than one list, or choose individual candidates from a particular list. Seats are then allocated on the basis of the number of votes obtained by the different candidates and party lists.<sup>165</sup>

While the electoral system used in European elections resembles the method employed in national elections, some differences exist that make EP elections more favourable to smaller parties. For example, one nationwide constituency instead of four can be considered as an advantage. To elaborate, smaller parties would require fewer nationally, or at least regionally, renowned candidates to act as their *spitzenkandidat*. The *spitzenkandidat* heads the list of each party in an effort to attract as many voters as possible. If a smaller party has a popular individual to act as their *spitzenkandidat*, the party can take advantage of this individual to draw support for

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<sup>164</sup> Hearl, "Luxembourg", 351.

<sup>165</sup> van der Eijk and Schmitt, "Luxembourg", 202-203.



the party throughout the country and not just in one district. For example, the Green's *spitzenkandidat* for the 1994 EP elections was headed by Jup Weber, a seasoned politician of national prominence.<sup>166</sup> However, in national elections, candidates like Weber could be utilized by the Greens as their *spitzenkandidat* in only one of the four districts.

While these advantages have made European elections more easier to contest, there are also some disadvantages that could possibly prevent them from winning a larger share of the vote in these contests. One such obstacle involves surpassing the threshold that is necessary in order to win representation in national and European elections. In both types of elections, the larger the number of seats available, the lower the percentage of the vote a party requires in order to surpass the threshold and win representation. Due to the fact that there are 60 seats available in national elections and only six in European contests, a lower threshold is needed in national elections in order to win seats. For example in the 1984 EP election, despite winning 6.2 percent of the vote, the Greens did not win any seats. However, their 5.2 percent of the vote in the concurrent national election was good enough for the party to win two seats on the Chamber of Deputies. If it is harder for a small party to win seats in European elections because of the higher threshold, it would be plausible to think that the wasted vote argument would be more prevalent in these elections. However, as will be demonstrated in section 7.3, this has not prevented the Greens from winning larger shares of the vote in European contests.

### 7.3 Vote Switching in European and National Elections in Luxembourg

While national and European elections are held concurrently, voters in Luxembourg are

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 207.

no different from voters in any other EU country in that a segment of the electorate choose to vote for one party in a national election, and a different party in a European election. As such, it is not surprising that in European elections, larger and governing parties would lose support, while smaller parties receive a larger share of the vote than they are accorded in national elections. However, the concept of smaller parties winning support at the expense of governing parties is not as relevant in Luxembourg. Expressing disillusionment with governing parties in European elections, while voting for them in national elections, makes little sense.

What differences could be expected in the performance of the Greens in a country that hold simultaneous elections? One would expect there would be little, or marginal differences at best. While the results for the Greens in the two types of elections have varied to an extent, the differences are more marginal in comparison to the performances of other Green parties included in this study. Table 7.1 gives an overview of the electoral performance of the Greens during the years 1979-1999. As Table 7.1 indicates, with the exception of 1979, the Greens have consistently received a greater share of the vote in European elections than in national elections.

**Table 7.1- Green Party Vote Percentage in National and European Elections; 1979-1999**

National Elections		European Elections	
1979	1.0 <sub>a</sub>	1979	1.0
1984	5.2	1984	6.2
1989	8.9 <sub>b</sub>	1989	10.4 <sub>b</sub>
1994	9.9 <sub>c</sub>	1994	10.9 <sub>c</sub>
1999	9.1 <sub>c</sub>	1999	10.7 <sub>c</sub>

Source: "Explaining the Electoral Success of Green Parties: A Cross National Analysis", *Environmental Politics*, vol.7, no.4, 1998, 154 and Neil Carter, "The Greens in the 1999 European Parliamentary Elections" *Environmental Politics*, vol.8, no.4, 1999, 161.

a- AL-WL b-Aggregated total. c-GLEU/GAP joint list.

Although the election cycle model is not applicable in the case of Luxembourg, there is still some difference in the share of the vote parties receive in national and European elections.

Tables 7.2 to 7.6 below shows the percentage of the vote cast for Luxembourg parties that have contested national and European elections between 1979 and 1999. Each table also indicates the gains and losses in EP elections compared to the preceding national election. Finally, each party is listed in rank order in accordance with these gains and losses.

### 1979

Leading up to the first directly elected European parliament, Luxembourg had been ruled by a center-left coalition comprised of the DP and the POSL. However, in the national election this coalition was defeated by Luxembourg's other major party, the Christian Socialists. In the European election, a total of eight parties presented candidates.

**Table 7.2- Performance of Luxembourg Parties in the 1979 European Election Compared to the 1979 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1979 EE	1979 NE	Gains or Losses
DP <sup>a</sup>	28.2	21.3	+6.9
CSV <sup>b</sup>	36.1	34.5	+1.6
PsD	7.0	6.0	+1.0
PL	0.6	0.2	+0.4
LCR	0.2	0.5	+0.3
AL-WL	1.0	1.0	0.0
PCL	5.0	5.8	-0.8
POSL <sup>a</sup>	21.9	24.3	-2.4
Others	-	6.2	-

Source: Karlheinz Reif, *Ten European Elections*, 209.

a- Governing parties before the 1979 national election. Principal opposition party.

Amongst Luxembourg's three major parties, the DP and CS made gains while the POSL experienced a drop in support. For the Greens, the AL-WL received the identical amount of support in both elections. While the party did not lose support in the European election, they did not make gains as would be expected according to the second-order election model. This occurrence was the only time that the Luxembourg Greens did not win a larger share of the vote

in a European election.

1984

**Table 7.3- Performance of Luxembourg Parties in the 1984 European Election Compared to the 1984 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1984 EE	1984 NE	Gains or Losses
Greens	6.2	5.2	+1.0
DP <sup>a</sup>	21.1	20.4	+0.7
Ind. Socialists	2.6	2.0	+0.6
PCL	4.1	4.4	-0.3
CSV <sup>a</sup>	35.3	36.6	-1.3
POSL <sup>b</sup>	30.3	31.8	-1.5
Others	0.5	0.7	-

Source: "Luxembourg", *Electoral Studies*, vol.3, no.3, 1984, 300.

The difference in the performances of Luxembourg's parties in the 1984 national and European elections was marginal. The Greens were only one of three parties to make gains in the European contest as they jumped from 5.2 percent of the vote in the national election to 6.2 in the European election. This gain of 1.0 percent was the largest made by any party that contested both elections.

1989

**Table 7.4- Performance of Luxembourg Parties in the 1989 European Election Compared to the 1989 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1989 EE	1989 NE	Gains or Losses
Greens <sup>c</sup>	10.4	7.4	+3.0
DP <sup>a</sup>	20.0	17.2	+2.8
CSV <sup>a</sup>	34.9	32.4	+1.5
NB	2.9	2.1	+0.8
KPL	4.7	4.4	+0.3
LSAP <sup>b</sup>	25.4	26.2	-0.8
Others	1.7	10.5	-

Source: Derek Hearl, "Luxembourg", *Electoral Studies*, vol.8, no.3, 1989, 301-302.

a- Governing parties. b- Principal opposition party. c- Aggregated GLEI/GAP total.

As Table 7.4 illustrates, the difference in the performances of Luxembourg's parties was once again marginal. However, this time around the Greens made a larger gain than they had in the 1984 contest. Combined, the Greens jumped from 7.4 percent in the national election, to 10.4 percent in the European election. This gain of 3.0 percent marked the second time that the Greens had the distinction of making the largest gains of any party in Luxembourg.

#### 1994

**Table 7.5- Performance of Luxembourg Parties in the 1994 European Election Compared to the 1994 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1994 EE	1994 NE	Gains or Losses
DP <sub>a</sub>	18.9	14.5	+4.4
CSV <sub>a</sub>	31.4	29.5	+1.9
Greens	10.9	10.1	+0.8
ADR	7.0	7.7	-0.7
KPL	1.6	2.4	-0.8
LSAP-b	24.8	30.4	-5.6
Others	5.4	5.4	-

Source: Table constructed from Derek Hearl, "Luxembourg", *Electoral Studies*, vol.13, no.4, 1994, 355 and Michael Smart, "Luxembourg: European and National Elections of 1994", *Electoral Studies*, vol.18, no.1, 1995, 195.

Amongst Luxembourg's three major parties, the DP and CSV made gains while the LSAP witnessed losses. For the Greens, while they made gains for the third consecutive election, it was marginal. Combined, the joint list of the Green Alternative and GLEI jumped from 10.1 percent in the national election to 10.9 percent.

#### 1999

In the 1999 European election, the governing CSV made gains while their coalition partners, the Democratic Party, experienced a loss. In this election, the Greens had to deal with competition from another ecologist party, the Green and Liberal Alliance, who took 1.1 percent in the national election and 1.8 percent in the European election. Regardless, the combined

Green Alternative/GLEI list jumped from 7.5 percent in the national election, to 10.7 in the European contest. This gain of 3.2 percent, was the largest gain made by any party, and marked the third such occasion in which the Greens had achieved such a feat.

**Table 7.6- Performance of Luxembourg Parties in the 1999 European Election Compared to the 1999 National Election (Gains and Losses in %)**

Party	1999 EE	1999 NE	Gains or Losses
Greens	10.7	7.5	+3.2
CSV <sub>a</sub>	31.9	30.4	+1.5
GAL	1.8	1.1	+0.7
LSAP	23.2	22.6	+0.6
ADR	20.5	22.0	-1.5
DP <sub>a</sub>	9.0	10.5	-1.5
Others	-	-	-

Source: University of Dusseldorf, *Parties and Elections in Europe*, <http://www-public.rz.uni-/~nordsview/indx.html>; EPM Magazine, *Le Magazine du Parlement et de l'actualite Europeenne*, <http://www.erm.lu/epm/id62.htm>

The results of European elections in Luxembourg indicates that the second order election model, although not as obvious as for other Green parties, is still applicable in the case of the Greens. However, the outcomes of these elections could not, as in other countries included in this study, be construed as any kind of evaluation of government performance, or as an update of a party's standing with the electorate. The fact that both national and European elections are held concurrently prevents this. As such, there is simple no possibility for perceiving the results of European elections in Luxembourg as an indicator of national trends, or as a sign of things to come. Gains made by the Greens in EP elections is best explained by the fact that because there is less at stake, voters are freed from concerns about government formation and instead, lodge expressive votes of support for the party in these contests.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

#### 8.1 Summary of Findings

What has been discovered about discrepancies in Green party voting in national and European elections? First, this study has come to the conclusion that with only a few exceptions, the second-order election model, as it applies to smaller parties, is in accordance with the performances of all Green parties included in this study. While the Greens have been the victims of insincere voting in national elections, the converse has often held true in European elections. This is because voters have used EP elections in one of two ways. First, many voters choose a party that they would not vote for in a national election because they wish to voice their displeasure with the party they normally support in a national election. Second, in European elections, voting can also become more expressive and therefore, is consistent with the central notion that less is at stake. In contrast to national elections, in which the electorate “votes with the head”, in a European election, voters are freed from concerns about government formation and will “vote with the heart”.

Due to the fact that EP elections are considered to be second-order elections, voters have demonstrated a greater tendency to vote for the Greens in these contests. The notion that EP elections are second-order in nature offers the best explanation of why smaller parties, including the Greens, generally do better in these contests. While it was not tested in this study, it would be interesting to examine whether the effects of second order elections has an impact on the electoral performance of the Greens in each country.

As well, the Greens have generally made larger gains than have other small parties. However, on several occasions, small xenophobic, or anti-EU parties have surpassed the Greens in terms of the size of the gains made in European contests. This leaves the study to suggest that anti-establishment parties, including the Greens, do particularly well because the second-order nature of EP elections gives voters a greater impetus to lodge a 'protest vote' against governing parties.

Although it is unclear how electoral rules affect Green party voting, this study has come to the conclusion that discrepancies in Green party voting often depend largely on how distinct the electoral rules are in national and European elections. In Chapter 2, it was noted that the SMP and majoritarian systems are unfavourable to smaller parties because they highly favour only the two biggest parties. On the other hand, PR often leads to a multi-party system and the development of smaller parties is encouraged under such a system. This is because the percentage of the seats a smaller party receives reflects the percentage of the vote that the party garners. Thus, it was expected that Green parties would perform better in European elections conducted under PR, than in national elections conducted under majoritarian or plurality systems. This was most evident in Great Britain, which uses SMP and France, which employs the double-ballot majoritarian system. Both of these electoral systems have proven to be extremely difficult for the Greens, and they have consistently received smaller shares of the vote than they are accorded in European elections. Closely behind was Germany, which uses MMP in national elections, but relies entirely on PR in European elections. In Belgium and Luxembourg, where PR is used in both types of elections, differences in the electoral rules has had little impact on the discrepancies in Green party voting in comparison to France, Germany and Great Britain.



Turning to the election cycle model, the study has found that Green parties made gains regardless of when EP elections have occurred in the national electoral cycle. However, what is important was that the timing of EP elections did have an impact on the size of these gains. It was noted in Chapter 2 that when an EP election is held in the early stages of the national election cycle, the probability of smaller parties making large gains is less likely than during the late stages of the cycle. This is because of the fact governing parties are often permitted a brief honeymoon period and a post-election euphoria often ensues, leaving voters little time to become disillusioned with such parties. During the mid-term or late stages however, many voters choose to vote for a smaller party. Under these conditions, the Greens would be expected to make larger gains than in the early stages. From analysing European and national electoral data, the study found that this was the case in Belgium, Germany and in Great Britain. The only exception to this case was in France, where the French Greens have made larger gains in EP elections that occurred in the early stages of the cycle. Still, this finding may be eventually prove to be anomalous. This is because the only French EP election held in the early stage was in 1989, an election where many Green parties had their best ever performance in regards to vote share percentage.

## 8.2 Directions for Future Research

There are many questions that can be raised about Green party voting in both types of elections. In reviewing the literature and producing an empirical analysis of Green party voting, this study has identified some areas requiring further research. This research comes through two different forms. First, future research may require readdressing the questions in this study and determine whether the findings from this study continue to remain valid.

As well, a number of other hypothesis can be considered to see if they are applicable to a study of Green party voting in national and European elections. To begin, will the second-order election model remain applicable to Green parties? To elaborate, as smaller parties, will the Greens continue to make gains in these elections? What about Green parties that now find themselves as coalition partners in their respective governments? Will they experience losses in EP elections as was the case in Germany in 1999, or will they continue to make gains in EP elections as a smaller party, as was the case in France in the same European election?

Second, the findings reached in this study on Green party voting and how it relates to the election cycle model, is based on an analysis of only five EP elections. Is the evidence provided in this study enough to make generalizations about Green party voting in future elections? To extend this further, will Green parties that make their largest gains in the mid, or late stages of the electoral cycle continue to do so in the future? Or, will these trends reverse themselves and leave the election cycle model non-applicable in the case of the Greens?

Three additional hypotheses warrant particular attention and could be tested with further analysis. First, although Green parties tend to do better in EP elections, asking whether the Greens do better in all regions or districts of each country would be useful. To examine this more closely, national case studies and regional election results could be used here to test this. As well, national elections could be tested against other types of second-order elections like regional, municipal and *Land* elections. Do the Greens do better in these elections compared to national elections? To examine this closer, data from these elections could be compared with the results of national elections.

A second hypothesis that merits consideration is whether or not specific EP campaign

issues and strategies are factors that enable the Greens to receive a larger share of the vote in these elections. To elaborate, because of their reluctance to accept further EU integration, is it possible to think that the Greens have been successful in tapping into anti-EU sentiment? As well, is there greater co-ordination amongst Green parties in EP elections compared to other party groups within the European Parliament? A comparative analysis of campaign co-ordination amongst the various party 'families' that comprise the EP could be conducted.

Finally, it is reasonable to suspect that lower voter turnout in EP elections has a role in explaining why the Greens win a larger percentage of the vote in European elections than in national elections. A possible hypothesis is that the Green parties receive a higher share of the vote in European elections because smaller parties are better able to mobilize their supporters than larger parties. If a greater percentage of regular Green party voters are mobilized to go to the polls, coupled with a lower voter turnout, then obviously they would comprise a larger share of those that do vote in European elections. Although there is some indication that this is indeed a fact, it has not been empirically tested in this study.

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