

# *Governmental Participation and the Organisational ‘Transformation’ of Green Parties: a Comparative Enquiry*

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## **Abstract.**

This contribution explores the possible links between the organisational ‘transformation’ of Western European Green parties, on the one hand, and the recent access to national coalition government of some of these parties in five countries, on the other hand. First of all, some comparative lessons are drawn from an examination of the “lifespan” of Green parties since their creation. Secondly, a series of hypotheses with regards to the possible causal link between organisational change and access to power are examined. Thirdly, the reverse question is addressed, that of the potential impact of governmental participation on further organisational change. Finally, although some provisional conclusions have been reached with regards to some of the potential (causal) links, complementary paths for more focused and qualitative studies are put forward.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This contribution is an exploration, a first attempt to examine the possible links between two important phenomena, two evolutions which Green parties have been subject to.

The first phenomenon has to do with the organisational changes all Green parties have experienced in the longer term, i.e. since their founding years. Indeed, this is not just a recent evolution of the last few years, as most Green parties are now about to begin their third decade of existence, in Western Europe at least. One of the conclusions of a recently completed comparative analysis of the organisational evolution of most Western European Green parties is that the latter have not only gone through processes of organisation changes: as a result of these successive changes, their organisation has genuinely been “transformed”<sup>2</sup> through the years (Rihoux 1999; Rihoux 2000).

The second phenomenon is a much more recent one: the access to executive power of Green parties at the national (or federal) level in five Western European countries: respectively in chronological order in Finland (since 1995), Italy (since 1996), France (since 1997), Germany (since 1998) and Belgium (since 1999). As interesting as they may be, other “boundary cases”, such as the Swedish *Miljöpartiet de Gröna* since 1998, will not be analysed here.

To put it short, in terms of causality, the question of the possible link (or association, or relationship; this remains to be clarified) between these two evolutions can be raised in two opposite directions. Firstly, is there some kind of “causal” relationship between the fact that Green parties have been transformed as organisations (some more than others?) and the fact that some of these parties have gained access to executive power? In other words, to put it a bit simplistically, is there a link between, on the one hand, the capacity of Green parties to change (to adapt?) the way they organise, and, on the other hand, their ability to make it to power? Secondly, does presence in power induce a further “transformation” of these parties’ organisational features? Or, to put it differently, does participation in power necessarily produce further profound organisational changes?

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<sup>1</sup> Note from the author : most of the material (updated, in some cases) used in this paper stems from a recently completed PhD research (Rihoux 1999 (unpublished)), which will be available in book format (in French) later this year (Rihoux 2000).

<sup>2</sup> For a conceptual clarification of what is meant by “transformation”, as opposed to other terms of change (“change”, “modification”, etc.), cf. Rihoux (Rihoux 2000) and hereunder.

These questions will be addressed in three stages. To start with, some comparative lessons will be drawn from the examination of the evolution of all Western European Green parties, from their creation until now. In order to do that, a “lifespan” model will be elaborated and applied. More details will be given for the six parties which are currently in coalition government, with regards to both their general evolution and the organisational changes they have experienced.

Secondly, a first set of hypotheses will be tested, with respect to the possible link between organisational change and access to governmental participation. Each one of the hypotheses will be briefly discussed and justified in theoretical and empirical terms.

Thirdly, a second set of contrasting hypotheses will be tested, with regards to the converse question, i.e. that of the possible link between participation in power and further organisational transformation.

Ultimately, relying on these different sets of results, and identifying some of the limitations of the research carried out so far, some paths for further research will be outlined.

## **1. Some comparative lessons from the description of the parties’ “lifespan”**

### ***1.1. The “lifespan model” revisited***

Any comparison of the (organisational) evolution of (Green) parties through time, be it with a descriptive or explanatory ambition, requires the use of some common comparison criterion which can be applied to all cases. The most straightforward criterion could simply be the party’s “age”, expressed for instance in the party’s number of years of existence since its creation. However, both in methodological and empirical terms, such a criterion appears quite unsatisfactory in several respects.<sup>3</sup>

A more promising path –though not devoid of difficulties and limitations- has been opened up by Pedersen (Pedersen 1982; Pedersen Müller-Rommel and Pridham 1991 97ff), who suggests to conceptualise the development of parties in terms of “lifespan”. Though he has

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, it leads one to draw a misleading analogy between a political party (i.e. a complex, collective entity, at the mesosociological level) and an individual. It also takes for granted –implicitly- that the measuring units are equivalent, i.e. that 10 years for a party A are strictly equivalent with 10 years for a party B which evolves in another context, and also with 10 years for the same party A at another stage of its development.

been inspired by the works of other political scientists, he is the first author who has attempted to apply this approach more rigorously to political parties.<sup>4</sup>

According to Pedersen, the parties' lifespan consists in a certain number of stages that are delimited by the passing of different thresholds. This model –or this metaphor- does indeed display some undeniable qualities. For instance, Pedersen's assertion that the different phases are discrete<sup>5</sup> (in the mathematical sense of the term) constitutes a clear (though not explicit) rejoinder to quite a few important contributions on the subject of party organisational change. Though Panebianco does not contend that all organisation changes *necessarily* take the form of "qualitative leaps" (v/s more incremental changes), he does indicate in his empirical research that this kind of change is predominant (e.g. (Panebianco 1988: 253-7)). Other key authors, such as Wilson (Wilson Merkl 1980; Wilson Lawson 1994) and Harmel & Janda (Harmel and Janda 1994) consider that changes necessarily take the form of qualitative leaps. Such a viewpoint can find some support in quite a few classical organisational theory studies. In his classic contribution, Crozier, for instance, demonstrates that, as organisational change necessitates some kind of "crisis", it almost necessarily takes the form of qualitative leaps (Crozier 1963; Crozier 1964). Many authors have also demonstrated that organisations are not change-prone, are not oriented towards change, i.e. that they follow a predominantly "conservative" logic. This means that change is only likely to occur when the combination or accumulation of different pressures for change will force the organisation to react somehow, and introduce some significant (not merely incremental) organisational change. This perspective is not only shared by Panebianco and Harmel & Janda<sup>6</sup> for instance, but also quite clearly by other important authors such as Duverger (Duverger 1954) and Michels (Michels 1962).

Indeed, considering the case of Green parties, this perspective does seem intuitively quite correct. For instance, if we consider (A) a Green party which has no parliamentary representation, and then (B) the same Green party a few months later, after an electoral success, with a parliamentary group, more resources, a fully professional staff, etc., one may

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<sup>4</sup> For other attempts, see e.g. (Harmel and Svasand 1993; Herzog 1987; Rawson 1970). Müller-Rommel (Müller-Rommel 1993: 31-4, 85-9) has also attempted –in a somewhat simplified way- to apply the Pedersen model to Green parties.

<sup>5</sup> N.B. : Müller-Rommel (Müller-Rommel 1993: 89) has not taken this central characteristic of the Pedersen model into account.

<sup>6</sup> The latter even use this property of organisational change to formulate one of their key hypotheses (Harmel and Janda 1994).

say that this party has clearly gone through some kind of “qualitative leap”, i.e. that the objects (A) and (B) correspond to quite significantly different organisational realities.

However, in spite of its intrinsic qualities, Pedersen’s model also raises quite a few difficulties, both in general terms and more specifically in terms of applicability to Green parties. Hence, while it appears useful to retain the logic of this model, it seems useful to refine it and to adapt it to the Green case and to the specific *organisational* dimension.

(insert Figure 1)

The first threshold is the *threshold of declaration*, i.e. “(...) *the declaration to the public about the formation of a new party*” (Pedersen 1991: 99). For practical reasons, it seems more adequate to refer to the date of the official (i.e. formal) creation of the party, most often during some kind of founding congress or assembly (T1), which often receives some media coverage.

Before the passing of this threshold, one sometimes observes quite a long period, during which some more temporary (electoral) structures may have existed. For instance, a political movement may have fielded candidates at local elections, and perhaps also at the subnational or even national levels. Between (T0) and (T1), we are hence dealing with *protoparties*, i.e. “(...) *groups that work with the aim of some day qualifying as parties (...)*” (Pedersen 1991: 99). Within the framework of this research, (T0) has been operationalised as the date of the first showing of an electoral list that declares itself as Green<sup>7</sup>, at any level.

From its formal creation onwards, from (T1) to (T2), the party exists as an autonomous organisation –most often still not well developed-, but it has not yet taken part in national elections. In order to do so, it will have to fulfil some formal obligations, such as the gathering of a certain number of signatures, etc. Hence, Pedersen defines the *threshold of authorisation* as the moment when a party is first “(...) *allowed to present candidates for office at national elections*” (Pedersen Müller-Rommel and Pridham 1991: 100). For practical reasons, too, (T2) has been defined as the date of the first national (or federal) elections in which the party takes part.

Between (T2) and (T3), though it has passed the threshold of authorisation, the party hasn’t obtained any parliamentary representation. When this happens, i.e. when the party obtains at least one parliamentary seat, it then crosses the *threshold of representation* (T3). It has been

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<sup>7</sup> Or “ecological”, “alternative”, etc.

operationalised as the date of the corresponding national (or federal) elections. Needless to say, the passage of this threshold constitutes an important event for the party considered as an organisation

Up to this point, Pedersen's model has been followed quite literally. However, the following threshold put forward by Pedersen –the *threshold of relevance*– does raise some serious problems both in terms of theory and operationalisation. The main problem is that Pedersen refers to the Sartorian definition of “relevance”, but the point is that, for Sartori, this definition tends to coincide with representation, i.e. with the preceding threshold. Indeed, quite a lot of parties which have gained access to parliamentary representation (T3) have already been displaying a certain level of “*coalition potential*” and/or “*blackmail potential*”, in the sense that their existence itself –and their parliamentary presence– « (...) *affects the tactics of party competition and (...) alters the direction of the competition.* » (Sartori 1976: 123). Hence, the validity of this additional threshold appears rather doubtful. Moreover, in some cases, parties may very well have become relevant (in the Sartorian sense) well before their access to Parliament, perhaps even from their creation onwards if they have attracted a certain level of media attention and if they have already influenced the terms of party competition in their country. This was certainly the case of the German *Grünen* before 1983, and also of the French *Les Verts* well before 1997. Furthermore, this threshold appears less important as far as the impact on the organisational structure is concerned.

Hence, the following threshold (T4) has been defined instead as a threshold which corresponds to what Panebianco defines as “*solidification*”, i.e. the relative stabilisation of the party organisation (Panebianco 1988: 49). This *threshold of institutionalisation*<sup>8</sup> could be operationalised as the first confirmation of the party's parliamentary presence, after the following national or federal elections. As it were, this threshold indicates “(...) *the passage from a 'consumable' organisation (...) to an institution*”.<sup>9</sup> It indicates that the party has reached a certain degree of organisational stability, particularly in terms of financial resources.

Finally, the *threshold of governmental participation* (T5) corresponds of course to the access to executive power. As far as Green parties are concerned, taking into account their level of electoral performance, this necessarily implies the participation in a coalition.

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<sup>8</sup> This term is not used with the same meaning that is attached to it by Panebianco. The latter uses this term rather to designate the whole process of organisational consolidation (Panebianco 1988: 53-4).

<sup>9</sup> (Selznick 1957), quoted in (Panebianco 1988: 53).

This model –this metaphor- should of course not be considered too literally. For instance, a real-life party may very well cross several thresholds at a time, e.g. if it manages to obtain parliamentary representation right after its formal creation (T1, T2 and T3 then coincide). It may also well be that a party loses its parliamentary status after an electoral defeat, or that it eventually disintegrates, in which case the thresholds are passed downwards. *A priori*, one may expect that two thresholds –be they passed upwards or downwards- are susceptible to exert a more direct impact on organisational change: the threshold of representation (T3) and the threshold of governmental participation (T5).

In spite of the fact that this model is a metaphor and that, because of this metaphoric nature, it does show some quite clear limits<sup>10</sup>, it does display quite a few qualities. As it were, it not only has some heuristic quality, it is not only congruent with the intuitive perception of organisational change as qualitative leaps (see above); it also offers some useful qualities in terms of methodology and operationalisation, in at least two respects.

On the one hand, if one operationalises the various thresholds in the same way and quite rigorously for the different parties, it allows one to compare their organisational evolution in a more rigorous and more systematic manner. In terms of comparative methodology, it is indeed much more correct to compare the organisational features and processes of organisational change of parties which stand at a comparable development stage. As it were, the lifespan model allows one to switch from an absolute time scale (in terms of years of existence of the party since its creation) to a relative time scale : at the beginning of each one of the stages (T0-T1, T1-T2, etc.), one finds the “year zero” of a certain *organisational state*. Hence, from there on, one may speak in terms of relative age, expressed in the number of years after the passage of a given threshold. For instance, with regards to organisational change, it is probably more instructive to note that, in the year 2000, the French-speaking Belgian Green party *Ecolo* has been continuously represented in Parliament since 19 years, rather than to observe that it has been created 20 years ago. This means that this party is quite “younger” in absolute terms than the British *Green Party* (founded some 27 years ago), but

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<sup>10</sup> The “*life-cycle*” metaphor has often been used (and continues to be used) in organisational studies, well beyond the case of political parties. For some more general comments see e.g. Whetten (Whetten 1987). Pedersen himself uses as a starting point an initial proposal –a quite vague one- made by Lipset & Rokkan in their famous article (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 27ff). The use of such a metaphor has been subject to a lot of criticism, not so much with respect to the intention, but more with respect to the lack of rigor in the use of the concept; see e.g. O’Rand *et.al.* (O’Rand and Krecker 1990). For a recent discussion on the potential and the limits of the resort to metaphors in organisational studies, see various contributions in Grant & Osrick (Grant and Osrick 1996).

much “older” in relative terms, as a party represented in Parliament, as the British Greens have not yet passed the threshold of representation at the national level.

On the other hand, the concept of threshold is also a rejoinder to quite a few important contributions with regards to organisational change in political parties (see above). Panebianco, for instance, suggests : « *As institutionalization begins, we can note a qualitative leap.* » (Panebianco 1988: 53). The same author also attempts to define different organisational thresholds, particularly the “survival threshold” and the “threshold of rigidity” (Panebianco 1988: 193-6).<sup>11</sup> The concept of threshold induces on the one hand the notion of quick, sudden change, of “qualitative leap”, of a form of discontinuity; on the other hand, it also induces the idea that this qualitative leap happens within the framework of a broader time process, before and after the threshold (Bartolini 1993: 151-2). In spite of the fact that it does convey a certain evolutionist bias (as a threshold A necessarily and logically precedes a threshold B which stands at a “higher” level), this concept has been used several times, particularly in some important contributions which focus more on the macrosociological level, e.g. (Deutsch 1953) and (Rokkan 1970). Finally, let us note that, in a more implicit way, the concept of threshold is also congruent with the notions of “crisis” and “critical phase” (Bartolini 1993: 151-2), i.e. with an understanding of organisational change more in terms of conjunctures of crisis and structural stress.

In practical terms, two difficulties have been encountered in the operationalisation and data collection, both with regards to the earlier stages of the party lifespan. The first problem, which is also a theoretical one, can be summarised as follows : how should one define Green parties before they actually become “real” parties, i.e. between T0 and T1 to say the least? They could probably be defined as *protoparties* as Daalder defines them : « (...) *informal groupings seeking to obtain preferential treatment for themselves and the definite interest which they [represent] (...).* » (Daalder LaPalombara and Weiner 1966: 51). From a functionalist viewpoint, this means that such entities do perform some functions of a modern political party (namely : interest aggregation and, to a lesser extent, political recruitment) but do not perform others (particularly political socialisation and political mobilisation) (Daalder LaPalombara and Weiner 1966: 51). However, it looks as though the way Daalder defines the *protoparty* refers more to the period before the rise of “modern” parties and mass democracy. Indeed, the “new social movements”, from which the Green parties largely stem, and indeed also the different more or less temporary electoral structures which have often preceded the

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<sup>11</sup> NB : The way Panebianco visualises these thresholds differs however from that of Pedersen (Pedersen 1982).

creation of Green parties, do not match this definition. For one thing, they are not necessarily informal; besides, they assuredly already play a role of political socialisation and mobilisation. The practical solution to this problem has simply been to exclude the T0-T1 period from the core of the empirical analysis.

The second problem, partly interconnected with the first one, is more an empirical one. It has to do with the phase which immediately follows the T0-T1 period, i.e. the first years (or months) of existence of the party, from (T1) to (T2) or even to (T3) if the party does not pass the representation threshold rapidly. The practical problem is that, during a “certain” period of time –probably quite variable from one party to the other- the party is likely to remain in a state of *relative* structural fluidity (Panebianco 1988: 91). For instance, the very first constitutional texts are likely to be quite incomplete, which may hamper the task of the analyst striving to identify the party’s genetic organisational features. This problem is likely to be quite acute for Green parties, specifically. One solution to this problem has been to draw a distinction between a party’s first constitutional text, on the one hand, and the first more or less *comprehensive* constitutional text, i.e. the first text which contains at least enough information on all the major formal organs.

### **1.2. A bird’s eye view of the development of Green parties in Western Europe**

In a recently completed study, the lifespans of 14 Green parties have been analysed in 12 Western European countries, considering a broad range of variables (Rihoux 1999: 253-357).<sup>12</sup>

Figure 2 presents, in a very simplified way, these 14 cases, as well as 3 additional cases<sup>13</sup> that were not included in the research. These 17 parties constitute all the 17 Green parties organised durably and still existing today at the national level in sufficiently large<sup>14</sup> Western European countries. “Green” parties have been defined as parties which, at least at one point of their development, have displayed at least to some extent most of the four characteristics of the “New Politics party” ideal-type as defined by Poguntke : New Politics ideology, participatory party organisation, unconventional political style, and predominance of New

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<sup>12</sup> This description will be updated in (Rihoux 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Respectively *De Grønne* (Denmark), *Graent Frambod* (Iceland) and *Miljøpartiet de Grønne* (Norway). The reason for dropping these cases was a practical one (too much missing information) (Rihoux 1999: 273-5).

<sup>14</sup> For methodological reasons, “micro-states” were excluded from the analysis. This implies that two potential cases of Green parties have been dropped : *Alternattiva Demokratika* (Malta) and *Freie Liste* (Liechtenstein).

Politics groups in their membership and electoral profiles (Poguntke Müller-Rommel 1989; Poguntke 1993: 36-40) They are presented (top-down) in chronological order of creation.

(insert Figure 2)

A quick glance at this figure allows one to draw two interesting observations related to the issues raised in this paper (other observations could be made, for instance in terms of particular “conjunctures” during which more Green parties were founded, but this is another matter). The first one is that there is nothing that looks like a relationship between party “age” and access to executive power, whereby the “older” Green parties would have gained more access to power. Indeed, one of the “youngest” parties (*Vihreä Liitto*) is the party with the longest national governmental record so far. The *Federazione dei Verdi* and *Les Verts* are also relatively young Green parties, and yet they show respectively the second and third longest governmental records so far. Conversely, the “oldest” party (the *Green Party of England and Wales*) has not yet been in power –actually, it hasn’t yet reached national parliamentary representation either.

The second observation is that out of the 281 years<sup>15</sup> of cumulated age (the total duration of existence) of these 17 parties, only 16 years<sup>16</sup> (or less than 6% of the time) have been spent in power. Hence, one has to bear in mind and consider seriously that the presence of Green parties in power still constitutes a quite “marginal” situation, in a more historical and comparative perspective.

### **1.3. A synthetic and selective description of the lifespans of 6 Green parties currently in power**

A detailed description of the whole development trajectory of the 6 parties that have so far gained access to executive power at the national/federal level is clearly beyond the scope of this contribution.<sup>17</sup> What shall be done here (Figures 3 to 8) is to provide a synthetic diagram for each party.

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<sup>15</sup> Full years, including the whole year during which each one of the 17 parties was founded and the whole of 1999.

<sup>16</sup> Full years, including the whole year during which each one of the 6 parties first gained access to power and the whole of 1999.

<sup>17</sup> For a more detailed description and further sources, see (Rihoux 1999: 286-336); (Rihoux 2000).

(insert Figures 3 to 8)

Each one of these figures provides basically two types of information. On the one hand, the main development thresholds (see above) which have been passed by the parties are indicated. Only four of the five thresholds are shown, as the threshold of institutionalisation has been left aside: it appears indeed somewhat more subjective –if not arbitrary-, and hence disputable. What would be the correct criterion that could allow one to draw a valid distinction between a party that has become “consolidated” and one that hasn’t? The first confirmation of the party’s parliamentary presence doesn’t seem all that relevant.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, some information is given on the evolution of the party’s organisational structure. We have deliberately chosen to concentrate on the parties’ *formal* organisational features, and particularly on *formal organisational changes*. This choice has to be justified<sup>19</sup>, as one may argue that many facets of the way (party) organisations work “in real life” go far beyond the constitutional and other formal texts. Indeed, most analysts of party organisations –and of organisations *tout court-*, from Ostrogorski and Michels to Panebianco, Kitschelt and many other contemporary authors, have striven to move away from what was perceived as a sort of positivist bias which, among other limitations, does not allow one to grasp the actual, informal, power structure. This notwithstanding, in the specific case of Green parties, there are at least six reasons which may justify to lay a priority emphasis on the *formal* organisational features.

First of all, the actual degree of (non-)correspondence between the formal rules and the actual power structure does vary from one party to the other. Panebianco suggests, in this respect, that the degree of correspondence is higher in more institutionalised parties (Panebianco 1988: 59). Though one cannot argue that Green parties are particularly strongly institutionalised (in the sense that, e.g., they do not constitute large bureaucracies), their degree of formalisation is often quite high, which does confer them a certain degree of institutionalisation. Secondly, one observes that, very often, the formal rules *are* indeed

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<sup>18</sup> This could be discussed. This threshold could perhaps be replaced by another intermediate threshold, between access to parliamentary representation and access to executive power : a threshold of “credibility” or “respectability”, i.e. the point when a Green party becomes considered by other parties (and/or begins to consider itself –there may be some time lag between the two evolutions) as a potential governing party (*regierungsfähig*). This would probably require a more qualitative assessment (Note from the author : Rihoux and Rüdiger are currently investigating this possibility within the framework of a forthcoming ECPR workshop (2001)).

<sup>19</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Rihoux (Rihoux 1999: 225-30).

abided by *à la lettre* in Green parties. This clearly has to do with the fact that a significant proportion of Green party activists are particularly touchy and well-informed when it comes to the discussion and control of the *in concreto* implementation of the formal rules inside the party. Thirdly, the (formal) constitutional rules of Green parties lie at the heart of what one could define as their initial “ideological-organisational project” : to organise differently from the established parties (Rihoux 1999: 34-41).<sup>20</sup> Fourthly, the internal debates around formal organisation are usually particularly fierce in Green parties, and hence they absorb a lot of activist energy and time. This can partly be explained by a fifth reason of interest : the fact that the modalities of formal organisation constitute a major zone of uncertainty<sup>21</sup> in most parties; furthermore, modifications in formal rules often have an important –direct or indirect- impact on other zones of uncertainty, such as party finance or membership recruitment. Finally, the way the decisions (or non-decisions) are taken inside a given Green party allows the observer to better describe and understand the shifts and dynamics of internal power relationships. To sum up, for all these reasons, the constitutional debates –and the formal organisational changes, when they are eventually decided- constitute as it were a strategic investigation site<sup>22</sup> for the understanding of the more general evolution of Green parties.

In terms of operationalisation, a *major formal organisational change* has been defined as follows : a significant and compulsory constitutional change with regards to at least one of the five key features expected to be found in “New Politics parties”. The five following features have been selected: collective leadership, rotation rules, limitations in simultaneous public and/or party office-holding, amateur leadership, and gender parity rules.<sup>23</sup> By extension, major modifications in the prerogatives and/or composition of the party’s central organs (executive, council, congress/assembly) have also been taken into consideration. The criterion used to distinguish “major” (v/s “minor”) changes has to do with the impact (v/s absence of impact, or negligible impact) of the formal change on the party’s actual power structure, on the party’s organisational order (in Panebianco’s sense (Panebianco 1988: 38-

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<sup>20</sup> See this source for reference to many other contributions on this matter.

<sup>21</sup> Or “zone of organisational unpredictability”. Indeed, in the course of the intraparty power games, the control, the manipulation and the interpretation of formal rules often constitutes a precious resource: « (...) *to establish formal rules is to mold the ‘playing field’ (...) upon which confrontations, negotiations, and power games with other organizational actors will take place.* » (Panebianco 1988: 35).

<sup>22</sup> This concept of “strategic site” is borrowed from Merton (Merton Merton, Broom, and Cottrell 1959).

9)). Let us consider, for instance, a party that features an 11-member fully amateur executive committee with 3 spokespersons. If, say, this number is reduced to 9 and the executive remains fully amateur, this has little or no impact on the party's organisational order. However, if the executive becomes fully professional, or if a position of "president" replaces the 3 spokespersons, or if the executive receives much more prerogatives, then this has an important impact on the party's internal power structure.

#### **1.4. Some first observations**

A quick glance at Figures 3 to 8 allows one to make three kinds of general observations.

A first –and important- observation is that there is no standard, typical or "paradigmatic" lifespan which would supposedly lead Green parties to executive power. Indeed, the shapes of Figures 3 to 8 show quite a lot of variation. The French *Les Verts*, for instance, have suddenly passed simultaneously both thresholds of representation and governmental participation in 1997. *Ecolo* and *Agalev*, on the other hand, in spite of a quite linear trajectory (as stable parliamentary parties since 1981) have experienced, eight years before actually joining a ruling coalition, a peculiar situation of quasi-participation in power in 1991-1992, having joined a temporary two-thirds majority in order to support Belgium's transformation into a federal state. The German story is still different, as the *Grünen* have virtually lost federal parliamentary representation between 1990 and 1994.<sup>24</sup> Looking at other variables, such as sequences of electoral successes or defeats (not shown on Figures 3 to 8), doesn't tell a clearer story, as there are no or little regularities in this respect. Even the access to executive power does not necessarily follow an electoral breakthrough : if that is clearly the case for the Belgian Greens in 1999, it is not at all the case for *Bündnis '90/Die Grünen* in 1998 and *Vihreä Liitto* in 1995.

Secondly, if one considers the number of minor and major organisational changes those parties have experienced, and also the number of thresholds they have passed, one may conclude that those parties have been transformed. "Transformation" may be defined as the passage from one form, from one state to the other. This means that it is a profound change that modifies the nature of the party itself (Rihoux 1999: 43-5). This is even more the case if

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<sup>23</sup> For more details, see Rihoux (Rihoux 1999: 230-3). These five features have been selected within a broader range of 11 features compiled in the literature, which have allowed us to define an ideal-type of a "movement party" stemming from new social movements (Rihoux 1999: 34-41).

<sup>24</sup> The Swedish case (not included here; see above) also tells a quite atypical story, not at all linear.

one compares several other facets of these parties (not shown on Figures 3 to 8) at two points in time : first during their first years of existence, and then in the last few years. One then notices that, in many respects, some deep-reaching changes have occurred : number of members, financial resources, number of professional staff, geographical coverage of local party units, political style, discourse, etc.

The third observation, still quite general at this point, is that there is a lot of variation in the *frequency* of organisational discussions and organisational changes, in two respects. On the one hand, there is a lot of variation between the parties : the *Vihreä Liitto* and the *Federazione dei Verdi* seem to stand on one extreme (low frequency) and *Les Verts* and *Bündnis '90/Die Grünen* on the other extreme (high frequency). On the other hand, there is also a lot of variation through time for each party considered individually: in some cases, it is possible to visualise alternating “warm” and “cold” phases in terms of organisational debate.

## **2. A causal link between organisational change and access to governmental participation?**

In the study from which most of the data above has been extracted, the dependent variable was formal organisational change, and a whole set of potential independent (or explanatory) variables were selected, including access to government participation (Rihoux 1999: 235 ff). The question here is raised the other way round: to what extent could organisational change, as an independent variable, explain or contribute to explain the access of Green parties to coalition government?

There are at least three ways to try and explore this question. For each one of these possible paths, a hypothesis will be formulated and then be tested empirically.

The first hypothesis can be formulated as follows :

*Hypothesis 1A : The higher the frequency of organisational changes experienced by a Green party, the more likely it is to gain access to governmental participation.*

This hypothesis is grounded on a set of more general assumptions regarding the relationship between the organisational features of a party, on the one hand, and the degree of “efficiency” of this party, on the other hand. If one accepts the prerequisites of the goal paradigm, then one may consider that the fact that a party eventually reaches executive power is a sign that this party has reached a particularly high level of “political efficiency” (which

also presupposes a certain level of “electoral efficiency”, too).<sup>25</sup> From there on, one may draw the general argument that the more flexible a party organisation, the more likely it is to react to new situations and meet new challenges, and hence to be more successful in a changing environment.

One way to test this hypothesis is simply to look at the frequency of organisational changes introduced in the various Green parties, and check if this frequency is indeed higher in the 6 Green parties which have reached executive power, as compared with the other 8 parties which haven't. Of course, for the 6 parties under consideration, one should only consider the period *before* their access to power. Quite evidently, too, one should only use as a starting point the date of the first more or less comprehensive constitutional text in each party. Table 1 summarises the data.

(insert Table 1)

Table 1 does tend to corroborate hypothesis 1A, to a certain extent, as four of the six governmental Green parties (*Les Verts*, *Bündnis '90/Die Grünen*, *Ecolo* and *Agalev*) clearly show the highest frequency of adoption of organisational changes. This being said, the two other currently governing Green parties (in Italy and Finland) do occupy a rather intermediate position, even above the average in terms of frequency of adopted organisational changes.

Up to this point, the category of “formal organisational changes” has been envisaged as a quite homogeneous one. This is however overly simplifying. In the case of Green parties, one should indeed at least draw a distinction between two types of organisational changes, which correspond to two opposite directions of change. The first type of change may be defined as organisational *adaptations*, i.e. formal organisational changes oriented more towards a “logic of electoral competition”, defined by Kitschelt as « (...) [the] adjustment of internal organization, program, and strategy to the conditions of the 'political marketplace' to maximize electoral support. » (Kitschelt 1989: 41). The second type of change, on the contrary, which may be defined as organisational *radicalisations*, is geared more towards a “logic of constituency representation”, i.e. towards “ (...) the ideologies and political practises of core supporters. » (Kitschelt 1989: 41). In other words, to put it simply,

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<sup>25</sup> One may define “political efficiency” as the capacity of a party to reach a position of power, and “electoral efficiency” as the capacity of a party to maximise its electoral support. See e.g. Deschouwer (Deschouwer 1987: 115-6).

organisational *adaptations* tend to push the organisational features of the Green party away from the “New Politics party” ideal-type, and closer to more mainstream modalities of organising political parties. Conversely, organisational *radicalisations* tend to bring the party closer to the “New Politics party” ideal-type.

It is quite clear that only organisational adaptations (and not radicalisations) are likely to improve the chances of a Green party to reach executive power, for at least two types of reasons. On the one hand, if a party follows this type of logic, it means that it is supposed to (or at least be striving to) achieve a higher level of political (i.e. electoral) “performance”. On the other hand, perhaps as importantly, organisational adaptations may be interpreted by the more established parties as indications that the Green party is coming of age, is converging towards them, and that it may thus become a potential coalition partner.

Hence, hypothesis 1A may be reformulated as follows, in a more precise (or oriented) way :

*Hypothesis 1B : The higher the frequency of organisational adaptations experienced by a Green party, the more likely it is to gain access to governmental participation.*

Table 2 summarises the data, once again for the 6 parties currently in power, as compared to the other 8 Green parties.

(insert Table 2)

Table 2 shows a quite parallel picture than that of Table 1, with some slight variations. Hence, hypothesis 1B also tends to be corroborated, to a certain extent.

Incidentally, one also notices that quite a few Green parties –including those which have eventually reached executive power- have experienced at one point or the other some organisational *radicalisations*. Indeed, this is one of the main findings of the research : very few Green parties have followed some kind of linear trajectory that would have pushed ever further away from the grass-roots democratic model. On the contrary, most of them have, at one point –not necessarily only during their first years of existence<sup>26</sup>-, introduced some organisational reforms which have actually brought them closer to the “New Politics party” ideal-type : e.g. by introducing more constraining rotation rules, by introducing gender

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<sup>26</sup> Generally speaking, organisational radicalisations do tend to be observed more during the first years of existence of the 14 parties, but there are also quite a few exceptions.

quotas, etc. (Rihoux 1999: 346-52). This type of change represents more than one quarter of all the organisational changes that have been monitored.

Finally, following a line of reasoning quite parallel to that of hypotheses 1A and 1B (1B especially), a third hypothesis may be formulated as follows :

*Hypothesis 1C : The greater its distance from the “grass-roots democratic” model, the more likely a Green party is likely gain access to governmental participation.*

The general argument could be summarised as follows (to put it somewhat simply): the more a Green party is distant from the grass-roots democratic model, the more it is geared towards a logic of “efficiency” (e.g. in terms of external efficiency, too : action within the institutions, co-operation with other parties, etc.), and the more it is perceived by the more established parties as a potentially reliable coalition partner.

Hence, the empirical question is : in terms of organisational features, right before they joined a governmental coalition, did the 6 Green parties stand further away from the “New Politics party” ideal-type than their 8 counterparts in the recent period?

Table 3 presents the data in this respect. What has been done is to track the minimal presence of binding rules with regards to the five key organisational features of the “New Politics party” ideal-type.<sup>27</sup> A Green party that would display all 5 features would receive the maximal score (5) –the closest to the ideal-type-, whereas a Green party that would display none of the 5 features would receive the minimal score (0) –the furthest away from the ideal-type.

(insert Table 3)

Table 3 shows a quite contrasted picture. In any case, hypothesis 1C cannot be clearly corroborated. Indeed, two currently governing parties (*Bündnis '90/ Die Grünen* and *Les Verts*) still displayed four out of the five key New Politics organisational features right before they passed the threshold of government participation. More importantly, in this respect, there is nothing which fundamentally distinguishes these two parties from four other parties which haven't made it to government so far (*Miljöpartiet de Gröna*, *Green Party/Comhaontas Glas*, the *Green Party of England and Wales* and *Dei Gréng*). On the other

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<sup>27</sup> This has been done relying on a whole series of indicators (17, on the whole). For more details, see (Rihoux 1999: 337-352).

hand, *Ecolo*, *Agalev* and *Vihreä Liitto* occupy a somewhat intermediate position. Finally, only the Italian *Verdi* occupy a position which is clearly congruent with hypothesis 1C. In 1996 already, this was the only Green party (among the 14 parties under consideration) which at the same time had one single president (the *Portavoce*), had abolished all binding rotation rules, had a professional executive committee and did not apply gender parity rules.

One also notices that the Italian *Verdi* is the only currently governing Green party which, between its creation and its access to power, unambiguously moved *away* from the grass-roots democratic model (score variation : -2). This is not the case for the other five parties, some of which (*Agalev* and *Vihreä Liitto*) have even moved closer to the ideal-type. This has to do with the fact that these parties, in the course of time –sometimes quite a while after their creation- have actually added some binding “New Politics” organisational rules which were not initially foreseen (see above). This diagnosis should however be moderated for the 5 parties under consideration (the German, French, Belgian and Finnish Greens) : in the course of time, especially from the 1990s onwards, all of these parties have begun to moderate these binding rules one way or the other, although they have not gone so far as to completely abolish them. For instance, in many cases, rotation rules have become more flexible, the number of persons sharing the presidential (or spokesperson) function has decreased, etc.<sup>28</sup>

### **3. A causal link between presence in power and organisational change?**

#### **3.1. Preliminary theoretical discussion**

What about the possible impact of participation in a ruling executive on the organisational features of Green parties? From here onwards, an inverted perspective is adopted, and another period in the lifespan of Green parties is examined : what happens *after* Green parties have signed a coalition agreement and have thus passed the threshold of governmental representation?

This question should ideally be treated both in a short-term and more medium-term perspective. Of course, if one considers the period until 31 December 1999, one may only rely on evidence from a relatively short period of time : from a maximum of 4 years and 8 months (for *Vihreä Liitto*) to a minimum of 6 months (for *Ecolo* and *Agalev*). Hence, any conclusions that will may be reached should be assuredly be considered with some caution.

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<sup>28</sup> For more details, see (Rihoux 1999: 337-352).

In theoretical terms, there are quite a few reasons why participation in government –a *first* participation in power, especially- should be expected to bring about organisational change in Green parties. If one considers Harmel & Janda’s model, participation in government may be considered as an *external shock*, i.e. « (...) *an external stimulus so directly related to performance considerations on a party’s ‘primary goal’ that it causes the party’s decision-makers (...) to undertake a fundamental reevaluation of the party’s effectiveness on that goal dimension.* » (Harmel and Janda 1994: 267-8). Indeed, it does place the party in a new situation, and might lead the party leadership to reconsider the party’s goal structure, and hence revise the party’s mode of organisation accordingly. On the other hand, if one considers Panebianco’s “synthetic model” of party organisational change, a first participation in power may be considered as a strong “*environmental challenge*”. This may lead the party to a particular situation of “*organizational crisis*”<sup>29</sup>, as the existing party structure is not adapted to this situation, and hence generate the need for organisational reform (Panebianco 1988: 243-5).

Indeed, a first participation in government does produce significant changes in the organisational properties of a Green party. If one considers political parties as a set of partly autonomous “circles”, a first governmental participation means the addition of a new organisational circle (the governmental circle) to the already existing circles : the parliamentary circle, the party circle (the “machine”) and the local circle.<sup>30</sup> According to Sorauf (Sorauf 1964), the key axis of conflict most often involves what he defines as the *party in government* (i.e. the governmental and parliamentary circles) versus the *party machine* (the party circle). The fact is that a participation in government induces a major organisational imbalance, as it strongly reinforces the *party in government* to the detriment of the *party machine*. In particular, some prominent party leaders are likely to shift to the ministerial positions, which further reinforces this imbalance. This almost inevitably produces conflicts, especially if the party activist base is still quite strongly ideologically committed (which is clearly the case in Green parties). To refer once again to the four-circle model, if one puts aside the local circle, one may suggest that a participation in government generates a higher degree of objective competition (competition for resources, media coverage, influence, etc.) between the parliamentary circle, the governmental circle and the

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<sup>29</sup> N.B. : according to Panebianco, the term “crisis” is not necessarily associated with a negative situation (e.g. following a major electoral defeat). It may also be the result of a quick positive evolution (e.g. a sudden increase in size).

party circle. This leaves the room open for some proposals of organisational reform, especially from those who wish to obtain shifts in their favour in this new organisational “power map”.

Furthermore, governmental participation can be conceived as a particularly positive “performance” of the party organisation. In these circumstances, Appleton & Ward suggest that “ (...) *parties may also respond to unexpectedly positive performance by seeking [organisational] innovation.* » (Appleton and Ward 13 January 1995-15 January 1995: 5). They actually build this proposal using a suggestion made by Cooke (in (Zaltman, Duncan, and Holbeck 1973: 17)) : organisations which suddenly benefit from more room for manoeuvre in terms of resources (organisational “*slack*”) are more likely to introduce innovations, e.g. to introduce an organisational reform. Appleton & Ward (Appleton and Ward 1994a; Appleton and Ward Shea and Green 1994) have indeed found some supporting empirical evidence, analysing the evolution of U.S. state parties after major electoral victories. The question is: can such a model also be applied to Green parties once they have reached power, i.e. does this new situation indeed generate some organisational “slack”?

This being said, there are also quite a few arguments that may lead one to expect that a Green party that reaches governmental power is *not* likely to proceed to further formal organisational reforms. Firstly, in a neo-machiavellian perspective<sup>31</sup>, one may consider that organisational reforms are most often the result of the deliberate intention of party leaders (an/or of the most influential party activists) to consolidate their power status inside the party. If one accepts this perspective, then this implies that, once the party leaders have achieved their ultimate goal –reach governmental status and obtain a ministerial position, then there is no need for them to push for significant organisational changes anymore.

Secondly, on the basis of his empirical analysis (of the Italian Christian Democrats especially), Panebianco concludes that « *substantial [organizational] transformation can only take place if the party finds itself in opposition for a long period of time.* » (Panebianco 1988: 129). From there on, one could suggest that, when Green parties are in government, further organisational changes are quite likely to be “frozen”, as the party leaders (and the most dedicated activists, too) are too busy trying to cope with the day-to-day race of participation in power, legislative work, crisis management, etc. In this perspective, one may consider frequent organisational reforms and debates as a kind of luxury (another kind of

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<sup>30</sup> This distinction is put forward by Charlot (Charlot 1975: 52). Some rather similar proposals (using a three-unit model) are made by Katz & Mair (Katz and Mair 1990), Key (Key 1964) and Sorauf (Sorauf 1964).

“slack”, as it were) which only idle opposition parties could afford, as the discussion and implementation of such reforms consume so much of the party’s leadership, activist and staff energy.

Hence, from this discussion, two competing hypotheses may be formulated :

*Hypothesis 2A : participation in executive power is a strong incentive for further organisational adaptation*<sup>32</sup>.

*Hypothesis 2B : participation in executive power precludes further organisational adaptation.*

### **3.2. Some preliminary observations**

Let us once again repeat that the time period for the empirical test of hypotheses 2A and 2B is still quite narrow; hence the results should be considered rather as some preliminary indications.

There are at least two ways of confronting the data with these hypotheses. The first one is to consider the results of the successive QCA (*Qualitative Comparative Analysis*)<sup>33</sup> analyses that have been performed in a recent study (Rihoux 1999). To put it short, what has been done is to consider organisational change (or, more precisely, *major formal organisational changes*; see above) in 14 Western European Green parties as a dependent variable, and to confront it with 13 potential explanatory variables (“causal conditions”, in QCA terminology). The entry in government was one of these 13 variables, along with other “external” and “internal” variables. A quite similar variable, in accordance with the lifespan model, was the entry in (and exit of) Parliament. For each occurrence of major organisational change (presence/absence), what has been done is to systematically look at the presence/absence of these 13 conditions during a “certain” period<sup>34</sup> before this change. The period under consideration only runs until 31 December 1998, so this is an additional

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<sup>31</sup> Such a perspective is clearly followed by Panebianco.

<sup>32</sup> It is quite evident that further organisational changes are more likely to take the form of organisational *adaptations* (see above).

<sup>33</sup> For a general introduction to this approach, see Ragin (Ragin 1987). See Rihoux (Rihoux 1999) for a detailed discussion and many more bibliographical sources on QCA as an approach, a method, and a set of particular techniques.

<sup>34</sup> Several variants have been tested. Eventually, a two-year period before each major organisational change was chosen.

limitation. Eventually, a complete QCA analysis was performed using only major organisational *adaptations* as the dependent variable.

The key point to be made here is that, at the end of the QCA analysis, entry in government does *not* come out in any of the “key causal conjunctures” explaining organisational adaptation. Hence, this variable does not (or not yet) constitute a key causal condition in the explanation of organisational change in Green parties. Another key result –perhaps as importantly- is that entry in (and exit from) Parliament- does *not* appear either as a key causal condition *per se*. This is an important result because access to (and exit from) parliamentary representation is supposed to constitute an important organisational “shock” for a young party organisation. One may even suggest that is a stronger shock than access to governmental participation, for at least two reasons. On the one hand, a party that gains access to government has usually already become a (relatively) quite “established” party, which is not the case for a newcomer in Parliament. On the other hand, a first entry in Parliament is likely to have a stronger impact –in relative terms- in terms of increase of resources (e.g. finance, staff) than a first entry in government for a stable parliamentary party. The bottom line of these QCA analyses is that there is a stronger argument in favour of hypothesis 2B.

The second confrontation with the data can be made by looking at Figures 3 to 8. On the one hand, if one excludes *Ecolo* and *Agalev* from the analysis (too recently in government), one notices that, on the whole, the frequency of minor and major organisational changes is certainly *not* higher (it appears quite lower, in most cases) *after* the entry in government than it used to be *before*. This is yet an argument in favour of hypothesis 2B. This is particularly clear in the French case, where no significant formal organisational change has been introduced since the participation in the *Gauche Plurielle* coalition in 1997. In *Vihreä Liitto*, only one minor organisational change has been introduced during almost five years of governmental participation (true enough, this party already displayed a low frequency of organisational discussions and change *before* 1995 as well) : the chairman of the *Green Commission* (the party council) will be elected by the party Congress, and not anymore by the council itself.

Conversely, two cases of more major formal organisational changes have been recorded in governing Green parties. On the one hand, the German *Bündnis '90/ Die Grünen* have introduced an organisational reform less than two months after their approval of the *Rot-Grün* federal coalition at the Bonn congress (23-24 October 1998). During this participation congress, the Greens had already decided “not to decide” with respect to the simultaneous holding of ministerial and federal MP positions, and rejected a proposal to apply a rigid

gender quota for the ministerial positions. At the Leipzig congress (12/13 December 1998), along with some technical adjustments, three important modifications were made. Firstly, a new organ was created : the *Parteirat*, which gathers representatives of federal and regional ministers, federal and regional MPs and representatives of the party's *Basis*. Secondly, the size of the party executive (*Bundesvorstand*) was strongly decreased, from 9 to 5 : the two spokespersons (male/female), the political secretary (*Politische GeschäftsführerIn*), the treasurer and a new position : the “spokeswoman for women’s affairs” (*Frauenpolitischen Sprecherin*). Thirdly, it was decided that, in all federal party organs, the percentage of representatives from the former GDR *Länder* should at least be equal to the percentage of these *Länder*'s population in the FRG. One has to note that two important proposals were rejected. Had they been accepted, the Greens would have almost completely obliterated their *basisdemokratisch* heritage. On the one hand, they refused a reform proposal that would have given a majority to ministers and MPs in the *Parteirat*, by keeping a numeric advantage for the *Basis* (a maximum of 12 ministers and MPs out of 25). On the other hand, in more symbolic terms (but symbols do matter in politics!), they refused to name the two spokespersons “Presiding speakers” (*Vorsitzende SprecherInnen*) and to call the federal delegates' conference a “party congress” (*Parteitag*). All things considered, the reforms that were decided in late 1998 were still “half-reforms”, as further reforms are on the agenda for the year 2000. As far as the *Federazione dei Verdi* is concerned, a significant reform was introduced at the Fiuggi party congress (*Assemblea Federale*) on 17-19 April 1998, i.e. about two years after the entry in the first Prodi *L'Ulivo* (olive tree) government. Along with quite a few significant changes, two main modifications were introduced. On the one hand, a new organ, the political office (*Ufficio Politico*), shall replace the existing executive committee (*Coordinamento Federale*). It will become a broader organ in terms of size<sup>35</sup>. On the other hand, the party council's (*Consiglio Federale*) has received more prerogatives, including an important role in the evaluation and discussion of participation in government and in pre-election alliance strategy.

Hence, considering these six cases (in chronological order of access to power : *Vihreä Liitto*, *Federazione dei Verdi*, *Les Verts*, *Bündnis '90/ Die Grünen*, *Ecolo* and *Agalev*), and keeping in mind the limitations in the data, hypothesis 2A can at least be rejected, as no systematic

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<sup>35</sup> It will consist of the spokesperson (the *Portavoce*, i.e. the virtual party “president”), the treasurer, 10 members elected by the party congress (*Assemblea Federale*), the president and vice-president of the party council (*Consiglio Federale*) and the heads of the parliamentary groups at the national (lower and upper House) and European levels.

evidence has been found that participation in executive power automatically –or at least more often, or more strongly than before governmental participation- translates into further organisational adaptation.

## **Some preliminary conclusions and further suggestions for research**

The purpose of this contribution was to try and confront two important evolutions of Green parties, their organisational transformation and the recent access of some of them to power, and to determine whether or not some causal links between those evolutions can be detected.

Before examining this question, the description of the “lifespan” of the six Green parties currently in power at the national level has shown, among other things that there isn’t one and only standard development trajectory which all parties have followed.

As far as the relationship between organisational change –organisational *adaptation*, more precisely- and eventual access to power is concerned, some indications that a causal link may exist have been found. However, there is nothing which looks like a deterministic causal link between the two. If there is a link, it appears more complex –most probably mediated by other variables- and also more or less substantial from one party to the other. In any case, it is impossible to discriminate the six Green parties currently in power from their counterparts, on the sole basis of their formal organisational characteristics.

Regarding the opposite possible relationship –the impact of participation in government on further organisational change, on the basis of the (still narrow) evidence available of this point, one once again finds quite a lot of diversity. All things considered, one may conclude that it is impossible to demonstrate, at this point, that governmental participation acts as a catalyst of further organisational change, quite the contrary.

All things considered, although some links between the two phenomena of organisational change and access to coalition government have indeed been discovered, there does not seem to be any systematic link, and even less a strong and unambiguous causal link. This is not so surprising, for at least two reasons. On the one hand, it is quite clear that so many other potential factors may explain organisational change in a Green party, and indeed quite many other potential factors may also account for the access to power of a specific Green party. Many of these other factors, unlike the internal organisational features, lie beyond the span of control of Green party leaders and activists. For instance, one should of course take into consideration the perceptions, reactions, strategies and initiatives of other more established parties *vis-à-vis* the Greens. On the other hand, one has to refrain from considering *a priori* that Green party leaders and core activists (and the leaders of other parties) always follow some kind a rational logic, i.e. that they have a clear perception of problems, correct

information at their disposal, a lucid ordering of goals, a well-defined strategy, etc. This is to say that, for instance, if a specific Green party joins a coalition and if, as a result of this new situation, the party's organisational features become inadequate, it does not imply that a "rational" organisational adaptation will rapidly follow.

To push the research further, it is quite clear that one should also consider a broader array of organisational changes. So far, this research has indeed only concentrated (deliberately so) on a quite narrow set of organisational changes, which have been defined as "formal organisational changes", and then focusing even more precisely on the "major" changes of this kind, i.e. those which have had a significant impact on the party's power structure. In the process, quite a few other interesting aspects of organisational change have been overlooked : other formal organisational changes that do not modify the party's power structure, other formal changes that do not pertain to the national/federal constitutional texts but that may also be relevant, and a whole set of other significant informal changes. One could name at least four other potentially interesting changes: modifications in the party's founding charter, the creation of ancillary organisations (especially –but not only- a youth organisation), modifications in terms of political "style" (acceptance of personal electoral campaigning, resort to survey or communication expertise, etc.), modifications in the members' obligations, etc.<sup>36</sup> There are also some changes of organisational "practises" induced by a newly acquired governmental status, which are not directly –or at least not immediately- translated into party statutes. For instance, a party may be lead to reorganise its internal flow of communication, or create informal organs, such as the weekly "MPM" (*Ministres, Parlementaires, Mouvement*) meeting which has been set up inside *Ecolo* since this party's access to power in mid-1999. These are of course all interesting aspects which also contribute to the "transformation" of Green parties in the course of time, and which would necessitate some further research.

Finally, beyond –or rather in combination with- the broader comparative perspective which has been (deliberately) adopted so far, one should also have a closer look at the concrete mechanics of the "black box" of organisational changes, which involve among other things leadership games, factionalism, small-group dynamics, power strategies and counter-strategies, etc. In the process, one should evidently address an important question which has

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<sup>36</sup> The author wishes to thank several participants in the ECPR workshop on "Challenges to established party organisation? Theory and practice of Green and Alternative Left party organisation" (Warwick, UK, March 1998), who have suggested some of these aspects. For a preliminary discussion, see Rihoux (Rihoux 1999: 233-4).

been correctly suggested by Deschouwer (Deschouwer 1992), but which has so far not been treated empirically in a satisfactory way : what is it that makes party leaders perceive (or fail to perceive) an organisational problem, and what is it that makes party leaders launch (or fail to launch) a process of organisational reform? To address this question, and many others, there is quite a lot of room open for some more qualitative case studies. Only the confrontation of a sufficient number of such qualitative analyses could –possibly- enable one to extract some consistent conclusions which could be applied to Green parties more generally.

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**Figure 1 : The lifespan model applied to organisational change (Rihoux 1999)**

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**Figure 2 : A chronological bird's eye view of the evolution of national Green parties in Western Europe (founding, name changes and participation in power)**

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**Legend of Figures 3 to 8**

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**Figure 3 : lifespan and organisational change in *Bündnis '90/Die Grünen* (Germany)**

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**Figure 4 : lifespan and organisational change in *Ecolo* (Belgium, French-speaking)**

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**Figure 5 : lifespan and organisational change in *Agalev* (Belgium, Dutch-speaking)**

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**Figure 6 : lifespan and organisational change in *Les Verts* (France)**

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**Figure 7 : lifespan and organisational change in *Federazione dei Verdi* (Italy)**

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**Figure 8 : lifespan and organisational change in *Vihreä Liitto* (Finland)**

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**Table 1 : Frequency of organisational changes in 14 Western European Green parties**

Party (until 31 Dec. 1998, unless stated otherwise)	Minor org. changes (failure)	Minor org. changes (adopted)	MAJOR org. changes (failure)	MAJOR org. changes (adopted)	Number of years since first com-plete party constituti on	Frequenc y of org. changes discussed (years)	Frequenc y of org changes <u>adopted</u> (years)
<i>Les Verts</i> ( <u>until early 1997</u> )	0	13	1	1	12	0,80	0,86
<i>Bündnis '90/ Die Grünen</i> ( <u>until mid-1998</u> )	0	12	3	2	18	1,05	1,29
<i>Ecolo</i> ( <u>until mid-1999</u> )	0	11	2	2	19	1,26	1,46
<i>Agalev</i> ( <u>until mid-1999</u> )	0	5	0	2	13	1,86	1,86
<i>Parti Ecologiste Suisse</i>	0	5	0	3	16	2,00	2,00
<i>Miljöpartiet de Gröna</i>	1	7	1	1	17	1,70	2,13
<i>Die Grünen (Austria)</i>	0	3	2	2	12	1,71	2,40

<i>Vihreä Liitto (until early 1995)</i>	0	2	0	1	8	2,67	2,67
<i>Federazione dei Verdi (until early 1996)</i>	0	1	0	2	9	3,00	3,00
<i>De Groenen</i>	0	2	2	2	15	2,50	3,75
<i>GroenLinks</i>	0	2	1	0	8	2,67	4,00
<i>Green Party / Comhaontas Glas</i>	0	3	2	1	16	2,67	4,00
<i>The Green Party of England and Wales</i>	1	3	5	2	22	2,00	4,40
<i>Dei Gréng (Luxembourg)</i>	0	1	0	2	16	5,33	5,33
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>1,76</b>	<b>2,16</b>

**Table 2 : Frequency of organisational adaptations in 14 Western European Green parties**

<b>Party</b> <i>(until 31 Dec. 1998, unless stated otherwise)</i>	<b>Organisational adaptations (major &amp; minor) (// logic of electoral competition)</b>	<b>(Organisational radicalisations (major &amp; minor) (// logic of constituency representation))</b>	<b>Number of years since first complete party constitution</b>	<b>Frequency of organisational adaptations (years)</b>
<i>Les Verts (until early 1997)</i>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1,00</b>
<i>Bündnis '90/ Die Grünen (until mid-1998)</i>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1,63</b>
<i>Ecolo (until mid-1999)</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2,11</b>
<i>Die Grünen (Austria)</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2,40</b>
<i>Agalev (until mid-1999)</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2,60</b>
<i>Miljöpartiet de Gröna</i>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2,83</b>
<i>Federazione dei Verdi</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3,00</b>

<i>(until early 1996)</i>								
<i>De Groenen</i>	4		0		15		3,75	
<i>Vihreä Liitto (until early 1995)</i>	2		1		8		4,00	
<i>GroenLinks</i>	2		0		8		4,00	
<i>Green Party / Comhaontas Glas</i>	4		0		16		4,00	
<i>Dei Gréng (Luxembourg)</i>	3		0		16		5,33	
<i>Parti Ecologiste Suisse</i>	2		6		16		8,00	
<i>The Green Party of England and Wales</i>	2		3		22		11,00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>201</b>		<b>2,87 (average)</b>	

Table 3 : current organisational features (presence/absence of key ‘New Politics’ features) in 14 Western European Green parties

Cases	De Groenen (NETH)	Bundnis 90/ Die Grünen (GER)	Les Verts (FRA)	Miljöpartiet de Gröna (SWE)	Comhaontas Glas (IRE)	Green Party (GB)	Dei Gréng (LUX)	Ecolo (BEL)	Agalev (B)	Vihreä Liitto (FIN)	Parti Ecol. Suisse (SWI)	Die Grünen (AUS)	Groen-Links (NETH)	Feder. dei Verdi (ITA)
Organisational features (on 31 Dec. 1998, unless stated otherwise)		(mid-1998)	(early 1997)					(early 1999)	(early 1999)	(early 1995)				(early 1996)
<b>1. Collective leadership :</b> collective nature of the presidential function														
<b>2. Rotation :</b> presence of binding rules (internal and/or internal mandates)														

