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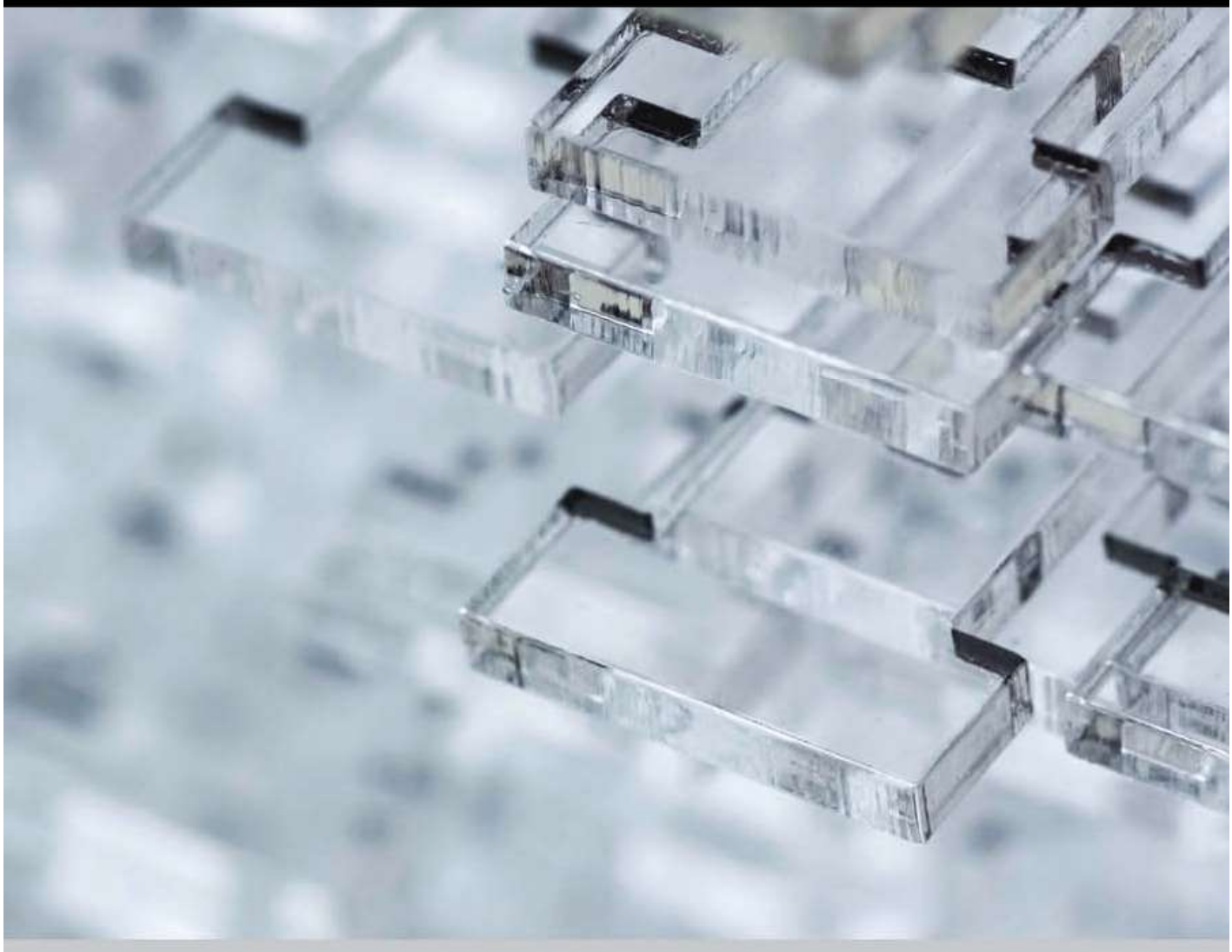

Institutionalisation of Political Parties

COMPARATIVE CASES

Edited by Robert Harmel
and Lars G. Svåsand

Chapter 8

The Uneven Institutionalisation of the Green Party in Poland

Agnieszka Kwiatkowska

INTRODUCTION

After the transition from communism to democracy in the central and eastern European countries and restoration of political pluralism, it became possible to establish legal political parties. However, despite the severe damage inflicted upon the environment during the rule of the communist governments, the successes of the Green parties in the region were limited. In a few countries, Green parties institutionalised quickly and were able to secure stable electoral support, but in most of them, Green parties soon disappeared and only years later managed to gain a new entry into political systems. Nonetheless, with the exception of Latvia, Estonia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, nearly all of them remain niche parties with little relevance for political systems.

The Green Party in Poland was established in 2003 as an environmentalist, leftist alternative to the then in-government, post-communist Alliance of Democratic Left (SLD). The decision to create a party was motivated by the limitations in influencing the political decisions encountered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the form of the political party was chosen as the most effective way of breaking this barrier. Therefore, the Greens emerged as a representation of the social groups that felt unrepresented in the parliament by pre-existing parties.

However, despite high expectations held for the Greens in Poland, both by their supporters and by the leaders of other political formations, in the subsequent fourteen years, the party neither achieved electoral success nor vanished. It managed to survive many internal and external crises, initiating regular, but mostly local actions and taking part in nearly all national and local elections, either independently or as a minor partner in left-wing

or centre-left coalitions. Nevertheless, its institutionalisation remains very uneven, which limits the chances of electoral success.

The institutionalisation of the political party is defined throughout this book as a multidimensional concept, consisting of three non-redundant and mutually reinforcing dimensions: internal and external institutionalisation and objective durability (Harmel, Svåsand and Mjelde: chapter 2 of this book). The internal institutionalisation refers to the organisation of the party and the attitudes of its members and supporters towards it. It covers the organisational development, expansion of the network of local party structures and formalisation of the actions and decision-making process (routinisation of behaviours). The other aspect is of a subjective nature and involves the strength of linkages between the party and its supporting groups, party loyalty, the degree of identification of the members with its ideology, values and methods of operation (value infusion).

The external dimension refers to the activities of the party in its environment and its relations with other political entities. This includes the scope of presence of the party in the public consciousness and the party being perceived as a lasting political actor and taken into account by other actors in their actions and strategies. Finally, objective durability is a dimension describing stable existence of the party over time and its ability to survive internally or externally originated shocks.

The case of the Green Party in Poland supports a relevant contribution to the theory of party institutionalisation for one key reason. Uneven institutionalisation of the Greens provides evidence that party institutionalisation is a multidimensional concept and that high institutionalisation on one dimension may compensate for other poorly institutionalised ones. Moreover, I describe how extensive institutionalisation on the value infusion dimension influenced choices in other aspects of party functioning: inhibiting its organisational development and restraining its relevance for the political system. Following Levitsky's (1998) finding that parties may maintain informal and non-institutionalised party organisations provided the other dimensions remain institutionalised, I proffer that excessive institutionalisation of one dimension may both compensate under-institutionalisation of other dimensions and limit the possibilities of party development in these aspects.

This chapter is based on the results of a research project on institutionalisation of the Green Party in Poland, which started with the party's unofficial formation and was carried out until 2015. The research methods included regular surveys at official party congresses, interviews with key position holders, participant observation, analysis of party manifestos, documents and media coverage and national and cross-national survey data analysis. The surveys among the party members were conducted at the party's official congresses on: 12–14 November 2004 (Gdansk), 24–26 February 2006 (Katowice),

1–2 March 2008 (Warsaw), 17–18 April 2010 (Warsaw), 2–4 December 2011 (Warsaw) and 30–31 May 2015 (Warsaw). Some questions were repeated in all studies, which allowed tracing of changes over time, and some questions referred to current events and activities of the party.

INTERNAL INSTITUTIONALISATION

Analysis of internal institutionalisation of the party provides information on how it transformed itself into an effective, stable organisation, valued by its members and supporters. It covers two key categories of party development established by Levitsky (1998: 78–79): infusion of value and routinisation of activities.

Value Infusion

The concept of institutionalisation as value infusion beyond the technical requirements resulting from the tasks that the organisation aims to perform was first proposed by Selznick in *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*. In his theory, by developing internal social structure the organisation becomes appreciated by its members not only as a tool to achieve their objectives, but as the goal in itself, because its existence meets their personal needs. The better the organisation fits this role, and the less it can be substituted by other entities, the greater its salience and necessity for the members (Selznick 1957: 16–17).

According to Selznick, stabilisation, resulting from the infusion of value, has its price in lower flexibility and adaptability to a changing environment. Similarly, Panebianco (1988) argues that rigid rules imposed on party actions slow down the process of its adaptation. On the other hand, according to Huntington (1968: 17), institutionalised organisation, which managed to create the 'inner life' independent of the function which it was scheduled to perform, is characterised by greater adaptability because it is easier for it to reformulate its objectives. It seems that the truth lies in between: a certain degree of common, internal value is necessary to meet affiliation needs of members and to provide an ideological core, indispensable especially in the initial period of party life and in times of crisis. However, parties over-institutionalised in this aspect, for which all professed values are non-negotiable, encounter difficulties in a situation where the implementation of some of them would require resignation from the others.

The Green parties are formed mostly as movement parties, which are characterised by the strongest value infusion (Randall and Svåsand 2002: 17). Likewise, the Polish Greens were created as a common initiative

of environmental, feminist, LGBTQ and alter-globalist activists. The strong emphasis on key values, shared by the members, became the most important resource of the organisation. A high symbolic value of the party programme was demonstrated in a series of surveys among the members, according to which programme changes in an unacceptable direction would cause a withdrawal of a vast majority of people, while the prolonged lack of electoral successes would not discourage almost anyone from membership (table 8.1).

Members of the Greens have felt strongly integrated within the party. They have been connected by social ties and have been meeting outside the party activities, although due to communication problems, these ties have been largely limited to their own local organisation. The decentralised, networked structure of the party allows for everyday operation in the new social movement – type formula – similar to a group of friends – which further strengthens the equal relations between authorities and other members.

Green ideology has been one of the main sources of self-identification of members, giving them a coherent identity, holistic vision of the world, as well as similar lifestyle. Nevertheless, building the party on multiple social movements was based on the assumption that their ideologies can be easily combined in the joint electoral platform. A common initiative of activists with distinct ideological backgrounds, hitherto cooperating on a limited scale, was started due to pragmatic reasons: opportunity to reach a broader audience and increased chance of passing an electoral threshold. The initiative was inspired by successes of the German party Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, whose members maintained direct contacts with Polish activists and facilitated cooperation between them. However, the key difference in comparison with the German Greens was the conservative sociocultural stance of many Polish environmentalist NGOs.

Therefore, the decision to incorporate in the Green Manifesto interests of many social movements – environmentalist, feminist, LGBT, pacifist, and alter-globalist – caused initial problems with ideological cohesion of the

Table 8.1. Reasons for Considering Leaving the Greens

	2006	*2008*	*2011*	*2015*
Changing the programme in unacceptable direction	87%	77%	69%	82%
Lack of MPs for 15 years	9%	15%	6%	7%
Coalition with the party I do not accept	48%	46%	41%	36%
Electing the party leaders I do not trust	11%	18%	25%	21%
Obtaining a parliamentary majority and failing to fulfil electoral programme	48%	41%	47%	43%

Note: Answers to the question: 'What could cause you to leave the Greens?' Any number of indications allowed.

Source: Surveys among party members 2006–2015.

party. Ideological heterogeneity of groups on which the party was based, including organisations of new social movements and former activists of democratic opposition in the People's Republic of Poland (including members of Solidarity, Orange Alternative, 'Freedom and Peace' Movement and Federation of Greens) meant the discussion involved clashes of multiple world views, often mutually contradictory.

Of the conflicts arising around the party's programme in its initial stage of development, the most crucial one concerned abortion. Two groups emerged: the moderate group, supported by the former liberal-conservative members of the centre-left Freedom Union, aiming at avoiding any statements in this matter and thereby allowing for different points of view, and the radical group, led primarily by feminists, maintaining that the Greens could not distance themselves from important sociocultural issues even if it yielded a loss of some supporters. The conflict was not unexpected, since the issue of abortion had long been dividing these two movements, ever since failed attempts to incorporate feminist postulates into the environmentalist programme in the early 1990s. However, among Greens, the radical faction eventually prevailed, which prompted some of the moderate members to leave the party. Since then, a strong and stable agreement with respect to the catalogue of essential values preached by the party has existed on the sociocultural dimension of the programme. As of 2015, virtually all activists supported liberalisation of the anti-abortion law (93 per cent), gender parity in the Parliament (89 per cent) and allowing same-sex marriages (89 per cent). There was a greater diversion of views on the topic of soft drugs legalisation, which was opposed by one-third of party members (figure 8.1).

However, the dispute over the party's economic stance, between a liberal and social-democratic option, was neglected at the party formation and has continued to threaten party ideological coherence throughout its history. For as long as seven years, the party leaders moderated this conflict by postponing the vote on the party's economic programme, which had existed during this period only as a draft resolution. It was eased by the fact that the two main ideological conflicts were cross-cutting, as surveys revealed the weak association between the sociocultural and economic dimensions in the members' political views. The discussion was postponed to subsequent congresses, causing internal conflicts and leading to emergence of opposing factions. Only at the 2010 congress was the economic platform finally accepted and a series of resolutions passed that placed the party on the far left.

Regular surveys confirmed a gradual ideological shift towards the left, caused partly by the change of views and partly by the liberal members leaving the party and more leftists joining. While all previous surveys revealed the existence of two clearly distinct paradigms in the responses – social-democratic and liberal – the views of party members in 2015 were almost

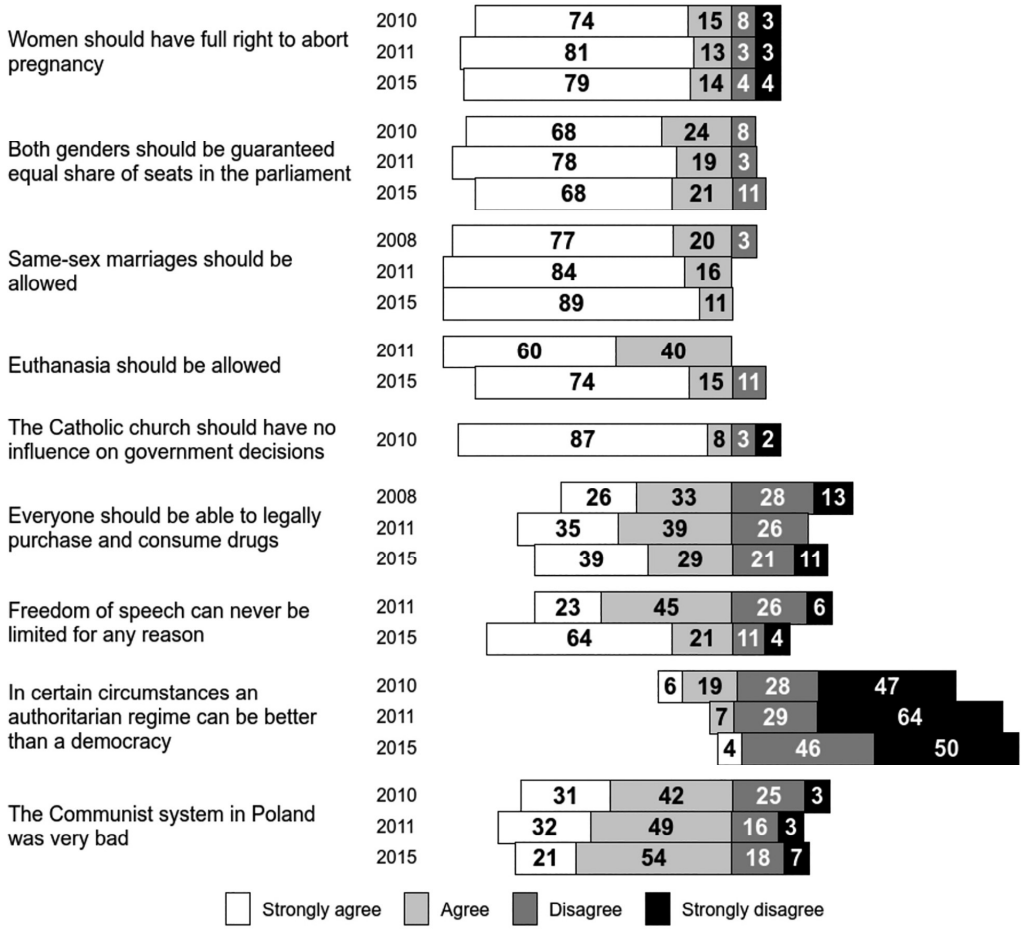

Figure 8.1. Changes in the Political Views of the Greens: Sociocultural Dimension (Poland). *Source:* Surveys among party members 2008–2015.

uniformly supportive of the social-democratic model. Nearly all Greens expressed the belief that the state should provide accommodation and board to anyone who could not afford it (89 per cent, up from 63 per cent in 2008), and a majority supported maintaining compulsory state health and pension systems (68 per cent and 83 per cent), public funding of political parties (90 per cent, up from 60 per cent in 2008), enhancing workers' rights and the empowering of the trade unions (96 per cent), while opposing free international trade (93 per cent) (figure 8.2).

Routinisation of Behaviour

The case of the Polish Green Party, similar to other Green Parties and movement-based parties in general, shows a history of struggle between centralisation and grass-roots tendencies. The fact that the party was founded by leaders of a number of independent NGOs resulted in their unwillingness

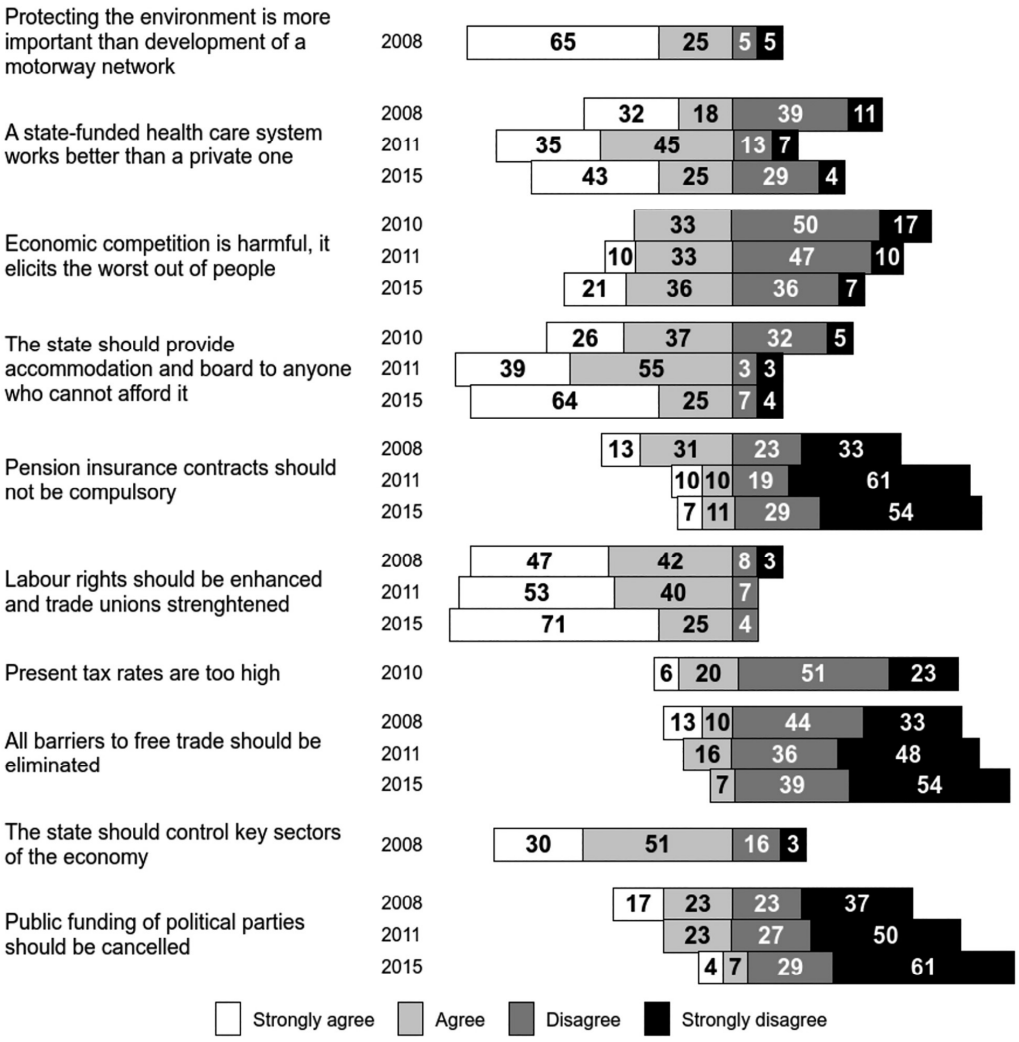

Figure 8.2. Changes in the Political Views of the Greens: Economic Dimension (Poland). ***Source:*** **Surveys among party members 2008–2015.**

to submit to central authorities' decisions and the top-down way of decision making. For many years, the party opposed routinisation tendencies, valuing spontaneity and non-formality. Only after a few electoral failures, greater centralisation and formalisation were introduced. While building a movement party focused on ideological purity and strong commitment to key values translated into high integration level and value infusion, it impeded party organisational development in several ways.

First, ideological conflicts reduced the number of members and led to some local party organisations ceasing to exist. The Polish Greens, given their small number of members (around 250 people), have a fairly well-developed network of local organisations. Most of them were created, however, in the few initial years of the party's existence, when it had twice as many members.

After their withdrawal, some regions were left with formal structures having inadequate or inactive staff. In some cities, the local organisations are made up of few people, and activity is undertaken intermittently, usually during electoral campaigns only. With very few exceptions, the Greens do not have any structures in villages and small towns. The self-reliance of the party and the capacity for regular functioning of many local organisations is doubtful. As the electoral experiences of the party have shown, among twenty-four local organisations only the Warsaw group is capable of completely independent and unabridged electoral competition (taking into account the need to fill the electoral lists in the majority of districts and collect signatures needed for their registration), and few other local organisations are able to present individual candidates. Therefore, from the perspective of the whole country, the organisational structure of the Greens is poorly institutionalised.

Building the party mostly on social movement activists resulted also in another factor impeding its institutionalisation, which is typical for most Green parties. As organisations of new social movements tend to operate using rules of decentralisation, spontaneity and consensual decision making, the transition to professional, efficient political organisation tended to provoke conflicts, especially in situations where rapid decision making was essential, and particularly during the election campaigns. Conflicts concerning the choice between political professionalism of the party – including centralisation, hierarchy, strong central authorities, and pragmatic coalitions – and an NGO-like style of action – consisting of the autonomy of local authorities, decision making based on consensus and decentralisation, and aversion towards compromises in coalitional agreements – were present especially during the first years of party operation. This led to disputes within the party on the centre-periphery line, problems with cooperation with local activists and organisations, and many members leaving the party, including one entire local party organisation.

The structure of the Green Party is based on the pattern of a network organisation, with its characteristic traits: a flattened model of power distribution, extensive independence of local groups, and a short distance between members of the party's senior management and everyday members. The autonomy of the local organisations was best highlighted during the local elections of 2006 when they were granted the right to enter coalitions as they deemed fit as the top-down decision concerning acceptable coalition partners could spark internal conflicts. Also, the differentiation of roles within the party tends to be slight, and the system of hierarchical dependencies is flat and variable. During the first few years of the party's existence, specification among management positions slowly increased, from the initial 'everybody does everything' to division of responsibilities. This gave the party some stability

of operation and greatly lowered the occurrence of blurred responsibility in cases of negligence or failure.

Since the party's founding, the General Assembly of Members (Congress) has been the party's highest decision-making body. Initially, decisions in matters not granted by the statute to other party organs belonged to the Congress. In addition, it had a number of specific competences: legislative (adoption of the statute and party programme), nomination (election of the National Board, National Council, National Audit Commission and National Peer Court), administrative (decision to abolish the party or merge with another one) and organisational (setting its own rules of proceeding, and, until 2006, also approving the regulations of other party bodies). In the past, it also approved nationwide electoral lists and held a number of financial competences: the adoption of the party financial plan (approval of the annual budgetary report and financial statement) and distribution of internal and external funds.

As early as 2006, centralisation tendencies could be observed, with the increasing number of former Congress competences transferred to the National Board and the National Council. The Congress's power has been significantly reduced, and its presumption of competence has been abandoned; its right to approve the electoral lists was also revoked (relayed to the National Council and, in some cases, to the Regional Council or District Coordination Council), as were its financial entitlements (especially distribution of party funds, passed over to the National Board). The National Board, whose competences initially consisted solely of organisational management and representative functions, was granted several additional functions, including the ability to make independent political decisions for the party. Meanwhile, the National Council became the most influential body of the party and gained the rights to, inter alia, approve of the budget and annual balance sheet of the party, appoint a party spokesman, temporarily suspend the chairs of the Greens and to select temporary chairs and adopt the rules for selecting and approving party candidates in the presidential, parliamentary, local government and European Parliament elections. The organogram in figure 8.3 presents the current formal structure of the party.

As for the leaders of the party, theorists of institutionalisation indicate the ambiguous impact of charismatic persons on the further development of the party. According to Panebianco (1988), the presence of a charismatic leader in the early stages of the formation of the party is one of the key factors that reduce the chance of its future effective institutionalisation. On the one hand, each leader has to show charisma to at least a minimal extent, as without that it would not be possible to manage any organisation, especially a non-institutionalised one which has not yet produced internal agreement on the

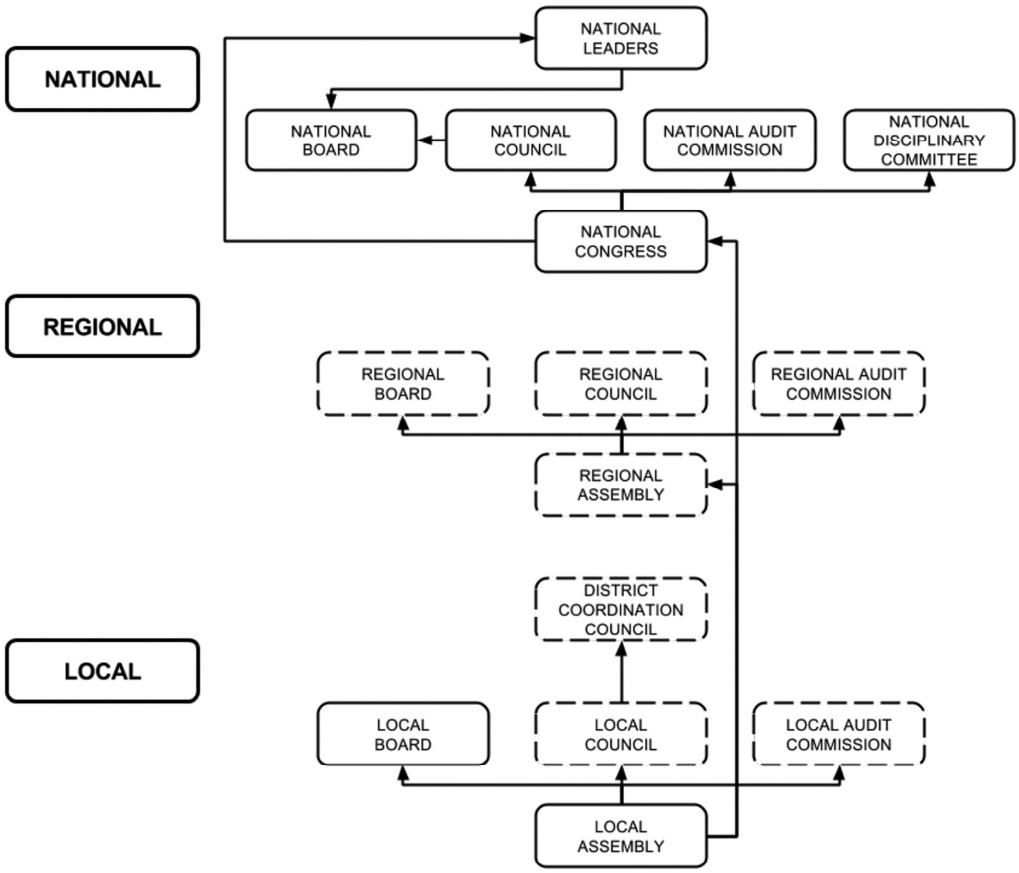

Figure 8.3. The Formal Structure of the Green Party (Poland). ***Source:*** **The Green Party (2016).**

Note: Bodies in dashed fields are optional, depending on the organisation size on the local and regional level. Arrow direction indicates appointing powers.

objectives and methods of operation. In addition, in the initial stage of development of the party, having a charismatic leader makes it easier to mobilise members and supporters.

On the other hand, charisma is in several ways the opposite of institutionalisation, as often it is the leader who acts as a point of reference for the members of the party, not a stable structure or shared values. Furthermore, charisma involves spontaneity and unpredictability of actions, which prevents the routinisation of behaviour necessary in the process of institutionalisation (Panebianco 1988). Moreover, the presence of celebrity-type leaders, especially at the initial stage of development, could be a source of intra-party conflict and influence factional tendencies. In a party created as a political representation of social movements, even attempts to impose decisions taken by leaders without wide deliberations with members could result in active protests and splits.

Having several new social movements, organisations as a social base also brought consequences in party leadership, including functioning of many local leaders and general preference for meritocratic rather than charismatic

leadership. The lack of widely recognisable personalities as the founders of the party certainly slowed down the process of party institutionalisation. The early leaders of the Polish Greens were, according to the 2008 survey among party members, competent and hard-working persons, but they were not charismatic (Kwiatkowska 2011). Since the beginning of the party formation, it is difficult to distinguish one or two persons whose authority contrasts with the rest of the party members. The party operates as a group of activists gathered around the local leaders who form a 'dominant coalition' (Panebianco 1988: 33), a management group that controls the basic sources of uncertainty in the party. This situation was another direct consequence of party formation as a common platform for multiple groups and movements with their long-term leaders. It resulted in turn in the high substitutability of the leaders, which fostered party institutionalisation.

The party also inherited from the social movements' background internal institutions and decision-making process much more democratic than in the other parties, including two national leadership positions to represent both genders and gender and regional quotas for other national authorities, consensual decision making, decentralised actions, electoral campaigns and nomination of candidates. Many of these institutions turned out to be difficult to maintain, especially after the party lost a majority of its members and the requirements of fulfilling all quota regulations led to problems with selection of the members of national authorities. However, the ideas of inclusion and equality – contained in the party programme and its structure and actions – translated into strong ties of members to the party and their emotional engagement. The Greens became not only a tool to achieve the political goals, but also the goal in itself, of great importance for its members and not substitutable by other entities (Selznick 1957: 16–17).

It was a valuable experience for the party to attempt to implement procedures of extreme decentralisation and democratisation. Attempts to introduce anti-political forms of operation, as developed by new social movements, succeeded only partially: fully consensual decision making and ceding key competences to the general meeting of members have proven unmaintainable. It turned out that the political praxis sometimes requires acting without unequivocal support and in conditions of limited transparency.

Of particular interest in this respect is the fate of the Greens' flagship rule – the quota system – which was intended to ensure representation of politically disadvantaged groups in the party authorities and therefore protect their interests and improve their political engagement. As early as in the first Statute of 2003, before formal registration of the party, women were guaranteed 50 per cent of the seats in all national and local party authorities. Women were also granted all odd-numbered places on electoral lists; in addition, they could also run from even-numbered places. In the event of lack of female candidates

for the spaces reserved for them, places in the pool could be granted to men. During the first official congress in 2004, the first principle was replaced by a 50–50 parity with gender-neutral wording. In addition, regional quotas were instituted: membership of the National Council was restricted to at most three persons from the same local organisation; this was intended to reduce the dominance of the largest regions. Age-based quotas were also discussed, providing young people places in the organs of the party and on electoral lists, but ultimately no decision was made on this issue.

However, shortly after the subsequent significant reduction in the number of members, it turned out that combining regional quotas with gender-based parity blocks the possibility of electing a full council consisting of persons with a long membership record who enjoy the acceptance of the majority, due to regional concentration of the Greens in only a few centres. Hence, over time, the requirement for decentralisation was relaxed, initially by increasing the regional limit to five people (in 2008) and then by making it inapplicable to members of the council *ex officio*, that is, to the party leaders and National Board members (in 2010). In addition, since 2008, the requirement for gender parity in the party organs was limited to the national level; at the local level, beyond the functions of the leaders of local groups, quotas became only recommended. The gender parity on electoral lists was also made more flexible by changing the minimal requirement to 40 per cent of the odd-numbered places for both genders; in the majoritarian elections to the Senate, women were guaranteed a minimum of 50 per cent of the positions.

The Greens' partial departure from 'extremely democratic' procedures can be seen not only as a positive process of acquiring political experience and abandoning their youthful radicalism, but also as confirmation of the overall impossibility of transferring decision-making rules of new social movements to the political sphere. Clearly, this failure stems in part from the fact that these principles have been designed for much larger parties. However, intra-party grass-roots democracy would not work well in large parties as well, due to extremely prolonged process of consensual decision making.

EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONALISATION

The concept of external institutionalisation refers to the perception of the party as a permanent and relevant part of the political scene. Thus, it mainly describes how strongly the party is reified in the public consciousness. When analysing the reification level of the Greens, one can distinguish among three aspects: their recognisability in the electorate, their media presence and their influence on strategies of other political actors. In tracking surveys measuring political party support, the Greens are generally not included as an option

due to the small number of their supporters. *Study of the 'Green Potential' in Poland*, whose primary objective was a multidimensional assessment of the political potential of the Polish Greens, revealed that only 0.1 per cent of respondents declared their support for the Greens; in addition, for 2.8 per cent the Greens were a second-choice party (ARC 2008).

This result can be considered very poor, especially given that in the same survey, 15 per cent of respondents mentioned the issue of environmental protection as one of the most important problems of the future, and 25 per cent expressed interest in voting for a party strongly advocating protection of the environment. These apparently contradictory data can be explained by the weak recognisability of the Greens. Only as little as 8 per cent of respondents have heard of the party. Even fewer people were familiar with the Greens' leaders: in an assisted question (with an interviewer reading the names from the list), around 1–2 per cent of respondents recognised the names of the party's main activists. Thus, the limited support for the party can be explained by the fact that it is largely unknown, which is mostly a consequence of the NGO-borne, non-celebrity type of leaders. In all national elections to date, the Greens' results were in the range of 0.2–0.4 per cent (which is approximately 20,000–40,000 of voters, depending on the turnout level).

Analysis of the political chances of the Green Party in Poland has revealed limited possibilities of introducing Green politics – in the form it emerged in the western European countries – into the mainstream of political competition. Most of the other Green parties in the region capitalised on merging environmentalism with a more centrist (Czech Republic) or even right-wing (Estonia, Latvia) position in the sociocultural dimension. However, the importance of ideological purity for the Greens and their close relations with the German Greens made it impossible to move far from the established form, which has very limited social support in Poland. As shown in the survey research (Sadura and Kwiatkowska 2008), Polish citizens declaring the most support for radical law reforms, like legalisation of same-sex marriages and decriminalisation of pregnancy termination, and indicating the protection of nature as a very important political issue, also proved to be economically liberal and no more interested in the protection of nature than an average voter. On the other hand, the economically pro-social electorate tended to exhibit a traditionalist and conservative worldview. Therefore, a less rigid ideological stance might have resulted in a party programme that would be more cohesive voter-wise.

One of the ways to enhance the recognition at the electorate level, particularly important in the absence of access to the media, which is another indicator of the external institutionalisation, is expanding its social reach. This concept can be defined as having 'connectors' with different subpopulations, such as young people, farmers or women (Janda 1980: 105, Randall 2006: 13). The

connectors may be individuals or organisations such as business clubs, trade unions or country clubs, directly cooperating with the party or at least publicly expressing their support during the electoral campaign. The party can create such 'ancillary organisations' by itself or employ already existing entities by allying with their leaders or introducing its members into them (Duverger 1963: 51–52, 106–107). They serve to organise an extra-political sphere of life for its members, so the party may employ them to get support from people who are either not interested in politics or hard to reach using standard communication channels.

The Greens have repeatedly undertaken efforts to win the favour of external groups, primarily new social movement organisations and groups of local residents in areas affected by environmental pollution. They also have made use of their contacts with many opinion-forming bodies, including the Heinrich Böll Foundation, the Congress of Polish Women, the Institute for Sustainable Development and the Institute for Renewable Energy. However, due to emphasis on the sociocultural issues in their programme, only after a few years did they start to establish contacts with economically underprivileged but numerically strong groups like female mall employees, call-centre staff, nurses and teachers.

The Greens' level of reification is strongly affected by membership in the European Green movement. The party often highlights its relationship with the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) and the membership within the European Green Party (EGP), which, in turn, publicly recognises and encourages the actions of the Polish Greens. The EGP activists also take part in events, primarily public debates, organised or co-organised by the Polish Greens.

The Greens' presence in the mass media is minuscule; however, proportionally to their small electorate, they have appeared in press publications fairly often, especially at the time of party formation. Information about the new party, along with its ideological profile, appeared in many national newspapers and magazines. Subsequently, news articles about the Greens were mostly published in connection with thematic actions carried out by them, such as the Rospuda Valley protests and climate and energy campaigns. Like most small new parties, the Greens primarily mark their presence online. At the party's beginnings, their promotional activities were limited to their main website and a newsletter sent out to a limited number of individuals who subscribed. Since 2009, the Greens have increased their online activities beyond their own website via portals, personal websites, social networking sites, blogs and micro-blogging platforms. A large majority of party members have active public Facebook or Twitter accounts, as do regional groups and the party as a whole. Some of them were only active during electoral campaigns, but some are also being used between elections – as means of contact with

supporters and as an everyday tool for communication with other members of the party.

The Greens' reification is surprisingly strongest in the political sphere, influencing the strategies of other political entities. Before each election, major Polish left-wing parties seek their favour, or at least publicly proclaim to do so; this has been even more evident since support for the largest left-wing party in Poland has dwindled to under 8 per cent and constant accusations of a lack of credibility forced it to search a radical, left-wing 'fig leaf'.

Interestingly, members of the Greens, especially in the first years, expressed generally negative attitudes towards prospective coalition partners. Their answers to survey questions assessing their attitude to potential coalitions revealed that, until recently, it was more important for the party to preserve its ideological purity than to achieve a real opportunity to gain seats in the parliament or local authorities. Thus, putting the issues of political purity over effective decision making, the Greens undermined one of the standard definitional features of political parties, which is striving to gain or maintain power (Weber 1968: 284). This feature of the Green party, typical of NGOs, distinguishes them from the majority of political parties, for whom ideologically distant alliances and compromises are an unpleasant yet inevitable part of political life.

The Greens can be arguably considered a 'promoter party' (Harmel and Robertson 1985: 517) or a prophet party (Lucardie 2000), that is, a party whose main aim is to promote awareness about problematic issues, to draw public attention or to promote the introduction to party competition of new political ideas. This goal is more important for the party than maximising electoral successes, which is characteristic of Green parties, at least in the initial phases of their development. Moreover, their primary intra-party purpose is to ensure equal opportunities for members to participate in decision-making process within a party, which automatically limits the role of leadership and makes the decision making slower. Harmel and Janda (1994: 273) call these parties the 'democracy-seeking type' and note that they seek intra-party democracy and full ability to express the preferences of the members, rather than voters' support. High value infusion and clinging to ideological purity resulted in a reluctant stance towards the coalition agreements and political compromises which could have improved their recognisability and electoral results.

OBJECTIVE DURABILITY

Objective durability of the party, as an 'estimate of the probability of continued survival of the party, based on its past history of endurance' (Harmel

et al.: chapter 2) takes into account its age and ability to survive shocks. The Greens, after fourteen years of existence, remain a very small party; yet they keep on engaging in political activities. During this time, the Green Party took part in almost all elections in Poland, excluding presidential ones: three times for local government, four times in parliamentary elections (plus one supplementary) and three times in elections to the European Parliament. The range of participation, however, was very limited: each time the Green candidates competed in just a few districts (when the party was participating independently) or, with few exceptions, occupied mostly distant places on electoral lists (when in an electoral coalition).

When assessing the process of institutionalisation of the Greens, it is essential to focus on the level of the party's ability to survive and adapt to constant changes within the organisation itself and in the external environment. The process of institutionalisation can never be finished, as parties need to react to constant changes of their environment in every phase of their development. This change of social and political context may be a consequence of external events or of a party's own actions. The party may be forced to undergo an inner evolution, extend the repertoire of actions, introduce changes in leadership style or amend its constitution as a consequence of its own actions: participation in national elections, or achieving electoral success and taking the role of parliamentary or governmental party. These changes result in greater stability and routinisation of party activities and strengthening it as an actor within the political system. According to Huntington's (1968: 16) hypothesis, older organisations are less adaptable to changes of goals than younger ones but show greater adaptability in structural and organisational changes. This can be observed in the Polish Greens, whose programme consolidated, but the party organisation and strategy became increasingly more flexible. While in the early years different ideological directions of the programme development were possible, nowadays its basis (radical sociocultural liberalism and social economy) is fairly well defined. The decisions to adopt both these directions resulted in a decrease of the number of party members but strengthened party identity.

The party has undergone particularly important changes at the level of organisation, membership, management methods and rules of proceeding. Joining the party has been made significantly easier, chiefly by eliminating the requirement of a written recommendation by two current members, which used to make it difficult for people from outside the NGOs' environment to engage in the Greens' work. Another soon-abandoned-in-practice prerequisite was a two-month candidate internship, covering the period between submitting the declaration of membership and formally becoming a party member. Because of the small number of people willing to join, the party

decided not to proliferate difficulties for prospective members. Currently, membership of the party is granted automatically, one month after registering, with the proviso that the local or regional council may decide either to grant membership immediately, prolong the internship, or outright reject the candidate. The party also introduced the possibility of registering via post, which is important for people from small towns and regions where local groups are non-existent or do not meet regularly.

The structure of the central bodies of the party has remained almost unchanged throughout its history. The only exception was the formal abolition, mostly due to staffing constraints, of the Council of Women and Council of Minorities, planned but never formed organs that were envisioned to oversee the needs of these groups in the party's programme. On the other hand, major changes occurred in the area of competences of the party authorities as competences of the National Congress have been gradually translocated to the National Board and Council as a part of a centralisation process.

The other changes were aimed at facilitating the functioning of the party during the staffing and organisational shortage. At the local level, the party attempted to mitigate inadequate staffing by loosening formal requirements regulating the local groups. This included more liberal rules regarding creation of a local organisation, relaxation of rules of dissolving or splitting a local organisation in case of too small or too large number of members and the ability to create extraordinary groups not confined to a single geographic region. Options of dismissing members of the central authorities via a referendum without the need to wait until the next Congress and co-opting party bodies through supplementary elections were introduced. The party authorities were enabled to adopt resolutions over the telephone or the Internet. The Greens' members were allowed to compete in the general election from the lists of other electoral committees (under approval of the National Council), while earlier this was possible only if the party had not enlisted its own candidates in a given region.

The party managed to successfully change its name in 2013 from 'The Greens 2004' to 'The Green Party'. While some theorists perceive a name change as an indicator of lack of institutionalisation (Janda 1980), in this case it improved recognisability of the party. The previous name 'The Greens 2004' was an ad hoc name, inspired by the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen name, adapted after the court rejected the simpler 'The Greens' as an effect of a judiciary protest of another then-existing environmentalist party. When the Greens outlived other environmentalist parties, the name was simplified.

When it comes to conflict management, the Greens have already proven to be able to survive a few ideological and structural splits, as well as splits due to interpersonal conflicts between party members. The most crucial conflict

in the initial stage of the party's development arose over decriminalisation of abortion, which divided it into two factions. Further conflicts over its economic stance and the pace of party professionalisation at the expense of movement-like activity brought considerably smaller reductions in members. However, the central authorities managed to convince the smaller local organisations to support the centralisation of the party. In subsequent years, ideological schisms were rare and not impactful.

Considering reification in public consciousness, the successful negotiations with the post-communist-successor party (Alliance of Democratic Left), resulting in very advantageous places on electoral lists in the 2010 local elections for the Green activists, have brought a prominent change in regard to the Greens' relevance to the party system. The first, though small, electoral success of the party had a significant positive effect on the party's recognisability (at least at the local level), changed the perception of the Greens by the other parties and contributed to a further improvement of the party members' attitude towards cooperation with other parties.

Changes in members' perception of the role of the party and the transition of the Greens from the NGO-style party to more professional politics can be seen as a proof of their organisational adaptability. In addition, the communication between the party and its supporters has changed. Initially, the Greens tried to implement the ideology, discourse and actions used by the European Greens on the Polish grounds, but after first electoral defeats, the party undertook efforts to adjust their message to local conditions. Currently, the Greens are still gradually adapting their ideology to the needs of the Polish voters and the style of their actions is evolving from spontaneous and unpredictable into stable and durable patterns. Moreover, the official messages have become more consistent, emphasising elements that enjoy large public support (environmental issues, economic equality) at the expense of the more controversial ones (e.g. lesbian and gay rights).

The Greens survived several external shocks, including the most recent internal split after the formation of the small left-wing party Razem (Together) before the 2015 parliamentary elections. Together radically pro-social economic policies combined with a liberal sociocultural programme attracted some of the Green activists, including a few members of the party's National Board. This made current (in broad left-wing coalition) and former (as members of Together) Green politicians compete against each other in the elections, as two left-wing electoral lists were formed. The lack of cooperation caused both left-wing groups to fall below the electoral threshold and, as a consequence, resulted in the lack of the left side of the political spectrum in the Polish 2015–2019 parliament. However, in the long term the Greens survived the split without much damage.

CONCLUSION

The institutionalisation of the Polish Greens is clearly uneven. It is very high in the value infusion dimension. The party's cohesive force and key resource is the ideological core to which all members subscribe. The members' identification with the party's ideology, as well as with the party as an organisation, is very strong, as evidenced by their declarations in the surveys and staying in the party regardless of its electoral failures. The party created its 'inner life' – surpassing the functions it was intended to perform as a political entity – as well as a distinct, coherent world view among the members. As one of the activists put it: 'The Greens function as a kind of social coterie, a sofa party. . . . Decision making is just an excuse to meet, argue, testify to one's ideas, divide into five factions, from *fundis* to *realos* through various alternatives along the way' (Kwiatkowska 2011). This causes operational difficulties (opposition towards centralisation of the party, prolonged decision making, problems with transition between formal and informal mode, especially in conflict situations) but contributes to the durability of the group despite small electoral chances.

High value infusion compensates problems resulting from underdeveloped organisational structure as the level of organisation of the party has been low since the beginning. The low coordination and management skills of party authorities and poor internal communications have been repeatedly evaluated in surveys among members as poorly developed and identified as factors hindering the party's political effectiveness. The Green Party has become an institutionalised, durable and adaptable organisation, but its organisational underdevelopment resulting in the enduring lack of electoral success prevents it from becoming a *relevant* institutionalised *party*. However, the relationship between electoral success and party institutionalisation is not trivial. Bolleyer and Bytzek (2013) found that nearly one-third of the parties that gained parliamentary representation fail to secure re-election.

The decentralised, loose structure of the Greens may raise doubts about their ability to react quickly to a sudden political situation, which was particularly visible in the case of the early elections of 2007 due to the shortened term of the Parliament. Gerlach (2001: 303) points out, however, that network-like structures have an advantage over hierarchical organisations, enabling them to immediately mobilise and grow the movement in the event of political confrontation, without the need for growth of its administration. Polycentric organisations with many leaders are more difficult to control by the authorities, and the autonomy and self-sufficiency of individual subgroups enable the party to survive splits and disintegration of other groups.

Ideological rigidity of the Greens and over-institutionalisation on the value infusion dimension contributed to its durability – an important factor when the party possesses very limited resources that can be redistributed among the members as compensation for their work. The party has been able to survive in a hostile ideological environment, actively competing in local and national politics, and thanks to ideological cohesion it has been able to survive many internal and external crises. Therefore, the case of the Polish Greens corroborates Steven Levitsky's (1998) hypothesis concerning the possibility of coexistence of a high level of institutionalisation on the value infusion scale and a low level of behaviour routinisation.

Moreover, the case of the Polish Greens confirms that there are many ways of achieving durability for the political organisation, each of them resulting from a party-specific advantage: value infusion, party access to some specific resources, or – as in the case of many communist-successor parties in eastern and central Europe democracies – financial, organisational and human resources derived from the former regime (see Bozóki and Ishyiama 2002; Grzymala-Busse 2002). It is therefore difficult to create a comprehensive set of dichotomous criteria which all need to be fulfilled in order for a party to be 'sufficiently institutionalised to succeed'. Rather, it seems that a high level of institutionalisation in one dimension may not only coexist, but even compensate for less-institutionalised ones sufficiently for the long-term survival of the party.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the underdeveloped organisational structure and extensive internal democracy are the consequences of the ideological profile of the Greens. As a movement party, based on the idea of grass-roots action, and with its own ideology – Green Politics – opposing centralisation and routinisation of organisation, the party authorities' actions towards greater centralisation are perceived by some members as breaking the core Green spirit of a fully inclusive party with a consensual decision-making process. The under-institutionalisation on the dimension of routinisation of behaviours is, therefore, a planned feature of the party.

Finally, the party has been able to maintain a loose and under-institutionalised organisational structure and low external institutionalisation, as the value infusion has been remaining extensively strong and has been holding the members together regardless of organisational obstacles and low electoral support. However, strong pressure on ideological purity has been making the party prone to internal conflicts and restricted its possibilities of attracting new members, further hindering its organisational development. High value infusion has also been a source of party problems with external institutionalisation, reducing its possibility of programmatic adaptation to the political views of a broader electorate. Additionally, ideological rigidity of the party

and reluctance towards ideological compromises restricted its coalitional possibilities. In conclusion, excessive institutionalisation in the value infusion dimension can both compensate for under-institutionalisation of other dimensions and limit the possibilities of party development in those areas, inhibiting its organisational development and restraining its relevance for the political system.