

DEVELOPMENT AND BASIC FEATURES OF GREEN IDEOLOGY AND GREEN POLITICAL PARTIES IN EUROPE

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Abstract

Since the 1980s of the XX century, there is an intense development of the green ideology. Speaking of the protection and survival of planet Earth, the green ideology becomes more and more interesting for the voters in periods of excessive damage to the environment. The rebellion against the process of industrialization and consumerism, as well as the promotion of ecological ethics, eco-centrism, and a holistic approach to nature, are becoming the basic ideological features of green ideology. This popularization of green ideology at the same time was followed by the emergence and development of green political parties. For now, green ideology and green political parties are becoming attractive in developed democracies. This contributes that the green political parties in these countries become part of the government coalitions by winning between 5 and 20 percent of the votes in the elections. Strong green political parties can be noticed in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Ireland, and Croatia. In the last decade, such political parties have often appeared to be an interesting option for the citizens who are disappointed with the traditional political parties and scared by the rise of the radical right. In addition, it is to be expected that the environmental problems will become more visible, thus this ideology will become more attractive. Therefore, the conclusion that the green ideology has managed to leave an initial mark for the time being and that it is expected to take a more important role on the political scene in the future is the best description of the current state of this ideology.

Keywords: *politics, political system, ideology, green ideology, elections, political parties, green political parties, greens.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The modern world today is obsessed with data on ozone depletion, uncontrolled deforestation, surges of plastics in the oceans, melting of the ice from the North Pole, extinction of various species, and rising global temperatures, almost on daily basis. It would not be an exaggeration to say that ecology is now a crucial part of the global debate.¹ The topics related to the protection and survival of planet Earth, and thus the survival of humanity, in the last few decades, are present in the national as well as the international discourse through various governmental and non-governmental organizations, social movements, and political parties. Such a reality quite logically

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¹ Andrew Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies – Third Edition* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 198.

caused the emergence of a green ideology as a protest against the excessive damage of the environment (nature). However, although the green ideology represents a modern category, still, like other ideologies, this green ideology traces its roots far back in the past. In this regard, the members of the green ideology go back as far as 10 000 years, to the Stone Age (Neolithic) and point out that people in the tribal community, at that time, are the first political ecologists because they took from nature what was necessary to satisfy their vital needs.² Thus, the members of the green ideology point out that people had such an approach towards nature until the XIX century, i.e. until the emergence of the period of industrialization. Throughout the process of industrialization itself, a process that began in the XIX century begins systematic exploitation of the natural resources of the planet Earth. Therefore, as early as the XIX century, there some theorists appeared, who wrote about the supposed unity between humanity and nature which industrialization had broken down.³ According to that, for more than 200 years man has been using and exploiting nature for his benefit, but it seems that this situation becomes astonishing after 1945. This made the environmental problems more intensely visible to humanity after the 1970s of the XX century, which in turn contributed to the more systematic creation of a green ideology as a coherent set of ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and values. Herewith, we should immediately mention that there is great diversity within the green ideology. In the framework of this ideology, we can meet eco-capitalists, eco-liberals, eco-conservatives, eco-socialists, eco-anarchists and eco-feminists. There is a different culprit for the destruction of nature in all of them. Additionally, within the green ideology, some ecologists have a completely different view on solving environmental problems (shallow ecologists vs. deep ecologists). Thus, there are moderate forces (shallow ecologists), who try to achieve the development of green ideology by adapting the capitalist system, but there are also radical forces (deep ecologists) who speak about building a post-industrial society where people will live in small, rural communities relying on craft skills. Such diversity contributes to the emergence of theorists who question whether green ideology is an ideology at all. However, political science is dominated by the position that diversity exists in other ideologies and that green ideology represents a complex but broadly coherent political landscape.⁴

II. BASIC ELEMENTS OF GREEN IDEOLOGY

Such a coherent set of ideas, attitudes, and values, and beliefs in green ideology can be noticed in terms of several things. Thus, the green ideology is strongly against the process of industrialization, consumerism, anthropocentrism and advocates the creation of environmental ethics, holistic approach and acceptance of the positions of ecocentrism. In that direction, let's have a detailed view of the basic elements of green ideology.

1. Opponents of industrialization

First of all, we should keep in mind that the green ideology is a great opponent of industrialization. The term industrialization for the green ideology represents adherence to the belief that human

² Andrew Dobson, "Ecologism," In *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, ed. Roger Eatwell and Anthony Wright (London: Pinter Publishers, 1993), 216.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Mathew Humphrey, "Green Ideology," In *The Oxford Handbook Of Political Ideologies*, ed. Michael Freeden, Lyman T. Sargent and Marc Stears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 549.

needs can only be met through permanent expansion of the process of production and consumption – regardless of the damage done to the planet.⁵ Meeting human needs is related to economic growth, which in turn is provided by nature exploitation. Thus, the system ensures higher GDP without worrying about the fate of the environment. Despite the fact that such a functioning would lead to the destruction of the environment, further, the green ideology shows that such a system is unsustainable. In a world where resources, such as non-renewable fuels, are finite, the green ideology is asking how can growth be infinite.⁶ The belief in steady economic growth in a state when natural resources are limited leads to imminent collapse. Therefore, the fact that economic growth depends on (non)renewable natural resources shows that one-day such resources will be completely depleted, and the economic system, unable to replace them, will end up in chaos. That is why green ideology speaks about building a system based on the principles of sustainability. According to green ideology, sustainability sets clear limits on human ambitions and material dreams because it requires that production does as little damage as possible to the fragile global ecosystem.⁷ Practically, the green ideology speaks of economic development that will carefully use non-renewable resources, and provide nature with enough space to renew renewable resources. This means that the world will have to learn to live with limited economic development. Such limited economic growth will be a consequence of the changes to the tax system, penalizing and discouraging pollution and by reducing the use of finite resources.⁸ This does not mean an absence of economic growth, but rather that it will no longer be sought by maximizing it at the cost of nature. Simply put, according the green ideology economic growth has to be created to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations.⁹

2. Opponents of consumerism

Still, such a sustainable system cannot be built in a world dominated by brutal consumerism. Green ideology is therefore a great critic of materialism and consumerism. According to the green ideology, as modern advertising and marketing techniques tend to create ever-greater material desires, they leave consumers in a constant state of dissatisfaction because, however much they acquire and consume, they always want more.¹⁰ Therefore, in order to meet the growing needs of the people, in a state of limited resources, nature suffers. That is why the green ideology speaks of abandoning the world of consumerism and leading a simple life which requires respect for the ecosphere.¹¹ A simple life in which spirituality will be more important than material life. Due to this, green ideology often refers to the wisdom of the Eastern civilizations' religions (Buddhism, Hinduism).

3. Supporters of ecological ethics

Given the above, it should be emphasized that green ideology calls for a change in individuals' lifestyles. Individuals should develop ecological ethics in their actions. Green ideology is dominated by the fact that individuals, through their personal behaviour, starting from what kind

⁵ Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies – Third Edition*, 219.

⁶ Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies – Third Edition*, 220.

⁷ Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction – Sixth Edition* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 400.

⁸ Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction – Sixth Edition*, 401.

⁹ Humphrey, "Green Ideology," 554.

¹⁰ Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction – Sixth Edition*, 404.

¹¹ Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies – Third Edition*, 216.

of paper they are using, whether they recycle, what kind of transport they are using, etc., actually influence the global trends and increase or decrease the ecological crisis for future generations.¹² Additionally, such ethics should be followed with empathy towards animals. For the green ideology, there is no doubt that animals also feel pain and suffering. Accordingly, members of the green ideology speak about animal rights through which people should protect other living beings on planet Earth.

4. Supporters of the holistic approach

The protection of other living beings, as well as nature in general, is a very important element within the green ideology because it is associated with a holistic approach. Namely, the green ideology criticizes the enlightenment thought, believing that based on it, people assumed the legitimacy of human beings conquering or dominating nature, seeing the natural world and the resources of the environment as passive objects to be used by humanity for its own purpose.¹³ Additionally, using science, people begin to see nature as a machine implying that, like any other machine, it can be tinkered with, repaired, improved on or even replaced.¹⁴ Members of the green ideology consider such arrogant attitudes of people to be dangerous for the survival of nature. They suggest that it is impossible for humans to fully understand the complexity, uniqueness, and enduring evolution of nature.¹⁵ Therefore, any underestimation of the power of nature and endangering its natural balance can have enormous consequences for humanity. Moreover, people should become aware and understand the nature as the interdependence or harmony of all.¹⁶ The green ideology often mentions Aldo Leopold's quote that the whole spectrum of living matter on Earth, from whales to viruses, from oaks to algae, is a single living organism. Such an organism is interconnected and the destruction of one part of it leaves consequences on the other parts of the organism. The extinction of one animal species affects the survival of other animal species. That is why the green ideology constantly says that nature should be seen as a whole, not partially.

5. Supporters of eco-centrism

This leads us to the last element of the green ideology. It is about ecocentrism. Green ideology is a great critic of the positions of anthropocentrism according to which human needs and interests are of overriding moral and philosophical importance and natural world is simply a resource available to satisfy human needs.¹⁷ According to that, modern man does not experience himself as a part of nature but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it.¹⁸ Quite the opposite, the green ideology takes the positions of eco-centrism according to which the human species acquires no priority over other forms of life.¹⁹ Thus man is only a small part of the whole system of nature, which is neither more nor less important than the other parts of nature. As such, the

¹² Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies – Third Edition*, 199.

¹³ John Schwarzmantel, *Ideology and Politics* (London: SAGE, 2008), 156

¹⁴ Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction – Sixth Edition*, 394.

¹⁵ James Meadowcroft, "Politické perspektive zelenih u osvjetljenje dvadesetprvog stoljeća," In *Politické Ideologije: Novi Prikaz*, ed. Michael Freeden (Zagreb: Algoritam, 2006), 252.

¹⁶ Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 527.

¹⁷ Andrew Heywood, *Politics – Fourth Edition* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 50.

¹⁸ Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, 540.

¹⁹ Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, 533.

green ideology calls for its return to nature (Back to Nature). Return to nature, but also care for nature because by caring for the survival of nature, man actually cares for the survival of humanity.

6. Other elements of green ideology

In addition to such views of green ideology directly related to environmental issues, green ideology is increasingly developing its views on other political issues. Thus, green ideology often speaks against social and economic inequality, centralization and bureaucratization, erosion of local self-government, militarism, and oppression of women.²⁰ Still, such views are much more secondary in comparison to the views on environmental issues. Environmental issues are based on a green ideology. That is why such questions are a symbol of green ideology.

III. GREEN IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Given these views, often in science, we come across the positions that green ideology is most relevant in the developed Western European societies, i.e. in societies where individuals enjoy the time, education and financial security to be able to be alarmed about the environment.²¹ And indeed the successes of political parties associated with green ideology come from these countries. Most often, political parties associated with the green ideology are not the biggest political options but still manage to win between 5 and 15% of the total number of votes. Such election results often contribute to green political parties being part of government coalitions. Additionally, in certain countries, candidates of green political parties managed to win presidential elections and become heads of state, and we can see examples of prime ministers of countries from the green parties. All this tells us that green political parties manage to establish themselves and be part of the political system and institutions of many European countries, since the 1970s of the XX century. Moreover, it can be easily noticed that within the last decade, green political parties have been facing an increase in their ratings in European countries. The fact that climate change problems are becoming evident probably plays a big role in the rise of green political parties. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether such a rise of the green political parties will continue in the coming years, and also to see how their rise will impact the position of the traditional political parties about environmental issues.

Having that in mind, let us have a detailed view of the development of the green parties in these European countries.

1. Green parties in Western Europe

Speaking about active and successful green political parties, we mostly talk about the green political parties originating from Western Europe. This is because within Western Europe active green political parties can be seen in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Green parties can be located in both France and the United Kingdom, but still, in these countries, the application of the majority electoral model for parliamentary elections contributes to the marginalization of these parties. Contrary to them, in other Western European countries, green parties manage to win a solid number of votes and thus become part of the

²⁰ Meadowcroft, "Političke perspektive zelenih u osvit dvadesetprvog stoljeća," 251.

²¹ Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies – Third Edition*, 204.

representative bodies. Therefore, let us take a closer look at the development of the Green parties in this part of Europe.

1.1 Green parties in Germany

Today, the most successful green party in Germany is Alliance 90/The Greens. It is a party that has its beginnings in the 1970s of the XX century in Western Germany. Namely, during the 1970s of the XX century, a group of eco-activists dissatisfied with the attitude of the political parties towards environmental issues decided to establish green social movements and groups. As a result, in the later 1970s of the XX century, individuals from such movements and groups were able to achieve some success in local elections in Western Germany. Driven by such successes, such movements and groups quickly grew into a political party intending to run in the European Parliament elections and the German Bundestag elections. Thus, the newly founded Green Party in Western Germany under the name The Greens (Die Grunen) began running in the 1980 federal elections. In the first election, this political party failed to enter the German Bundestag. However, such a reality was changed as early as 1983. At these elections, the party The Greens (Die Grunen) won 5.6% of the votes, and that number of votes brought them 28 seats in the Bundestag. This success of the Greens in the 1983 elections paved the way for their further growth in the 1987 elections. Namely, at these elections, The Greens (Die Grunen) managed to increase the number of won votes (8.3%) and to win 42 parliamentary seats. The success of the Greens in Western Germany contributed to the foundation of the Green Party in Eastern Germany during the fall of communism. In late 1989, such a green party was founded in Eastern Germany and thus began the preparations for the first parliamentary elections in a united Germany in 1990. Interestingly, the green party from Western Germany and the green party from Eastern Germany decided to run on their own and not to unite in the first parliamentary elections in united Germany. In fact, the Greens did not share the idea of unification and were afraid of a new Germany as a powerful nation-centred player in Europe.²² Practically, the green parties in Germany did not take advantage of the moment of unification of Germany and in the first elections in 1990 had poor election results. The Greens (Die Grunen) failed to win a single seat, while the green party from Eastern Germany had better results and won 8 seats in the new Bundestag. This electoral collapse forced the Green Party to change strategy and realize that being an all-German party would be pivotal for survival.²³ Such unification of the green parties in Germany took place in 1993. The unification of the green parties can also be seen in the name of the green party of Germany (B90 / The Grunen). What we can also notice is the fact that after the unification, the German Green Party managed to secure a place in every composition of the German Bundestag. That was the case in 1994 (7,3% - 49 MPs), in 1998 (6,7% - 47 MPs), in 2002 (8,6 % - 56 MPs), in 2005 (8,1% - 52 MPs), in 2009 (10,7%- 69 MPs), in 2013 (8,4 % - 64 MPs), in 2017 (8,9% - 67 MPs) and in 2021 (14,8 % - 118 MPs).²⁴ Such electoral results often made the Green Party to be needed to form a government. Thus, in 1998, immediately after the parliamentary elections in Germany, a government coalition between SDP and the Green Party was formed. It is a coalition known as the Red-Green Project that managed to stay in power until 2005. This is the period when the Green Party held important ministerial positions within the German government, and their candidate (Joschka Fischer) also held the position of Deputy Chancellor. However, the victory of the CDU and Angela Merkel in the 2005

²² Sebastian Bukow, "The Green Party in Germany," In *Green Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute (London: Routledge, 2016), 117.

²³ Bukow, "The Green Party in Germany," 118.

²⁴ Bukow, "The Green Party in Germany," 115.

parliamentary elections marked the end of the Red-Green Project. Such an end contributed to a situation in which the Green Party became an opposition party. It is interesting to note that there was no seat for the Green Party in any of Merkel's four cabinets. That's why Merkel's 16 years in power were also marked by 16 years of opposition to the Greens. On the other hand, the end of Angela Merkel's political career was also followed by an increase in the rating and the election result of the Greens in the 2021 parliamentary elections. For the first time in this election, the Green Party managed to win over 10% of the votes in the parliamentary elections in a united Germany and to become the third-largest political party in Germany. In that regard, it remains to be seen whether this result of the Greens will contribute, after 16 years of opposition, to finally bring the Greens back to power through a new Red-Green Project.

1.2. Green parties in Austria

In both Germany and Austria, the current Green Party traces its origins in the eco-movements from the 1980s of the XX century. A series of protests against nuclear energy, as well as against the construction of hydropower plants, led to the creation of the first two green parties in Austria in 1982 (VGO and ALO). In order to achieve better election results, in 1986, these two parties decided to support the united Green list led by Meissner-Blau.²⁵ Shortly after the 1986 election, a new party was formed - The Greens – The Green Alternative (Die Grunen/ Die Grune Alternative). That is the most successful party in Austria, which since its foundation in 1986 until today failed to succeed and secure seats in the Austrian Parliament only at the 2017 parliamentary elections. In all other parliamentary elections, the Green party of Austria managed to secure parliamentary seats, as follows: in 1986 (4,8 % - MPs), in 1990 (4,8% - 10 MPs), in 1994 (7,3 % - 23 MPs), in 1995 (4,8% - 9 MPs), in 1999 (7,4 % - 14 MPs), in 2002 (9,5%- 17 MPs), in 2006 (11,1% - 21 MPs), in 2008 (10,4% - 20 MPs), in 2013 (12,4% - 24 MPs) and in 2019 (13,9% - 26 MPs).²⁶ Despite such constant successes of the Green party of Austria at the parliamentary elections, still, this party becomes part of the government for the first time only after the 2019 elections. The Green party enters the second cabinet of Sebastian Kurz and such an entry is followed by three ministerial posts, as well as the position of Deputy Chancellor. The scandals related to Kurz in 2021 led to the fall of his cabinet, but Kurz's resignation was followed by the formation of a new government (11.10.2021) led again by the candidate of OVP, Alexander Schallenberg. The Green party of Austria managed to retain the three ministerial posts and the position of Deputy Chancellor within this cabinet as well. In regards to the successes at the parliamentary elections, we should also emphasize that candidate Alexander Van der Bellen won the 2016 presidential elections in Austria. This is a candidate who ran as an independent one at the 2016 elections, but given the fact that Van der Bellen was a member of the Green party from 1992 to 2016, and from 1997 to 2008 he was the party leader, the green background becomes quite clear. Having all this into consideration, within political science we often come across the position that the Green party of Austria has one of the strongest results in Europe.

1.3 Green parties in Switzerland

Similar development dynamics, with completely different institutional results, can be noticed in Switzerland. Namely, in this country as well, during the 1970s of the XX century, as a result of the protests against roads construction and environmental damage, we can see the emergence of

²⁵ Martin Dolezel, "The Greens In Austria and Switzerland: Two Successful Opposition Parties," In *Green Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute (London: Routledge, 2016), 16.

²⁶ Martin Dolezel, "The Greens In Austria and Switzerland: Two Successful Opposition Parties," 17.

candidates with green ideology. During the 1970s of the XX century, such candidates had certain successes at the local elections and based on those successes in Switzerland in that period, there was the formation of several green political parties. It is interesting to note that some of them possessed moderate political positions, and some possessed quite radical ideological positions. This heterogeneity eventually led to the unification of the moderate green political parties in GPS, while the radical green political parties decided to unite in the GBS.²⁷ The foundation of GPS and GBS came in 1987. From the two green political parties, the moderate GPS managed to achieve far better results over the years. This reality indeed made GPS the main green party of Switzerland. From its formation until today, GPS manages to secure places in the Swiss Parliament at all parliamentary elections. That can be noticed at the election in 1987 (4,9% - 9 MPs), in 1991 (6,1% - 14 MPs), in 1995 (5 % - 8 MPs), in 1999 (5% - 8 MPs), in 2003 (7,4% - 13 MPs), in 2007 (9,6% - 20 MPs), in 2011 (8,4 % - 15 MPs), in 2015 (7,1% - 11 MPs) and in 2019 (13,2% - 28 MPs).²⁸ However, this rise of GPS is in no case followed by the participation of GPS in the Swiss government. The principles of consensual democracy, as well as the 1959 Agreement according to which the Swiss government will be composed of the four largest political parties (Free Democratic Party, Christian Democratic People's Party, Social Democratic Party, and Swiss Peoples party), prevent the green party GPS to become part of the ruling coalition. This interesting story becomes even more interesting after the 2019 parliamentary elections when GPS became the fourth largest party in the Swiss political system in terms of the number of MPs, but still, the Swiss political elites decided to keep this party out of the grand ruling coalition of the Swiss government. If such a rise of the GPS continues at the following parliamentary elections in Switzerland then it is expected that the 1959 Agreement will be abandoned and a new agreement will be needed. It should be kept into consideration that the need for a new agreement may arise due to the rise of another green party in the political system of Switzerland. Namely, in 2007 another moderate green party known as GLP Grunliberale Partei was established in Switzerland. The Green liberals managed to win 3 MP seats in the Swiss Parliament, at their first elections in 2007. GLP manages to repeat these results at the 2011 parliamentary elections (5,4% - 12 MPs), in 2015 (4,6% - 7 MPs) and in 2019 (7,8% - 16 MPs). All this points to the fact that the rise of the green ideology in Switzerland is evident and that on the next parliamentary elections in 2023 GPS may become the second-largest party in Switzerland, and GLP will move its rating much closer to the Free Democratic Party, Christian Democratic People's Party, Social Democratic Party. Such a situation would inevitably completely disrupt the structure of the grand government coalition created with the 1959 Agreement.

1.4 Green Parties in Belgium

The foundation of green political parties in Belgium follows the examples of other Western European countries, but they also contain their own specifics that are related to the nature of the Belgian state. Namely, in Belgium, the foundation of green political parties comes at the end of the 1970s of the XX century, as a consequence of the political activities of eco-activists. Interestingly, however, such activities are divided by ethnicity. Thus, within Wallonia, eco-activists of French descent were organized within the green party Ecolo. Within Flanders, on the other hand, eco-activists with Dutch descent formed the green party known first as Agalev and today as Groen. Both green political parties can boast that they have managed to secure a seat in the Belgian parliament since their foundation. Such a statement cannot be shared only for Groen

²⁷ Martin Dolezel, "The Greens In Austria and Switzerland: Two Successful Opposition Parties," 18.

²⁸ Martin Dolezel, "The Greens In Austria and Switzerland: Two Successful Opposition Parties," 17.

and only for the 2003 parliamentary elections. At all other elections, Ecolo and Groen representatives were part of Belgian parliament, as follows: in 1981 (Ecolo: 2,5 % - 2 MPs/ Groen: 2,6% - 2 MPs), in 1985 (Ecolo: 2,5 % - 5 MPs/ Groen: 3,7% - 4 MPs), in 1987 (Ecolo: 2,6 % - 3 MPs / Groen: 4,5% - 6 MPs), in 1991 (Ecolo: 5,1 % - 10 MPs / Groen: 4,9% - 7 MPs), in 1995 (Ecolo: 4 % - 6 MPs / Groen: 4,8% - 5 MPs), in 1999 (Ecolo: 7,4 % - 11 MPs / Groen: 7% - 9 MPs), in 2003 (Ecolo: 3,1 % - 4 MPs / Groen: 2,5% - 0 MPs), in 2007 (Ecolo: 5,1 % - 8 MPs / Groen: 4 % - 4 MPs), in 2010 (Ecolo: 4,8 % - 8 MPs / Groen: 4,4% - 5 MPs), in 2014 (Ecolo: 3,3 % - 6 MPs / Groen: 5,3 % - 6 MPs) and in 2019 (Ecolo: 6,1 % - 13 MPs / Groen: 6,1% - 8 MPs).²⁹ The constant presence of the Green parties in the Belgian Parliament will not lead to their constant presence in the Belgian Government. Namely, Ecolo and Groen became part of the Belgian government for the first time after the 1999 elections. It was at these elections that the two parties achieved a big leap in their number of votes and as a result, they became part of the government coalition. However, participation in the government has eroded the ratings of the green parties, so their support at the next elections has dropped dramatically. As a result, the Green parties in Belgium will not remain part of the government coalition after the 2003 elections and this situation remained to be a reality until the 2019 elections. At these elections, the Green parties in Belgium noticed a big leap in the number of votes won and thus became an important element in the formation of the government. Whether the government coalition will negatively influence them this time, or help them for further growth remains to be seen in the coming period.

1.5 Green parties in the Netherlands

Unlike other Green political parties in Western Europe, the Green Party in the Netherlands has a completely different path of foundation. Initially, it was easy to see that the Green Party in the Netherlands was established later than the Green parties from other Western European countries. Namely, the Green party of the Netherlands was established at the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990. Secondly, the Green Party in the Netherlands does not arise as a consequence of the activities of the eco-activists but rather as a result of an electoral federation of four small left-wing parties that all had been represented in the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament.³⁰ Known as GroenLinks, since its establishment until today, the Green Party in the Netherlands managed to win parliamentary seats within the Dutch parliamentary elections. That can be seen at the parliamentary elections in 1989 (4,1% - 6 MPs), in 1994 (3,5% - 5 MPs), in 1998 (7,3% - 11 MPs), in 2002 (7% - 10 MPs), in 2003 (5,1% - 8 MPs), in 2006 (4,6% - 7 MPs), in 2010 (6,7% - 10 MPs), in 2012 (2,3% - 4 MPs), in 2017 (9,1% - 14 MPs) and in 2021 (5,2% - 8 MPs).³¹ Often these GroenLinks election results were followed by post-election negotiations to join the government. Interestingly, however, never before have such negotiations been successful. In this regard, throughout its existence from 1989 until today, the Green Party in the Netherlands has always acted as an opposition political party from the parliament.

1.6 Green parties in Ireland

²⁹ Marie-Catherine Wavreille and Jean-Benoit Pilet, "The Greens in Belgium's federal landscape," In *Green Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute (London: Routledge, 2016), 43.

³⁰ Gerrit Voerman and Paul Lucardie, "GroenLinks in the Netherlands: No longer a protest party, not yet a coalition partner," In *Green Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute (London: Routledge, 2016), 140.

³¹ Voerman and Lucardie, "GroenLinks in the Netherlands: No longer a protest party, not yet a coalition partner," 141.

Green political parties in Ireland have really interesting development. Namely, the green political party in Ireland was founded in 1981 under the influence of Dublin teacher and environmental campaigner Christopher Fettes.³² From then until now, the Green political party in Ireland notices its electoral ups and downs. At certain parliamentary elections the Green party of Ireland managed to secure parliamentary seats (1989 – 1,5%/ 1 MP, 1992 – 1,4%/ 1 MP, 1997 – 2,8%/ 2 MPs, 2002 – 3,8% - 6 MPs, 2007 – 4,7% - 6 MPs, 2016 – 2,7%/ 2 MPs, 2020 - 7,1%/12 MPs),³³ but there are elections in which such a goal was not met (1982, 1987, 2011). It is interesting to note that this diversity of the Green Party election results was followed by its participation in the government on two occasions. Thus, the Green party becomes part of the current Irish government after the 2020 elections, but the Greens had previous governmental experience in the period from 2007 to 2008. We should also keep in mind that the Green party had a big jump in the number of votes at the 2020 elections. It remains to be seen whether such a rise will be followed by a fall again, or whether this time it is a matter of long-term growth of the Green party.

2. Green parties in Scandinavia

Some experience with Green political parties can be seen in the Scandinavian countries. However, it should be immediately noted that political active and successful green political parties can be seen in Sweden and Finland, while in Denmark and Norway these political parties represent an insignificant political power. In this regard, let us have a detailed view of the development of the Green parties in Sweden and Finland.

2.1. Green parties in Sweden

The development of the green ideology in Sweden is also an interesting story to observe. On the one hand, within the Swedish political system, there is a political party that is associated with agrarian interests, and through that, it reaches certain points of the green ideology. It is a party founded in 1913 under the name Farmers League, which in 1957 was renamed and became known as the Centre Party. This party has twice had the opportunity to lead the Swedish government and has often participated in government coalitions led by the Social Democratic Party. However, this party is often seen as a party that belongs to the liberal ideology and as a result of its disappointments in terms of environmental protection, the Green party of Sweden was founded in the early 1980s of the XX century. This party secured its first seats in the Swedish Parliament in the 1988 elections (5,5% - 20 MPs). Since then, this party failed to secure a seat in the Swedish Parliament only at the 1991 elections. At all other elections, the Green party of Sweden managed to secure MPs. That is the case at the elections in 1994 (5% - 18 MPs), in 1998 (4,5% - 16 MPs), in 2002 (4,6% - 17 MPs), in 2006 (5,2% - 19 MPs), in 2010 (7,3% - 25 MPs), in 2014 (6,9% - 25 MPs) and in 2018 (4,4% - 9 MPs).³⁴ It is interesting to note that the Green party becomes part of the government for the first time in 2018, i.e. at elections where this party failed to achieve good election results but on the contrary, the election results were almost halved compared to 2010 and

³² Lynn Bennie, "Greens in the United Kingdom and Ireland: Weak but persistent," In *Green Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute (London: Routledge, 2016), 201.

³³ Bennie, "Greens in the United Kingdom and Ireland: Weak but persistent," 202.

³⁴ Niklas Bolin, "Green parties in Finland and Sweden: Successful cases of the North?" In *Green Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute (London: Routledge, 2016), 161.

2014. It remains to be seen how the participation in the government will reflect the rating of the Green party at the next parliamentary elections which should take place in 2022.

2.2. Green parties in Finland

Finland is a country in which the Green Party has often been part of the ruling political elites. Namely, in this country, similar to many European countries, the Green Party appears as a consequence of several years of activities of eco-activists. Activities of the green activists within Finland can be traced back to the 1970s, but the real foundation of a Green Political Party under the name Green League was in 1987. The party founded like this managed to secure seats in the Finnish Parliament in the first parliamentary elections in which it participated (1987), (4% - 4 MPs). The Green League repeated this in the next parliamentary elections. Green League managed to secure MPs in the Finnish parliament in 1991 (6,8% - 10 MPs), in 1995 (6,5% - 9 MPs), in 1999 (7,3% - 11 MPs), in 2003 (8% - 14 MPs), in 2007 (8,5% - 15 MPs), in 2011 (7,3% - 10 MPs), in 2015 (8,5% - 15 MPs) and in 2019 (11,4% - 20 MPs).³⁵ Such election results enabled this party to become part of the government for the first time in 1995, and then on several occasions to be part of various government coalitions. The Green Party is currently part of the government. Having all this in mind, we can safely conclude that the Finnish Green Party represents the most successful green party within the Scandinavian region.

3. Green parties in the Baltic countries

A comparative review of the development of green parties in Europe leads us to an interesting conclusion. Namely, the green parties that operate within the Baltic countries are one of the strongest green parties in the world. It is from this part of Europe that the greatest successes of the green parties come. This conclusion applies to the situation in Latvia and Lithuania, but not to the situation in Estonia. Estonia, unlike Latvia and Lithuania, lacks a strong green political party. In this regard, we are going to take a detailed view of the development of the green political parties in Latvia and Lithuania.

3.1 Green parties in Latvia

Latvia is probably the country that can boast the biggest political successes of a green political party. The foundation of such a strong green party within Latvia began at the end of the USSR. Namely, since 1987, eco-activists, often organized in different social groups, decided to protest against the USSR's plans to build hydroelectric dams. Such activities led to the foundation of several green political parties immediately after the fall of communism in Latvia. However, these green parties will not have any particular successes in Latvia during the 1990s of the XX century. The success of the Greens in Latvia comes in the XXI century. Namely, in 2002, in Latvia, there was a unification between the Green party of Latvia and the Latvian Farmers' Union. By uniting, these two parties created a new party known as the Union of Greens and Farmers - ZZS. Latvia's newly founded green party managed to secure a seat in the Latvian parliament in its first parliamentary elections in 2002 by winning 9,4% of the votes and 12 MPs. Securing MPs in the Latvian parliament will not be a problem for ZZS at the next parliamentary cycles: in 2006 (16,8% - 18 MPs), in 2010 (20,1% - 22 MPs), in 2011 (12,3% - 13 MPs), in 2014 (19,6% - 21 MPs) and in 2018 (9,9% - 11 MPs). It is interesting to note that the ZZS was continuously part of the government coalition from 2002 until 2011. It should be especially emphasized that ZZS earned a

³⁵ Ibid.

place in the history of Greens when, in 2004, Indulis Emsis became Europe's first Green prime minister.³⁶ During the period from 2011 until 2014, ZZS was part of the opposition, but after a three-year break, starting from 2014 until 2019, ZZS became part of the government again. For the most part (2016-2019) this coalition was led again by a Prime Minister who was a member of the ZZS. Additionally, noteworthy is the fact that as many as two members of the Green party in Latvia were elected Presidents of the Republic. From 2011 until 2015 the function was performed by Andris Berzins, and from 2015 until 2019 by Raimonds Velonis. Thus, Latvia becomes the first country in the world where the Head of the state comes from a Green party.

3.2. Green parties in Lithuania

Besides Latvia, a successful story of a Green political party can be seen in Lithuania. Namely, in Lithuania, during the collapse of the USSR, a Green Political Party was founded under the name LŽP. This green party was founded by eco-activists and it managed to win 4 seats in the first parliamentary elections in independent Lithuania and to enter the government structure, as well. In the following years, however, the LŽP failed to replicate its initial success. Leading members of the Green movement migrated to liberal and conservative parties while others refocused on a local environmental project.³⁷ That is why LŽP was quickly suppressed by the emergence of another Green Party. It is the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union, which since 2004 has consistently managed to secure seats in the Lithuanian Parliament. We can see such a situation in 2004 (6,6% - 10 MPs), in 2008 MPs (3,7% - 3 MPs), in 2012 MPs (4% - 1 MPs), in 2016 MPs (22,4% - 54 MPs) and in 2020 (18% - 32 MPs). As winners of the 2016 elections, the Green Party of Lithuania had the opportunity to nominate and support a candidate for Prime Minister, who, although was not a formal member, still was a holder of the Green Party's electoral list. Thus, the Green Party of Lithuania can be proud to stress out that their candidate was Prime Minister of the Republic.

4. Green parties in other countries in Europe

Certain green political parties can be seen in other European countries, but their political activities and results are far weaker than their sister parties in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Latvia, and Lithuania. The absence of strong green political parties can be seen in Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece), Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania), as well as in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. In this part of Europe during the 1990s some optimism for green political parties was observed in Central Europe (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary), but soon such optimism was replaced by fragmentation and marginalization of green political parties in these countries. In recent years some interesting events can be seen in Croatia with the Green political party We Can (Možemo). A party founded by prominent eco-activists managed to win a solid number of votes in the 2019 local elections, and already in the 2020 parliamentary elections managed to enter the Croatian Parliament with 7 representatives. The data show that the rating of this party is constantly rising. Based on that and looking at the rating, in 2021 this party managed to grow into the third-largest party in Croatia. This rise in the rating of We Can (Možemo) does not stop, so it is clear that there is a tendency for this party to soon surpass the Social Democrats in the rating and thus become the

³⁶ E. Gene Frankland, "Central and Eastern European Green Parties: Rise, fall and revival?" In *Green Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute (London: Routledge, 2016), 72.

³⁷ Frankland, "Central and Eastern European Green Parties: Rise, fall and revival?"74.

second-largest party in the Croatian political system. It remains to be seen whether this will happen.

IV. THE GREEN IDEOLOGY AND THE GREEN POLITICAL PARTIES IN MACEDONIAN POLITICS

Throughout its development, the Macedonian political scene was and still is dominated by the major political parties (SDSM, VMRO-DPMNE, PDP, DPA, DUI, Alliance for the Albanians). Thereby, in the statutes of almost all political parties in North Macedonia, there are provisions related to the protection and promotion of the environment, but none of them decides to be directly related to the green ideology.

Having this in mind, we should emphasize the first real green political party in North Macedonia, which in its statute is defined as a green political party and which belongs to the European family of green political parties was founded in 2006. It is the party Democratic Renewal of Macedonia (DOM) which was founded on 28.1.2006 under the leadership of Liljana Popovska. The foundation of the party DOM occurred as a consequence of the disappointment with the actions of the current government coalition “For Macedonia Together” led by SDSM. In fact, DOM as a party emerged from previous members of political parties that belonged to the government coalition “For Macedonia Together”.

With that, North Macedonia has its first Green political party, which in its first parliamentary election in 2006, through single party appearance, managed to win 1 parliamentary seat. Such success at the 2006 parliamentary elections enabled DOM to enter in post-election negotiations for a government coalition with VMRO-DPMNE. Such negotiations ultimately resulted in success. Such a post-election government coalition of VMRO-DPMNE and DOM soon grew into a pre-election coalition. Thus, at 2008, 2011, and 2014 parliamentary elections, DOM participated as part of a pre-election coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. Moreover, DOM within this pre-election coalition managed to secure a parliamentary seat again in 2008, 2011, and 2014. Thus, in addition to being a parliament party, DOM remained to be part of the government coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE. However, in 2015, as a result of the great political crisis caused by the wiretapping scandal, DOM decided to leave the government coalition and act as an opposition party in the Macedonian Parliament. This decision caused DOM to conclude a pre-election coalition for the 2016 parliamentary elections, but this time led by Social Democrats (SDSM). As part of such a pre-election coalition, DOM again managed to secure a seat in the Macedonian Parliament, but this time with 2 MPs. After several months of blockade for the formation of a government after the 2016 elections, on 31.5.2017 a new government led by SDSM was elected. With that, DOM became part of the ruling political elites again. The outcome for DOM was similar after the 2020 elections. DOM as part of the pre-election coalition led by SDSM managed to secure 2 MPs in the Macedonian Parliament and to be part of the government led by SDSM again.

Thus, we can conclude that since its foundation (2006), until today, DOM is constantly part of the Macedonian Parliament, but in most of the years of existence, it has been part of the ruling political elites (out of its 15 years of existence, 13,5 DOM is part of the ruling political elites).

Unfortunately, such success of DOM was not followed by successes in terms of environmental protection in North Macedonia. On the contrary, the last decade has been marked by extremely polluted air, unplanned urbanization, and the destruction of nature. Such a reality caused an emergence of a new phenomenon on the Macedonian political scene in the 2021 local elections. Namely, at these elections, a large number of eco-activists started to create an independent list for

Municipal Councilors. Such independent councillor lists won a large number of votes and within several municipal councils managed to secure councillor seats. The emergence of independent councillor lists related to the green ideology was not an isolated phenomenon but it can be seen in several municipalities across the country.

It should be noted here that through the review of green parties in Europe, it could be noticed that in many cases, green parties in European countries arose primarily from the actions of eco-activists. It remains to be seen whether this will be the case in our country.

For now, in terms of a green political party, Macedonian citizens will have to be satisfied with DOM, and also from 2021 with DUI. Namely, in the middle of 2021, the leader of DUI, Ali Ahmeti, sensationally has announced to the Macedonian public that DUI has met all the priorities and that now it is time to grow into a green party that will focus on environmental protection. It remains to be seen how real this claim of Ahmeti is and how much DUI will actually act as a green party in the coming period. The fact that DUI, like DOM, was part of the ruling elites at a time when the environment in North Macedonia suffered enormous damage, casts great doubt on DUI's readiness to truly become a party associated with the green ideology. Additionally, the fact that within DUI's statute there is no clear definition of DUI defined as a green party casts an additional doubt to this determination.

V. CONCLUSION

Starting from the 1970s of the XX century, the political theory and practice speak about the rise of a new ideology - the green ideology. Quite logically, the development of such an ideology comes as a consequence of the excessive damage to the environment of planet Earth. Thereby, the green ideology is gradually but surely becoming a coherent set of ideological values. In this regard, the green ideology today is recognized for its views against industrialization, consumerism, as well as supporters of the views on environmental ethics, holistic approach, and ecocentrism. Additionally, the green ideology includes positions against social and economic inequality, centralization and bureaucratization, erosion of local self-government, militarism, and oppression of women.

As a result of these views, it is often said that green ideology develops in countries where individuals enjoy time, education and financial stability and therefore have the opportunity to deal with environmental issues. Indeed, politically active and strong political parties associated with green ideology can be seen on Western European soil, Scandinavia, and the Baltic. Strong green political parties can be seen in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Croatia. It is in this part of the world that green political parties have been imposing a green agenda on the political system for years and have managed to win 5 to 20% of the votes at the elections. Evidently, in the last decade, the green political parties have noticed an increase in the election results. Thus, green political parties in this part of the world become a political factor within European countries that influences the formation of governments, but also the election of heads of state. That is why it is often stated that the green ideology and the green political parties have so far managed to leave an initial mark and that they are expected to take a more important role on the political scene in the future.³⁸

³⁸ Meadowcroft, "Politické perspektive zelenih u ovisit dvadesetprvog stoljeće," 247.

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