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ABSTRACT

Redefining Red and Green: Ecology and Socialist Politics in France and the Federal Republic of Germany

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This thesis explores the origin and function of new ideologies in contemporary party systems, through a comparative history of ecology parties in France and the Federal Republic. Ideology is strategic: it defines these new entrants and helps expand their political base. Different ideologies fit different strategic situations, however. One was Marxist-influenced, centered on workplace and production-related demands (Die Grünen). The other was a "pure ecological" version, based on decentralized development and citizens' participation (Les Verts).

The thesis links this variation in ecological strategies to the history and political situation of parliamentary socialist parties, the ecologists' main competitors. Where the socialist party was conservative and electorally weak (the West German Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, or SPD), ecologists picked up its left flank with a red/green fusion. Where socialism was politically strong and left-leaning (the Parti Socialiste in France), ecologists had to occupy a radically postindustrial niche.

The theoretical model analyzes the strategic choices progressive movements, both green and red, face in electoral participation, and asks how the process shapes their goals. Spatial theories, which assume these goals rather than explain them, are rejected. Progressive parties must reconcile competing yet overlapping strategic rationalities. These are "identity" (emphasis on the goals of a definite social movement) and "efficacy" (an emphasis on the range of party goals). Though each ecology party at times

combined the two in different degrees, the Verts tended toward identity, and the Grünen toward efficacy.

At any single juncture, an optimal strategy must advance both a movement-based "defining identity" and a concrete "alternative program." The empirical section correlates ecology parties' electoral successes with choices that fit the constraints posed by the socialist party's strength and ideological positioning. Changes in strategy are indicated by the composition of ideological factions inside the ecology party and by related patterns of programmatic material in their campaign documents. An extended comparison of the Grüne and Vert models of ecologically guided social change is drawn from these documents.