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NEW CHALLENGES: POST MATERIALISM AND THE EXTREME RIGHT

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1. New parties 1980-1994

Since the early/mid 1980s West European party systems have broadened their spectrum by including "new parties". These newcomers are new in two different respects- first, they are new because they have been founded (or have emerged from absolute irrelevance) in recent years; second, because they do not belong to the traditional political families.

The new parties we are referring to in this analysis comprise basically the green parties on the left side and the extreme right parties (henceforth: ERPs) on the right side. Other "new" parties emerged in the 1980s and in the early 1990s such as the Irish Progressive Democrats, the Italian Northern League, the Belgian Roussem and, very recently, the Italian Forza Italia, the French de Villiers list, the Dutch pensioners' lists. Most of these parties could be considered anti-establishment (Schedler 1994) or anti-party (Poguntke 1994) parties, and they share some traits with the parties of the extreme right, but they do not fit the criteria for inclusion in this party family and for this reason they will be disregarded.

In order to belong to the ERP family a party should fulfil three conditions: a) it should be located at the right wing pole of the political spectrum such that no other party is further to the right; b) it should express an ideal-ideological linkage with Fascist mythology and principles; c) it should express a set of beliefs which undermines the fundamentals of a polity. It goes without saying that the adhesion to Fascism (second criterion) implies the anti-system patterning (third criterion): therefore the anti-system criterion applies only to those parties located at the right side but devoid of Fascist imprinting.

While the neo-Fascists parties do not pose any problem of classification, the right-wing newcomers of the 1970s and the 1980s need a careful appraisal of their programmes, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Even if such parties do not openly advocate a non-democratic institutional setting, they nevertheless undermine system legitimacy by expressing distrust for the parliamentary system, the weakness of the state, the disruption of the traditional natural communities,

"unnatural" egalitarianism and excessive freedom. Their anti-systemness is thus assessed according to whether the party displays "a belief system that does not share the values of the political order within which it operates" (Sartori 1976: 133). Many new ERPs do not share any nostalgia for the interwar Fascist experience, and they even reject any reference to Fascism, but nevertheless they express antidemocratic values throughout their political discourse.

As argued elsewhere (Ignazi 1992, Ignazi 1994), there is a gap between these *new* extreme right parties - listed under the label of post-industrial ERPs in Table 1 - and conservative or bourgeois parties. Such a gap is expressed by the attitudes towards the mechanisms of representation and the pluralist conception of the political system: while the conservatives are supportive of the system and never delegitimize these fundamentals, the extreme right expresses hostility and even rejection. The overlapping on certain issues between the two families is more apparent than real: even where they share a high concern with themes like law and order, moral traditionalism, and immigration, these issues are addressed in a completely different way. Not only do the ERPs invoke much more radical policies than their bourgeois counterparts, but such policies are qualitatively different as they concern every question of rights and entitlements. On a very salient question such as immigration, for example, most of the *new* ERPs demonstrate xenophobic and also racist stances that are different "in quality" to conservatives' tough positions, because no ERP has in its ideological genetic code the principle of individual rights. The community (and the ethnos) or the State have rights, not the individual. An exception is the economic field where the new ERPs support free-market against collectivist or statist approaches.

In sum, the extreme right parties should exhibit an "opposition of principle" and/or should express an ideology which undermines the constitutional rules of the democratic regime. If we refer to Fascism as the extreme right ideology, this ideology is, by any standard, alien and extraneous to liberal-democracy. But where such reference to a well structured ideology does not exist, the presence of anti-system political attitudes and beliefs -antiparlamentarism, antipluralism and antipartism - allow their inclusion in the extreme right family.

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On the basis of the spatial, ideological and attitudinal criteria, we can offer a *typology where parties more on the right of the political spectrum are categorized according to the presence or absence of a Fascist heritage and to the acceptance or refusal of the political system*. If a party fits the ideological criterion - and, as a consequence, the systemic one - we can include it in the old, traditional, neo-Fascist *type*. If a party is not linked to Fascism but has an anti-system profile, we can include it in the new, post-industrial *type*.

In the category of *traditional* extreme right-wing parties, we have the Italian MSI (even if some change is in progress after its recent transformation into the AN), the German NPD and DVU, the Dutch CP'86, the British BNP and, in certain respects, the Belgian Vlaams Blok; in the category of the new, *post-industrial* extreme right-wing parties we have the French FN, the German Republikaner, the Dutch CD, the Belgian FN, the Austrian FPÖ, the Danish FRP and its Norwegian counterpart, the Swedish NyD, the Swiss AN (now SD), Autopartei, EDU and the Tessin League (see Table 1 for the acronyms).

Returning to the distinction between ERPs and the above-mentioned anti-establishment/anti-party parties, the commonality between them is quite large: many ERPs are included (see for example Schedler 1994, Mackie 1995, Poguntke 1994) in this category which is rather similar to the "populist" one introduced by Betz (1994). It would be tempting to enlarge the range of the extreme right class by including the "anti-establishment" parties but this operation would produce somewhat of a conceptual stretch. In fact, keeping in mind our first criterion - the spatial location - one can see that some anti-establishment/populist parties are "mainstream parties"; that is, parties located in the middle of the political spectrum and not at the right end which is the first necessary condition of our typology. This is why one cannot include in the ERPs an anti-establishment and populist party like the Italian Lega Nord.

On the other side of the political spectrum the new parties are more clearly grouped in the Green family. This family of parties is also riven by cleavages. It has been underlined that the Greens are not exclusively devoted to the protection of the environment but they embellish, and even justify, this concern with a

broader set of issues, from pacifism to women's liberation, from equalitarianism to minority rights and so on. Therefore some authors distinguish between "pure Greens" and "alternative Greens" (Muller Rommel 1993: 16) while others have adopted the definition of "left/libertarian" (Kitschelt 1988) or "New Politics" (Poguntke 1989, 1993a) in order to place in the same category Greens and minor left-wing parties that are concerned *also* with the environment. Finally, another classical internal division concerns the *realos* and the *fundis*: this distinction, borrowed from the internal debate of the German Grünen, denotes the supporters of a bargaining approach with the established parties in order to reach some concrete output (*realos*) and the "true believers" of political ecology who plead for a more radical socio-cultural alternative (*fundis*).

In this analysis no typology of the green family is suggested. The only question concerns the exclusion/inclusion of some parties. Contrary to some authors (Boy 1994, for example), we think that the shades of green are not so wide as to include also the Danish "greening" Socialist People's party -SF- and the Venstre Socialist party -VS- (enlarged to include anti-EEC groups for European elections), and the Portuguese communist-led CDU where Os Verdes find a (marginal) hospitality. A somewhat similar problem afflicts the Dutch Groen Links but on the basis of the accurate analysis of Lucardie, Voerman and Van Schuur (1993), this party is included. The reverse goes for the French ecological movements led by Brice Lalonde, for the quite *realo* Swiss GPS (whose role is emphasized by Church 1992 against the alternative POCH/GBS; *contra* Ladner 1989) and for the "pure green reformist" Austrian VGO (Haerpfer 1989:23): while these cases are disregarded in some analyses of the green movements, we include them.

2. The electoral performance and development of ERPs and Green parties

The Greens were established in the late 1970s/early 1980s (Muller Rommel

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1989, 1993) and a little later came the breakthrough of the extreme right (with the exception of Italy and, to a lesser extent, Denmark, Norway and Switzerland).

After the anticipatory and isolated candidature of the proto-green René Dumont in the French presidential elections of 1974 (1.3%), a relative widespread presence of green lists emerged in connection with the first European elections (1979); on that occasion, green lists were presented in four countries out of nine (and in five if we include the Italian Radical party as a prototype of the subsequent Italian Verdi).

On the other side of the political spectrum, only two parties of the extreme right - the Italian MSI and the Danish FRP - contested that election and obtained Euro-parliamentary seats.

Since then, the electoral trend up to 1994 is positive for both kinds of parties and even more so most recently. More specifically, the breakthrough into European politics of the new "party families" appeared almost simultaneously in 1983-84.

The German Grünen entered the Bundestag for the first time in 1983 overcoming the 5% threshold and obtaining 27 seats. Even if their performance was not an absolute novelty in Europe -having been preceded by the two Belgian ecologist parties (Ecolo and Agalev) which had gained four seats in 1981, and paralleled by positive outcomes in Switzerland and Finland- the relevance of Germany in the international setting was such to create an event, to mark a watershed.

A year later, in 1984, it was the turn of the extreme right to surface and gain attention (and votes): the French Front National, under the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen, moved from 0.2% in the 1981 legislative elections to 11.2% in the 1984 European elections. This percentage represents the highest score ever attained in a nation-wide election by an extreme right party to date.¹ At the same

¹ This statement is based on the exclusion by the family of ERPs of another French (flash) party, the UDCA, better known as the Poujadist movement, which collected 11.6% of the votes in 1956. For the discussion of the relationship between the UDCA and the extreme right see Ignazi 1994, Rioux 1985.

Euro-election, extreme right parties gained a sizeable amount of votes in the Netherlands and in Greece (where a Euro-parliamentarian was elected), but it is again the importance of the country, and the dimension of the success too, that make the difference for European public opinion. In order to understand the development of continent-wide phenomena, the "imitation effect" inevitably produced by political developments in two of the main European countries (France on the right side, Germany on the left one) is highly relevant: the spreading and circulation of ideas, slogans, issues and so on at the European level are inevitably supported by their affirmation in geo-politically important countries.

Since the mid/late 1980s, both the Greens and the ERPs gained more importance. If we compare the electoral outcomes of the European elections of 1989 with those of 1984 we can assert that the take-off was located sometime in the intervening period.

The same development is confirmed when we take into account all the other European countries. Dividing the period from 1980 to 1994 into two sub-periods (1980-87 and 1988-94), the increase is almost general for both the Greens and ERPs (see Table 2). In national elections, Greens moved up from 2.7% in the 1980-87 period to 4.7% in 1988-94 (calculated excluding Great Britain, Greece, Norway, Portugal and Luxembourg).² The average vote of ERPs went from 3.3% in the first period to 7.2% in the second one (calculated excluding Finland, Ireland, Great Britain, Spain and Luxembourg).³

In some cases the increase was dramatic. With respect to the ERPs, Austria shows +12.2%, Belgium +6.1% (that means *five times* the previous percentage); Switzerland and Norway more than double. In two cases, Greece and Spain, where ERPs are the weakest, a further decrease has led to the disappearance of this kind

² The reasons for exclusion are different: Greece and Norway have absolutely marginal parties in both the sub-periods; the British Green Party reached relevant, even outstanding, scores but only in European elections while in national elections it was below 1%; Portugal does not have an autonomous green party; Luxembourg has been excluded by the analysis because of its size.

³ The calculations do not consider Great Britain, Finland, Ireland and Spain because of the absence of an extreme right party in both the sub-periods considered. For the same reasons spelt out in the previous note, Luxembourg is excluded.

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of party. Taking into consideration the electoral outcome of the 1988-1994 period, ERPs could be divided into four classes:

- the strong parties: FPO, FN, MSI/AN, FRPn which collected around 10% or more of the votes;
- the medium size parties: VLB, FRP, NyD, Autopartei and AN/SD, between 3% and 6%;
- the small ones: CD, FNb, Tessin League, EDU and the Republikaner⁴, less than 3%.
- the irrelevant parties, those who contested some national elections without any success⁵: the German NPD and DVU, the Norwegian Stop immigration, the British NF and BNP, the Austrian NDP, the Spanish FN (Fuerza Nueva, then Frente Nacional), the French and Belgium PFN, the Greek EPEN and other minor parties, the Portuguese PDC, the Dutch CP'86, the newly born Finnish VSL and IKL.

On the green side, the increase in 1988-94 was less dramatic because of the earlier take off before 1988. Finland, Belgium and, above all, France show the highest increase (even if the French Greens have the most impressive fluctuation) during the whole period (Roche 1993). Looking at the 1988-1994 period, the green family could be divided into four groups⁶:

- the strong parties: Belgian Agalev/Ecolo, above 10%;
- the medium size: German Grünen, Finnish Vihreä Liitto (Green league),

⁴ The Republikaners are a special case: they are above 3% of the votes, but only thanks to European elections, otherwise they would be below; moreover, contrary to all the other parties, they never elected a MP to the national Parliament: for this reason the Republikaner are placed in the small category.

⁵ Some of these parties have disappeared while others have just emerged such as the Finnish VSL (Union of Free Finland), a "moderate-nationalist" party which is located at the border between conservative and extreme right parties and IKL (Patriotic National Union) a small, quite nostalgic organization which has revived the symbols, and even the acronym, of an interwar fascist movement.

⁶ In some countries the green movement was quite split. A process of unification has occurred (Austria -VGO and ALO-, West and East Germany -Grünen and Bündnis 90-, Italy -Verdi Arcobaleno and Liste verdi-) but in others, conflict remains such as in France, where unification and splits are endless, in Switzerland and, to a lesser extent, in the Netherlands. The existence of both Ecolo and Agalev in Belgium reflects the linguistic cleavage in the country more than a separate party-building or ideological divide.

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Austrian Gruene Alternative (merger of VGO and ALO), French Generation Ecologie and Les Verts, Swiss GPS (Grüne Partei der Schweiz), Swedish Miljöpartiet, between 5% and 7%;

- the small parties: Italian Verdi, Dutch Groen Link, Irish Green Alliance, Swiss POCH/GBS (Grüne Bündnis Schweiz), between 1.5% and 4%;

- the irrelevant parties: Danish Miljøpartiet, various Greek groups, Spanish Los Verdes, Norwegian Miljøpartiet de Grønne, Dutch De Groenen, less than 1%.

A special, unclassifiable, case is the British Green party. Having been present in only a few constituencies up to 1987, scoring at the maximum 3%, it made an impressive breakthrough in the 1989 Euro-elections obtaining the highest score ever attained by a green party: 14.9% (although in a very low turnout election); but in the 1992 parliamentary elections, despite presenting candidates in more constituencies (253 out of 634, against 133 in 1987), the party collected only 173,008 votes (0.5%). Finally, in the 1994 European election, it scored 3.2%. This imbalance of results creates the problem of determining the British Greens' strength. In national elections they always scored very poorly and they should be included in the category of the irrelevant parties; but taking into account European elections, where the constraints of the plurality electoral system are loosened, the party greatly improves its performance and could be placed in the medium-size group. As categorization is derived from national election results, the British Greens are kept out of the calculation because of their irrelevance at this level.

In sum, the green partisan presence coalesced in 1981-83 and then consolidated its presence with a decade of increasing success. The family of ERPs, being more "established", experienced a more variegated trend: the oldest parties declined in the 1980s and some recovered at the end of the decade and in the early 1990s; the newcomers, with the exception of the German case, gained more support than the older ones.

3. Hypotheses on the origins and development of new parties

Having identified the parties in the Green and ERP families, let us turn to the origins and causes of their development. The problem is twofold: on the one hand, one should look to the conditions of party system change and the likelihood of formation of new parties in general terms; on the other, one should investigate the conditions which favoured Green and ERP parties in particular.

A quick glance at recent events in European countries shows that the proportion of votes for established parties, while stable up to the late 1980s (Mair 1993), has fallen impressively so in the last few years. The Italian case is a striking example of the downfall of a very stable party system (Bardi 1994). To a lesser extent, Ireland has also abandoned the historical duopoly of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, leaving room for four new parties, while three of them originated from splinter groups of the established parties (Marsh 1994). And finally, Sweden and, once more, twenty years after, the Netherlands, have opened the doors of their Parliaments to newcomers.

If this impressionistic observation is true, one should find a sharp increase in volatility all over Western Europe: new parties imply, by definition, voting shifts. As Bartolini and Mair (1991) amply demonstrated, the myth of high volatility in Europe does not fit with the reality of electoral behaviour: volatility was generally low and above all did not cross the border between the two blocs. The recent updating of the data of Bartolini and Mair presented by Gallagher *et al.* (1995) seems to reinforce that original interpretation. Moreover, in the 1980s the mean volatility has even decreased compared to the 1970s: 8.0 against 8.2. However, the mean mirrors just part of the reality. In fact, only four countries show a decrease in volatility in the 1980s (Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Great Britain) while *seven* manifest an increase and one remains equal. The four countries which display a decrease in volatility experienced an increase in party system fragmentation in the 1970s which led to system stabilization (and decrease in volatility) in the 1980s. In the other countries, the increase in volatility in the 1980s seems linked to the formation and spreading of both green and ERP parties plus some national-specific anti-establishment parties. Moreover, if we

extend the analysis to the first years of this decade, "a new wave of instability may be in the offing" as Gallagher *et al.* (1995:234) underline. The elections recently held in France, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Spain, Sweden and, above all, Italy, show a level of volatility of between 10 and 36; only Great Britain remains below this level (Gallagher *et al.* 1995: 235, Luther 1995: 134, Bardi 1994). Voters swing more and more: but mainly because the offer is broader.

To be more precise, the offer has been enlarged but is concentrated in two new "political families", the Greens and ERPs. In six countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and France), prior to 1984 the offer of ERPs was almost im-perceivable, while later it has become more (Austria, Belgium, Germany, France) or less (Sweden and the Netherlands) relevant. And in the remaining countries which already had a sizeable ERP (Italy, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland) the trend has been growing everywhere. Five countries do not fit this schema: Portugal, Greece and Spain - where a marginal extreme right has even disappeared - and Ireland and Finland - where no extreme right party is even identifiable. Also the Green parties were quite weak up to the mid-1980s with two exceptions (Belgium and Switzerland). After the 1983 success of the German Grünen and the 1984 European elections which fostered the green movement, this kind of party spread out all over, the only exceptions being Spain, Greece, Portugal, Denmark and Norway.

Party systems in Europe have changed but they did not suffer earthquakes comparable to the 1973 Danish or the 1994 Italian elections: the change has been gradual and continuous throughout a decade (the 1980s) with a sort of acceleration in the first part of the 1990s. Moreover, the change has been mainly channelled through two types of party. Having argued that a change - growing but not steep, slow but accelerating, concentrated but bi-modal - is underway let us enquire why. Why is support for traditional parties shrinking while new parties find more and more support? And why have these particular types emerged?

The hypothesis is that changes in the cultural and social sphere and changes in party organization and party function have combined to weaken the credibility of established parties and to open the way to new parties located at

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opposite ends of the political spectrum. In other terms, on the one side, the emphasis is on societal changes and, on the other side, on the political realm with particular attention to the party.

a) Socio-economic transformation and new social alignments

If we follow Rokkan's model of the four poles of conflict, we could argue that the conflict over economic resources has lost, in the last decade, much of its salience as different party programmes and government policies *do not make so much difference*. The allocation of resources is less crucial than before and, moreover, is not so distinctive. The landscape has radically changed since the 1920s when the conflicts which shaped the party systems in Europe centred on the allocation of economic resources. The ideals of socialism and communism mobilized large masses of people and the same happened, to a lesser extent, with Fascist ideology which garnered millions of members and voters in the inter-wars years all over Europe *before* it seized power. These two groups clashed violently where the economic pole of conflict was supplemented by a second pole of conflict, that of the "integrative orders". Where economy and culture clashed, an antidemocratic system arose. The (military) victory over Fascism renewed in Western Europe the conflicts of the previous generation, as Lipset and Rokkan argued, but with a crucial difference: one actor - Fascism - had been (physically) eliminated from the political arena. The most salient conflict of post-war Europe was once again that of resource allocation (economy) but the bargaining style prevailed over confrontation: even if the communist parties in catholic countries (plus Finland) contributed to heighten the conflict, the absence of a radical competitor on the other side inhibited a repetition of the scenario of the 1920s. Moreover, as "democracy is compromise", the disruptive potentiality of the communists' "integrative order" was domesticated. When class conflict decreased, a different type of conflict over the allocation of resources emerged; it no longer concerned ownership of the means of production nor state intervention in the economy, but

rather welfare policies: in other words, provisions not goods. Post-industrial society is not a class conflict society: it is a society of values conflict. This does not mean that economic issues have not remained highly relevant. It would be naive to disregard the importance of such themes as unemployment, inflation, welfare provisions and so on: in fact, they are always rated in the top positions in survey research. But it would be even more naive to infer that these issues remained the principal axis of conflict. Post-industrial society means the decline of the interaction of man and machine. The crucial interaction is now that of man and man. The implication of this epochal change is not yet clear for the political sphere but what is clear is that the economy has lost its centrality for defining political allegiances; again, this is not because work is less important, but because we work in a different manner. The decline of the machine (or maybe its substitution by a universally standardised machine, the computer) eliminates the *object* of the conflict: exploitation by the machine. Without reviving Marx's value theory, the disappearance of the machine implies the shift to other *objects* for domination: *objects* that are no longer in the production sphere but in the interpersonal sphere. If economics is no longer salient, integrative orders might acquire more importance. Rokkan conceived of integrative orders as all-embracing ideologies or world views moulded by grand theorising, such as the Marxian one, or by religious denominations. In reality, integrative orders have collapsed too and a *bric-à-brac* style of value formation has emerged. Some would label this new trend postmodernism, emphasising the decline of "modernity". Others would challenge such ideological bricolage stating that new conflict dimensions are shaping Western societies: Offe's *New left-Old left* conflict, Dalton's *New politics*, and Inglehart's *Post-materialism* are three examples. At any rate, class conflict (Franklin *et al.* 1992) over the economy is giving way to value conflict. This change is not traumatic: it has been evolving for a couple of decades. It is a process, not a sudden revolutionary rupture. And finally it has not (yet?) produced new social alignments. On the contrary, one could argue that, in keeping with post-modern cultural patterns, future social alignments will be blurred, unstable and volatile. The absence of clear and solid social configurations along the post-material cleavage line has limited the growth of new parties: in fact, they have failed to

gain a pivotal role (legitimised by mass consent) in the various party systems.

In sum, post-industrial and post-modern societies are characterised by changes in the relevance of the poles of conflict, but such changes have not yet been translated into an "alternative set of political packages".

b) A crisis of legitimacy?

Another way to explain the decline of established parties refers to the wider question of the crisis of the democratic system. This problem has been variously interpreted in terms of fiscal crisis (O'Connor), legitimacy crisis (Habermas), overload (Rose) and ungovernability (Crozier *et al.*). The latter argued as early as 1975 that "Dissatisfaction with and lack of confidence in the functioning of democratic government has thus become widespread" (1975:159). Since then the same consideration has been repeatedly stated (Wiedmaier 1988; Kaase 1988)

The passage from concepts to indicator in this field of research has raised a series of controversies: How to assess, respectively, the level of "confidence", "trust", "support" in/for democracy as such, democratic institutions and the working of democracy? Easton's seminal work (1975) on this topic has been variously criticised and modified (see Fuchs 1993:237-239; Morlino and Montero 1995:232-235). However, the debate on the theory of legitimacy and the operationalization of concepts goes far beyond the scope of the present analysis. Restricting ourselves to the most recent research on this point, it could be stated that the diagnosis of Crozier *et al.* was too pessimistic.

In terms of the working of democracy (or "regime efficacy" as Morlino and Montero (1995:235) define it), the data provided by the Eurobarometer surveys from 1976 to 1991 (Fuchs *et al.* 1995) indicate that the "satisfaction with democracy" is over 50% in all the EEC countries and there is no decline over time. Regarding democracy *per se* - that is, democracy as an ideal form of government - more than 90% of citizens surveyed in 12 EEC countries in 1991 (Eurobarometer 31a) consider it positively. On the other hand, the same survey indicates that around 80% of citizens consider democracy a comparatively better form of

government as opposed to "dictatorship".⁷ Without overlooking these last data because of their relative lack of sophistication, it is nevertheless true that one cannot infer a state of malaise *vis-a-vis* the ideal model of democracy.

Even if faith in the working of democracy declined dramatically in the early 1990s thanks to the drastic fall of the Italians' confidence in democracy (Eurobarometer JH), the level of satisfaction (with the exceptions of the Southern European countries - Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece - plus Great Britain) remains quite high indeed: too high to explain the development of new parties as alternatives to and antagonists of the democratic system.

Therefore new parties are not the by-product of a generalised and acute decline in confidence in democracy. What we argue, however, is that distrust is unevenly distributed: it is overwhelmingly concentrated in the fringe electorates of the right and the left, much more of the right than of the left.

This is not new in social science research. A long tradition of study has demonstrated that alienated people - that is, those who either do not have the means to interpret and master the political world, or feel excluded from society and experience a strain between aspirations and realisations - tend to withdraw from politics or to choose extreme positions. This approach fits better with the right side of the political spectrum because of the more radical antisystem characteristics of the ERPs. The green side too provides opportunity for "protest" but in a rather different manner and with radically divergent aims. First of all, the Greens tend to collect culturally sophisticated, higher educated, relatively well-off people who want to express their opposition to the system and the predominant value system by involving themselves in politics in an articulated way and using various modes of actions. Secondly, they do not aim to overthrow the democratic system: on the contrary, their emphasis is on participatory democracy and their internal organization points to the emphasis of the basic principles of democratic regimes. While ERPs are anti-system parties, Greens are "reformist" or "challenging" parties, they "do not undermine the fundamentals of the system".

⁷ Morlino and Montero define this aspect as "diffuse legitimacy" (1995:233).

Only some minor Marxist-alternative remnants, painted with a pale shade of green, oppose radically the system (the Swiss Poch, part of Dutch Groene Link, some Grünen fundis) On the whole, the conception of man differs totally between Greens and ERPs: while the former are Rousseauian and thus they want to free man, the latter "escape from freedom" and seek control. Put differently, for the Greens there is not enough democracy, for the ERPs there is too much.

Data on the satisfaction with democracy by location on the right-left continuum confirm that those on the extreme right are less supportive than the centre-located and even the extreme left. This trend is particular evident in Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal which shows a criss-cross of left-right positioning and support for democracy: moving from left to right, the pro-system decline while the anti-system increase (Morlino and Montero 1995: 246-247). In these countries the passage from right-wing authoritarian regimes to democracies explains this secular trend: the left is identified with the new democratic regime while the right is nostalgic and therefore more critical. Also in Norway, Sweden and the USA, "those who locate themselves on the ideological extremes tend to be most strongly alienated" and "those on the left are more trusting than citizens on the right" (Miller and Listhaug 1993: 185).

As far as the voters of ERPs are concerned, those of the MSI, Republikaner⁸ and Front National⁹ display a much higher level of dissatisfaction with democracy than the mean population *and the Greens*. In France, the voters who are "alienated" overwhelmingly vote for the Front National: 45% support the FN while only 9% would vote for the French Greens. In Germany, 24% of dissatisfied citizens would vote for the Republikaner and 9% for the Grunen; in Italy, 19% would vote for the MSI and 10% for the Greens. The percentage of alienated voters, in the case of the Greens, reflects, *grosso modo*, their share of votes, while in the case of the ERPs that percentage is more than double for the MSI, three times for the Republikaner and four times the FN voters. (Ysmal 1990:18-20). A

⁸ The same trend for the Republikaner is highlighted by many other surveys: see, for example, Fuchs 1993: 262-263

⁹ Many other works confirm the above mentioned data: see, for example, Mayer 1993.

similar pattern is evident for the Austrian FPÖ whose voters rated the political system negatively much more than the population at large (47% against 28%) and who even preferred a dictatorship in spite of democracy (17% against 5%) (Betz 1994:51). The Norwegian and Danish progress parties follow a different pattern: the balance is slightly in favour of satisfaction (more for the Danish FRP than for the Norwegian one) (Klages and Neumiller 1993:14-15), while below the national mean, but the distrust of politicians is much higher than that of the other parties (Goosken 1993: 17-18).

In sum, the hypothesis of a rise of new parties as a consequence of a crisis of democracy is to be rejected. On the other hand, it is true that those who feel alienated regarding the democratic system are concentrated on the right pole and amongst the ERPs' voters especially. However, some elements of alienation in Western democracies do exist but they have found a quite clear scapegoat: *not democracy as such, but its linkage agents, political parties and politicians* (Poguntke and Scarrow 1996).

c) Value change

Resuming this first exploration in search of a systemic explanation for the rise of new parties, it could be stated that neither changes in the cleavage structure nor a deficit in democratic legitimacy are linked to the development of new parties.

A further explanation, dealing with societal changes, regards the cultural level: change in the value system. Inglehart's famous paradigm of post-materialism *vs.* materialism was based on the "socialization hypothesis" which linked socialization in an environment of "material saturation and security" (Inglehart 1985: 103) and unprecedented high education, exposure to mass media and mobility, with a different value system and value priority. This different value priority and value system emphasized self-affirmation, quality of life, democratic participation, equality and informal interpersonal relationships. The youth

revolution of the 1960s represented the first manifestation of the new value system. The critique of that period, addressed against "fundamental aspects of modern life such as commercialisation, industrialisation, political centralization, bureaucratisation and democratisation and cultural rationalisation" (Brand 1990: 28), began to undermine standard beliefs in liberal-democracy or social-democracy.¹⁰ The novelty of the left-libertarian and green movements which adopted the post-material agenda was precisely that of opposing traditional socialist parties not on the basis of Marxist orthodoxy and purity but on the basis of a completely different agenda.

In principle, the structural transformations which led to a post-material value system could have produced a radically different outcome. Why should the post-industrial process of change have favoured left/libertarian organizations? Why should post-materialists be inclined to the left side of the political spectrum? Inglehart's socialization hypothesis implies a change in value *priority* (material vs. postmaterial), not in political orientation. Therefore, the same structural societal change -basically, long-term economic development (Inglehart and Abramson 1994:351)- could have induced post-material *right-wing attitudes*.

This hypothesis is consistent with the analysis of theoreticians of mass society: the by-product of mass society was the destruction of the bonds of family, kinship and (small) community. The loss of social and affective roots would have produced insecurity and *anomie* leaving the individual isolated and alienated.¹¹ The demand emerging from mass society did not concern the economy but the value system: providing a sense of community, of belonging, of common scope, of integration and so on, has nothing in common with "material" elements. Increasing *anomie* (in Durkheim's terms) has raised the demand for stricter moral

¹⁰ Beyond the classical themes of the progressive agenda, the *Zeitgeist* of the late 1960s and early 1970s contained in itself also some elements of anti-modernism extraneous to traditional leftism, such as opposition to economic growth, to consumerism and to the penetration of society by the state.

¹¹ However, neither outcomes occurred. Abundant empirical evidence shows that in Western democracies people have a reasonable interest in politics - 40% declare such an interest (Cayrol 1994:183) and only one third, on average, never discuss politics (Topf 1995:61) - they join voluntary associations, interest groups, above all trade unions (Aarts 1995), and they participate actively beyond the vote much more than before.

standards, for a more rigorous religious commitment and more pervasive religious presence, for traditional family and sexual roles, for a more hierarchical social organization, with clearly defined lines of command, for law and order enforcement, for symbolic references to "national" identity in term of national pride (easily shifting to aggressive nationalism and xenophobia) and of opposition to Europe and to globalization. All these issues, which consitute the "new right" agenda (Flanagan 1987, Eatwell 1989, Girvin 1989), emphasise non-material concerns: they represent the right-wing (and substantially authoritarian) version of post-materialism. These issues found theoretical systematisation in the neoconservative intellectual tendency which emerged in the late 1970s as a reaction to Keynesian social compromise and the welfare state, to internationalism and libertarianism. Neoconservatism differs from conservatism because it does not support the *status quo* but challenges modernity on its own territory by juxtaposing to the post-material "progressive" agenda a post-material "authoritarian" agenda (Flanagan 1987:1308, 1312).

The importance of the conservative reaction has been underrated because, on the one hand, the *Zeitgeist* favoured at first a libertarian-equalitarian value change and, on the other, *no manifest mobilization of the right-wing tendency emerged*. While on the left side the mobilization took the form of "new social movements" with quite high levels of popular participation in the 1980s¹², on the right side, nothing coalesced in that form. Those who wanted to respond to post-industrial society differently from the pacifists, civil rights militants, feminists, ecologists etc., kept silent until a political entrepreneur arrived to mobilise their support. And when they mobilized, their political style was different: while the New politics parties advocated more participation and more citizens' involvement, and were quite visible on the streets, ERPs neither supported nor exhibited anything similar. The most visible presence of the extreme right was the violent, Fascist-like actions of the ERPs' youth groups or by small groups of radical-right militants which have recently taken the form of the "skin-head" or "nazi-skin" movements, frequently responsible for aggression against immigrants all over

¹² See the data in Aart 1995: esp. 249-254.

Europe (Merkl 1994, Björge 1995). These acts, however, involve very few people and are not those of anything akin to a social movement.

What was lacking on the right side in order to form a collective movement was the utopian message. The only highly emotional and strongly symbolic messages came from the Fascist and nazi traditions: that is, the absolute evil for post-war democracies. The stigma associated with this symbolic imagery inhibited the formation of a large collective movement. And it is not the case that all extreme right parties which referred clearly to the inter-war Fascist tradition have recently undergone a crisis. The nostalgic element preserved a well-defined constituency for several decades, especially in the case of Italy: but then, when even the nostalgia lost its power of identification, these parties declined. The "traditional" ERPs almost disappeared with the exception of the Italian MSI which, on the contrary, reached the zenith of its electoral fortunes: but this outcome materialised because, first, the Italian system collapsed and, second, the party quickly changed its Fascist image, softening the nostalgic traits and transforming itself into the AN (Alleanza Nazionale - National Alliance).

It could be argued, then, that a right-wing value system, either derived from the Fascist tradition or by the radicalization of the neoconservative agenda, merged with novel themes coming from the *Nouvelle Droite*, was developing at the same time that the New politics took off. But it was invisible, it did not manifest itself, it was "silent".

Post-industrial society produced two opposite reactions: more self-affirmation on one side (New politics) but also more atomisation/alienation on the other (authoritarian neo-conservatism). The representatives of New politics seek more auto-direction, informality, libertarianism; their right-wing counterparts seek more order, tradition, identity and security/reassurance. The direction taken in the context of post-industrial transformation depends on which ideology or cultural mood had prevailed in the last two decades. After the libertarianism and equalitarism of the late 1960s and early 1970s, in the 1980s a rightward turn occurred. This shift to the right saw the diffusion of the neoconservative cultural tendency and its adoption in the manifestos of the "bourgeois" parties

(Klingemann *et al.* 1994). Moreover, all political families had moved to the right compared to the 1970s but *the larger shift to the right concerned the conservative parties* (Klingemann 1995: 190-191).

This move had favoured the subsequent rise of ERPs. Where conservative parties regained power the ERPs succeeded. The relationship established by Kitschelt (1988) and Rorhschneider (1993) for the green parties - "where the left was in government the greens grew" - goes for the ERPs too. As the socialist parties in government were not able to manage the New politics agenda, the conservatives *in power*, not in opposition, dropped the new right agenda (with the relevant exception of the British Thatcher government). Therefore, new issues, placed on the political agenda through the neoconservative intellectual movement by established forces such as the conservative parties and their think-tanks, remained stagnant until the extreme right parties emerged to represent *and radicalise* that agenda.

The rise of ERPs in the 1980s is thus linked to the capacity for mobilising resources (citizens unsupportive of the system, alienated from politics, sensitive to non-politicised issues such as immigration, morality and national pride) of political entrepreneurs who exploited a favourable structure of opportunity at the political level (system polarisation and radicalization) and at the cultural level (the rise of a neoconservative movement within the intellectual elite with its impact on mass level beliefs).

d) New parties and spatial analysis

The development of new parties has also been explained by Downs' model

(1957). Spatial analysts predict the emergence of a new party when the traditional parties move significantly along the left-right continuum and leave open to newcomers a relevant portion of the unrepresented electorate (Downs 1957: 128ff). The famous example of the success of the Labour party in spite of the Liberal party in Great Britain is a case in point. This interpretation brings into the analysis the problem of the left-right continuum: all parties occupy a precise location on the continuum and they keep control of a certain part of the electorate, trying to conquer some part of the bordering electorate by small programmatic shifts (Shepsle and Cohen 1990: 39-40). The party system could thus be imagined as an oligopolistic market where few actors control their share of consumers/voters. The only way to break into the market is to introduce a brand new product: in other words, only if a party offers to the electorate a new set of issues could it gain its own place in the party system. As we know, very few succeeded in this effort up to the 1980s. The largest quota of these parties were flash parties whose life was short and not relevant (Pedersen 1982; Harmel and Robertson 1985). Moreover, they were country-specific which means that they arose from specifically national problems (for example, the linguistic cleavage in Belgium in the 1970s) and/or from a split in pre-existing party organizations.¹³ In sum, they did not form a kind of new party family.

The only, rather weak, attempt to enter the party system by a new political family was made by "new-left" groups in the early 1970s. These by-products of the movement of 1968 arose in many countries, especially Scandinavian and Mediterranean countries, as a consequence of splits amongst the Communists and Socialists but they did not survive long, nor did they play a significant role. Moreover, in this case, the political offer of these ultra-leftist parties was not so original, as they presented themselves as "true believers" of the Marxist principles that had been "betrayed" by the traditional leftist parties. On the other hand, when the Greens appeared, their agenda was quite novel. And the same applies to those ERPs which denied any Fascist inheritance, the so-called post-industrial

¹³ Between 1960 and 1980, 233 new party organizations were counted but only twenty were formed by new political groupings without the participation of previous existing politicians or party factions or party organizations (Harmel and Robertson 1985).

ERPs.

Downs' approach leads us to test whether in countries where new parties emerged the pre-existing parties had previously moved along the left-right continuum leaving "open" (that is, un-occupied) some portions of the continuum still occupied by voters: with these voters being un-represented, a political entrepreneur might try to fill such a "vacuum".

As we have already rapidly touched upon, the political vacuum to be filled concerned a set of issues that were introduced into the political arena by neo-conservatism and then abandoned by the established conservative parties. These issues concern only marginally "economic" or "material" interests. National identity, statecraft, xenophobic policies, moral traditionalism mainly concerning sex and family roles, law and order -all these issues, surrounded by more general attitudes such as antipluralism, antipartism and antiparlamentarism, are the characterising elements.

This set of issues, in particular nationalism, immigration and physical security, was disregarded by the established parties, while being rated as very important by a sizeable number of citizens. The survey data offered by the French polling institutes, for example, (the same goes for other countries) demonstrated quite clearly that French people were concerned for many years with these questions (Ignazi 1989, Sofres 1993). The sudden breakthrough of the Front National is linked to the unresponsiveness of traditional political parties to some issues that were crucial for a certain constituency. And, last but not least, these issues were not "material" issues: they concerned post- or non-material concerns.¹⁴ This is why the ERPs which developed in the 1980s (and their two Scandinavian predecessors) have been defined as postmaterial extreme right.

The same goes for the left side: one knows that the importance of the environmental question and its salience explains first, the rise, and later, the

¹⁴ The very exhaustive analysis by Knutsen (1994:68) argues that right-wing voters "do not appear to have extreme rightist materialist or authoritarian values. (...) The only set of value orientations where they express extreme attitudes is on environmental values where their voters have the most anti-green values of all party families".

success, of the greens. The data provided by Hofrichter and Reif (1990) and Dalton (1994:54) point out that the environmental problem was perceived as an important issue by the population at large and that a particular section of citizens rated this problem at the highest level. When this condition materialises, a potential constituency for a "green" party exists. Then other factors (the reaction of the established parties, the electoral system, lack of leadership, the emergence of more salient questions and so on) might fuel or arrest the development.

4) Conclusion

Peter Mair (1993) is right in stressing the limited electoral support for new parties: they are not present in all countries and in some they do not even obtain 1% of the vote. But if we take the eleven European countries where they are present, in the period 1988-1994 they collected 12.3% of the votes, (ERPs:7.2%; Greens:5.1), doubling the percentage of the previous period (1980-1987). If this share of votes is divided among all European countries, the new parties' impact decreases; but if, on the other hand, we add the "anti-establishment parties" excluded from this analysis, the mean increases further. Instead of playing with numbers, it is fair to conclude that new parties are growing in number and in size. They have not made a real breakthrough (with the possible, though quite different, exceptions of the Italian and Austrian cases): only a handful, in fact, attained more than 10% of the vote in national elections: the French Front National, the Belgian Greens, the Norwegian FRP, the Italian MSI/AN and, above all, the Austrian FPÖ.

On the other hand, the ERPs and the Greens represent two quite neat "political families": this means that, on two different, opposite sides, common problems and common concerns across Western Europe were shared and coalesced in partisan organizations. This phenomenon has been interpreted as the symptom of a system crisis, a crisis of democracy. It seems clear that this is not the case: democracy is in good health. The more plausible explanation lies in value change

and the related inability of traditional parties to represent new issues. The political parties, more than the democratic system, are under question for not fulfilling their channelling function. Parties seems quite sclerotic in the transmission of people's demands and desires. They are still strong and powerful (Mair 1995) but they are losing their hold over (civil) society: they are no longer considered the best channel of expression. On the one hand, this perception has fuelled new social movements and protest; on the other, it has stimulated the disaffected, but active, citizens to promote, and to participate in, new political parties. Very few (usually referring to the anti-democratic right tradition) criticise parties as such. New parties have been created to overcome the deficiencies of the old ones. If the value system and the specific issues supported by these new parties continue to be salient and to be poorly treated by government and opposition parties, the new parties which entered the political arena in the last decade might be an enduring presence in party systems. A tentative forecast of their future role could be assessed only on the basis of their ability to consolidate and enlarge their constituencies, and with respect to the level of system polarisation. A growing political distance between the extremes and the collapse of the centre-located parties could favour highly institutionalized ERPs and Green parties. But the reverse might be true: novel, more salient issues could emerge, and/or traditional parties might recover their expressive function and, therefore, their diminished prestige.

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