

Conserve and Conservative:
The Ideological Divide Between the Green Parties of Lithuania and New Zealand and Its
Ramifications for Environmentalism's Future

Introduction

With the progress of the 21st century, climate change and environmentalism have risen to become key issues for people across the world. Many protests and movements have taken hold, both nationally and internationally, calling for strong climate action and reform to battle anthropogenic impact on nature. Yet, the green movement has translated into somewhat fractured representations in international political spheres. Where some countries possess weak and powerless green parties, others have long-standing and influential green forces. Among those of the latter are New Zealand and Lithuania, a peculiar duo on the world stage. Both have green parties with long histories—New Zealand's, in fact, being the successor to the world's first national green party. Most importantly, each of these small nations boasts a green party with significant political power. The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand currently works alongside the governing Labour Party in a “cooperation agreement,” which has provided the Greens with two ministers in addition to influence on the government's policies. In Lithuania, the Farmers and Greens Union (Lietuvos valstiečių ir žaliųjų sąjunga, LVŽS) first served in government coalitions from 2001-2008 under three separate cabinets. Then, the 2016 general election saw a shock victory for LVŽS, garnering the most seats and propelling them to government formation under the Skvernelis Cabinet (2016-2020). However, with both the New Zealand Greens and LVŽS touting significant victories, there do exist substantial differences; most importantly, the former prescribes to the left-wing while the latter constitutes the centre-right and “green conservatism.” This is a trend that can be seen across the world, with various environmentalists finding their niche on the ideological spectrum. Numerous countries possess powerful green conservative parties—such as Mexico, Latvia, and Denmark in addition to Lithuania. Others,

however, retain the movement's left wing, as in France, the Netherlands, the USA, and many others. Some have even trod the middle ground, prescribing to "green liberalism" as in Switzerland, Uruguay, Finland, and others.

The success of environmentalism's three corners has varied wildly, with some parties rising into government while others remain lowly opposition. However, can the movement survive when it is fractured? Must its platform remain unified, or can green politics settle with both left and right? I hypothesize that while both wings of environmental action pursue important green policies, green conservatism in particular finds itself at odds with many foundational policies of the broader environmental movement; as a result, green conservatism should perhaps not be considered a subset of green politics, but rather as conservatism with an acceptance of the climate crisis. Instead, left-wing green politics is most representative of what the movement, scientists, and leading diplomats are advocating as solutions to climate change.

Literature Review

With the recent and significant rise in green political relevance, there has been a corresponding increase in articles, papers, and books that detail the subject. This literature can be divided into two groups: those that follow the rise of green parties and how they fit into the political sphere, and those that detail their decline or transformation as the green movement has itself transformed. Regarding the former, numerous important discoveries and hypotheses have been made. *The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe* is an important source in particular, first published in 1995 when green parties, which had seen massive success over the 1980s, were beginning to solidify in European politics in the last decade of the 20th

century¹. The authors document the appeal of Green ideology—a post-industrial society of conservation and decentralized economics—especially in parts of Europe where this was the chief opposition to state-socialist regimes of the Cold War. Ultimately, the book analyzes numerous European countries, finding a great level of variety amidst their policies and success. From this point in time, literature on green parties was just beginning to come about. Over the first few years of the 1990s, the first political analyses of green parties' emergence were finally manifesting (Kaelberer et al. 1993). This growth was, in fact, so new that it was viewed as a phenomenon before being established as a permanent fixture of European politics (Kitschelt 1993). These works typically focused on the early European green parties in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, also noting their success in countries like Sweden and Belgium (Vedung 1991, Doherty 1992).

As the 1990s progressed, however, and the world marched onwards into the 21st century, the substantial success of green parties seen in the 1970s and 1980s began to falter. As early as 1994, scholars were noticing backwards steps in the environmental movement—we can see this in Anna Bramwell's book from that year, *The Fading of the Greens: The Decline of Environmental Politics in the West*². Writers took note of a changing political state; the greens, initially defined by their “anti-party party” nature and emphasis on grassroots democracy, began to take form as solidified forces in European democracy (Zelko & Brinkmann 2006). Additionally, green parties that had taken shape across the world were beginning to home in on more local issues, diverging from the highly international environmentalism that dominated the

¹ Richardson, Dick, and Chris Rootes. *The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe*. London: Routledge, 1996.

² Bramwell, Anna. *The Fading of the Greens: The Decline of Environmental Politics in the West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

1970s and 1980s (Schreurs 2004). Further, not only was the green ideology threatened by decline, but writers have observed a decline in party politics as a whole and activism for party platforms (Whiteley 2010). Finally, the movement was additionally burdened by a failure to succeed outside of developed democracies in Europe, North America, and Australasia; in Asia and Africa, places with environmental problems aplenty, little documentation has occurred for their equally minute green movements. Though Japan saw a small environmental push in the 1990s, such attempts stumbled and failed without extensive industrial or political support (Schreurs 2004).

This context brings us to the literature and political reality of today. The green parties of both New Zealand and Lithuania have certainly been subject to the aforementioned shifts and phenomena, as well as others unique to their countries. For example, Lithuania, as an eastern European democracy only relatively recently freed from the Soviet Union, is potentially vulnerable to political manipulation that might not strike heavily guarded and historic democracies like Germany, France, and the United Kingdom (Kascian & Denisenko 2020). Meanwhile, New Zealand is a strong democracy rated very highly by NGOs like Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index; however, its Green Party suffers from occupying a similar political space as the left-of-centre Labour Party, with the gains of one typically impacting the losses of the other (O'Brien 2012). Additionally, New Zealand elections function under the mixed-member proportional representation (MMP) system, making it very difficult for parties to achieve majorities and forcing them to rely on smaller parties for confidence-and-supply or coalitions. Some argue that this threatens the long-term democratic health of the nation by way of encouraging contract parliamentarism (Bale & Bergman 2006),

but one can also attribute the MMP system as the reason New Zealand's Green Party maintains relevance and representation.

Background — Politics of Lithuania and New Zealand

Though both Lithuania and New Zealand's green parties now exist as substantial political forces within their respective legislatures, this has not always been the case, and both nations have unique historical circumstances that have led to today. Beginning with Lithuania, the country first achieved independence from the Russian Empire in 1918, then once again became autonomous from the Soviet Union in 1990. This was shortly followed by the 1992 general elections, the first under a liberal democracy, though it was not until the 1996 elections that the zeitgeist of modern Lithuanian politics began to take shape. The Democratic Labour Party (Lietuvos demokratinė darbo partija, LDDP), the reformed title of the Communist Party, quickly declined with the rise of Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats (Tėvynės sąjunga – Lietuvos krikščionys demokratai, TS-LKD) who, as of late 2020, currently govern Lithuania. Where TS-LKD represented the right, the Social Democratic Party (Lietuvos socialdemokratų partija, LSDP) became representative of the centre-left alongside the more centrist Labour Party (Darbo partija, DP). Until 2016, these three parties dominated Lithuanian politics and formed the majority of its governments, and it was this hegemony that LVŽS challenged with its unexpected electoral victory. Leading up to the 2016 elections, opinion polls had LSDP in the lead, followed by LVŽS and TS-LKD. The results, however, were a major blow to the establishment parties; LSDP received only 14.4% of the vote, about 10% less than polls suggested and causing a loss of twenty-two seats. TS-LKD, though it received 22.63% of the vote (more than LVŽS' 22.45%), lost two seats and ended with thirty-one. This opened the door for LVŽS to garner an astonishing fifty-four seats up from only one, putting them far ahead of their largest opposition TS-LKD and

prompting government formation. The table below documents the full electoral history of LVŽS:

In New Zealand, however, the Green Party has yet to lead its own government. Though it maintains a good relationship with the Labour Party, this is a noticeably young phenomenon. New Zealand has an electoral history stretching back to the first general election in 1853. In 1856 the country was awarded “responsible government,” meaning they were no longer held accountable by the British Parliament. This was followed by becoming a dominion in 1907 and, finally, full independence in 1947. Though elections stretch back into the 19th century, the Labour Party did not participate until 1911; meanwhile, its centre-right counterpart of the National Party would not join the fray until 1938. Since the emergence of the National Party, the Labour-National dichotomy has remained strong. It was weakened, however, with the adoption of mixed-member proportional representation in 1996, which has greatly limited the capacity for any one party to achieve an absolute majority in the House of Representatives. This electoral reform caused a burst in third-party activity, allowing the New Zealand First, Alliance, ACT, and United New Zealand parties to receive significant representation. The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand, meanwhile, entered parliament in 1999 and has remained a steady force since. In their most recent 2020 election, the Green Party gained two seats for a total of ten in the House of Representatives’ one hundred and twenty seats. Labour won a historic absolute majority with sixty-five seats, forming the government and signing a cooperation agreement with the Greens.

Background — Platforms of LVŽS and New Zealand Greens

Before one can discuss overcoming the ideological divide between various green parties, it must first be seen what exact policies have caused this schism. The Green Party of New Zealand is, in many ways, what one might envision as a “standard” green party. Climate collapse is at the heart of their platform, the front page of their website advertising “Zero Carbon,”

“Thousands of Jobs for Nature,” and “Ended Offshore Exploration.” However, this is but a piece of what makes the party left-wing. The Green Party also advocates for a progressive tax system under which net wealth over \$1 million is taxed and various loopholes and systems of avoidance are closed³. The Greens have introduced the “Homes for All Plan” as well, which would make housing more affordable and, therefore, more accessible for New Zealand’s impoverished. Finally, the party has also been a stout advocate for legalized cannabis and euthanasia. With these policies in mind, it is clear that the party sits in the left-wing—they are clear advocates for the regulation of capitalism, pushing for policies that expand government programs and social welfare.

The Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union, meanwhile, has a noticeably different platform. Some policies do remain alike; LVŽS, in its 2016 election platform, advocated for increased psychological services availability, increased old-age pensions, and significant climate action via preservation, agricultural reform, and environmental education⁴. Additionally, each category in its platform description is labeled “sustainable,” further emphasizing the party’s green direction. However, there remain large diversions from New Zealand’s Greens. Their 2016 platform called for a 2% increase to defense funding, and it emphasized the importance of fertility in marriage. In fact, it was the latter policy that caused LVŽS to refuse admittance in the European Green Party, as they do not support the legalization of same-sex marriage in Lithuania⁵. Finally, the party also espouses Lithuanian nationalism and Russian skepticism,

³ "Progressive Tax Reform." Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand. Accessed February 27, 2021. https://www.greens.org.nz/progressive_tax_reform.

⁴ User, Super. "2016 M. LR Seimo Rinkimai." LVŽS - Lietuvos Valstiečių Ir žaliųjų Sąjunga. Accessed February 02, 2021. <https://www.lvzs.lt/lt/apie-mus/programa/2016-m-lr-seimo-rinkimai>.

⁵ Austėja Masiokaitė-Liubinienė, BNS. "Lithuanias Farmers and Greens Union Refuses to Join European Green Party Due to LGBT Stance." Lrt.lt. September 09, 2019. Accessed February 02, 2021. <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1095718/lithuania-s-farmers-and-greens-union-refuses-to-join-european-green-party-due-to-lgbt-stance>.

pushing for the country to become independent of Russian power production and remain close to the EU and NATO blocs. Thus, LVŽS is evidently placed not only to the right of New Zealand's greens but on the political right-wing, evidenced by their Lithuanian nationalism, military support, and socially conservative values.

Data

Data for this thesis will come from a variety of sources, each addressing a different aspect of my political analysis. Firstly, party platforms are of great importance to understanding how each party presents themselves to their constituents, as well as what issues they find to be most pressing. Obtaining this data is as simple as visiting each party's website and reading about their issues; however, additional information regarding how each party campaigns on these issues will be provided by various papers. This includes Šuminas and Aleksandravičius' 2017 paper focusing on advertisements in the 2016 Lithuanian parliamentary elections, among others that focus on very similar topics.

Secondly, data regarding the historical success and patterns of each green party is also necessary. This is available via each country's official electoral results, which provides exact statistics regarding popular vote, share of the total vote, and other important figures—these are detailed in the tables below. Numerous authors and scholars also detail the subject, such as O'Brien's paper describing the Green Party of New Zealand's ascension from a minor to major political force following the 2011 general election. Likewise, Navickas' paper "Lithuania After Politics?" provides the equivalent for Lithuania's LVŽS, explaining their rise to power in 2016 and the reasons behind this shock victory. Otherwise, the electoral history of the New Zealand Greens is detailed in the following table:

1990	124,915 votes	6.85%	0 seats (Extra-Parliamentary)
1993 ⁶	350,063 votes	18.21%	0 seats (Extra-Parliamentary)
1996	209,347 votes	10.10%	3 seats (Opposition)
1999	106,560 votes	5.2%	7 seats (Confidence & Supply)
2002	142,250 votes	7.0%	9 seats (Opposition)
2005	120,521 votes	5.3%	6 seats (Cooperation Agreement)
2008	157,613 votes	6.7%	9 seats (Opposition)
2011	247,372 votes	11.1%	14 seats (Opposition)
2014	257,356 votes	10.7%	14 seats (Opposition)
2017	162,443 votes	6.3%	8 seats (Confidence & Supply)
2020	226,754 votes	7.86%	10 seats (Cooperation Agreement)

Additionally, this second table shows the history of LVŽS:

2004	78,902 votes	6.6%	10 seats (Coalition)
2008	46,162 votes	3.7%	3 seats (Opposition)

⁶ At this time, the New Zealand Greens were part of Alliance, a left-wing political group formed in 1991 and dissolved in 2015. Though the Greens garnered no seats in 1993, Alliance received two.

2012	53,141 votes	3.9%	1 seat (Opposition)
2016	274,108 votes	22.4%	54 seats (Coalition)
2020	204,780 votes	18.1%	32 seats (Opposition)

As is made apparent by this data, the New Zealand Greens have a longer history than Lithuania's LVŽS by over a decade. Moreover, though their share of electoral votes is noticeably smaller than LVŽS' largest shares, the Greens are seen to have participated slightly more in governance throughout their history: government support 1999-2002 and 2017-2020, and cooperation agreements 2005-2008 and 2020– (a total of about 10 years, as of May, 2021). LVŽS, while it has participated less, has had a more direct involvement in political rule by being part of two governing coalitions—a minor partner 2004-2008 and the leading partner 2016-2020. Both parties, however, have significantly different patterns of success. The New Zealand Greens' peak came early on in the 1990s; however, since this was prior to the country's adoption of MMP, the large share of votes did not translate to parliamentary strength. In Lithuania, meanwhile, its greatest success has come most recently, where the 2016 and 2020 general elections saw LVŽS rise from a markedly small party to one of Lithuania's largest. Whether this presence will last as long as Green Party of New Zealand is still to be seen.

Finally, the third form of data will originate from books and papers that detail green party patterns and phenomena outside of the New Zealander and Lithuanian political spheres. These texts focus primarily on well-known and successful parties, such as The Greens (Die Grünen) in Germany and Austria, Sweden's Environmental Party (Miljöpartiet de Gröna, MP), and the Netherlands' GreenLeft (GroenLinks, GL). Some also address the green parties that have seen less than great success, including the United States' Green Party and Greens Japan (緑の党グリー

ンズジャパン, Midori no Tō). These will serve as important points of reference for looking at both New Zealand and Lithuania, as they help to illustrate the reasons for success in these countries in relation to both overarching, international phenomena as well as county-specific sociopolitical factors.

Methodology

Ultimately, it is from the aforementioned data that we can conclude the success of New Zealand and Lithuania's green parties is attributed to numerous factors outside of climate change. This is made evident, first in Lithuania's case, by the numerous papers and books regarding its unique political sphere. As previously stated, the country is relatively young with a history of political oppression and authoritarianism under the Soviet Union, which has a substantial impact on the modern politics of the republic. In particular, a deep skepticism of Russia, along with a desire for independence and alignment with the West, take centre stage for party platforms and policy. While groups like LVŽS advocate for environmentalism, conservation, and other ecological considerations, this is done in the backdrop of anti-Russian sentiment in addition to criticism of Lithuania's predominant political forces. This is made evident, for example, in the Lithuanian government's push to become energy independent of Russia, working to link with European Union grids by 2025⁷.

New Zealand, on the other hand, is not a Soviet bloc country. Rated one of the world's strongest democracies, it boasts a highly secure and representative system largely free of independence concerns that characterize Lithuanian politics. As such, the rise of its Green Party comes not from a position of challenging the political status quo or outside influence, but rather

⁷ Carbonnel, Alissa De, and Andrius Sytas. "Baltic States to Decouple Power Grids from Russia, Link to EU by 2025." Reuters. June 28, 2018. Accessed November 29, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-baltics-energy-eu-russia/baltic-states-to-decouple-power-grids-from-russia-link-to-eu-by-2025-idUSKBN1JO15Q>.

of climate change itself. This is a somewhat peculiar conclusion, given that both New Zealanders and Lithuanians find climate change to be a significant, existential threat both now and in the future^{8 9}. However, with a lack of competing threats like Russia, in addition to an underlying cultural reverence for the natural world, New Zealand has a political space that allows purely environmental groups to accrue power. This is clear in the aforementioned papers, namely O'Brien's 2012 research. Considering that the Green Party competes with left-wing voters against the Labour Party, it is clear that they are running on a platform that revolves around climate change and environmentalism. Evidence exists plainly on the Green Party's website, as previously mentioned, where their front page calls for net-zero carbon emissions, nature-based jobs, and ending offshore oil and gas exploration¹⁰. Meanwhile, LVŽS' website lists "environmental protection" as one subject among many others, clearly revealing that it is not at the absolute forefront of their platform¹¹. By analyzing this evidence, in addition to other books and publications both mentioned and yet unmentioned, we come at the conclusion that Lithuania's LVŽS exists as an outlier to green parties that can exist only in the political sphere of a young, conservative, Soviet bloc democracy, while New Zealand's Green Party fills a more traditional role of environmental advocacy.

Discussion

It is not unprecedented for a single movement to vary in its regions of support. Even an

⁸ Bns. "Most Lithuanians Agree Climate Change a Threat – Infographic." Lrt.lt. January 31, 2020. Accessed November 29, 2020. <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1138500/most-lithuanians-agree-climate-change-a-threat-infographic>.

⁹ "Public Concern over Climate Change Hits New High." HorizonPoll. Accessed November 29, 2020. <https://www.horizonpoll.co.nz/page/541/public-conc>.

¹⁰ "Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand." Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand. Accessed November 29, 2020. <https://www.greens.org.nz/>.

¹¹ User, Super. "LVŽS - Lietuvos Valstiečių Ir žaliųjų Sąjunga." LVŽS - Lietuvos Valstiečių Ir žaliųjų Sąjunga. Accessed November 29, 2020. <https://www.lvzs.lt/lt/>.

institutional ideology like social democracy has variations across the world's parliaments. However, can the disparate flagbearers of environmentalism overcome their differences to remain a unified movement? Though not an easy achievement, this is one that simply must be accomplished. Our chance to minimize climate change's impact is quickly fading; most recently, researchers from the University of Copenhagen found that sea level rise is occurring faster than even pessimistic predictions¹². Thus, bickering and in-fighting within the environmentalist movement is simply not a luxury that can be afforded.

It comes as no surprise that the green movement has splintered. Zelko and Brinkmann's *Green Parties: Reflections on the First Three Decades* notes that the early German greens were a "melting pot" of "far left socialists, former communists, radical conservationists, ecologists with conservative values, disappointed social democrats," and so on (78). With such a big-tent variety of members, it is only natural that those within the environmentalist movement would eventually find their niche. Moreover, early environmentalism—and much of its modern representation—was distinctly left-leaning. As also described in Zelko and Brinkmann's book, green politics in the US attracted "progressive activists, cultural radicals," and other leftist types that "may have helped prevent US political discourse from drifting even further to the right" (93). As such, it would not take long for the centrist and conservative wings of green politics to splinter off in hopes of forming parties more akin to their own beliefs.

With the rise of green politics in the last few decades, there have been a number of attempts at cooperation with other ideologies. Many eyes have tracked the progress of the current Austrian government, in which their greens and conservatives work side-by-side in a coalition.

¹² EurekAlert. "Sea Level Will Rise Faster than Previously Thought." EurekAlert! Accessed February 28, 2021. https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2021-02/uoc--slw012921.php.

Likewise, Germany's greens cooperate with the conservative CDU in numerous state governments, and Ireland's greens form a government with the country's two historically dominant parties. The same can be seen on the other side of the spectrum, too. Mexico's green conservatives govern alongside two left-wing parties, and LVŽS cooperated with the centre-left Social Democratic Labour Party in the Skvernelis cabinet. Further, as greens accrue power across the world's democracies, there have been more deliberations over new coalitions. With 2021's German elections approaching, there has been discussion over a Green-CDU federal government. Likewise, Belgium's green parties Groen and Ecolo recently became part of a big-tent government alongside social democrats and liberals.

Yet, as quickly as this cooperation has come about, so too have we witnessed the subsequent decline in green party support. For example, Ireland held an election in February of 2020, resulting in a government between two major centre-right parties and the Green Party. The Irish greens garnered 7.1% of the vote, the most in its history. However, due to their support of unpopular austerity policies, the Green Party is polling at a paltry 2% as of March 2021. A similar phenomenon has occurred in Austria's conservative government, where the greens returned to parliament with 13.9% of the vote. Now, they have sunk to 9% and continue to decline. This phenomenon can be explained by Abou-Chadi's paper *Niche Party Success and Mainstream Party Policy Shifts*, in which he describes the following: "Whereas parties' position taking will mainly determine competition over position issues, issue ownership and salience constitute the key components of competition over valence issues" (420). Here, Abou-Chadi is discussing positional and valence issues. The former describes policy wherein voters can have various different beliefs and preferences, while valence is policy that is seen as simply positive or negative, with varying degrees of successful implementation. Green parties, he explains,

campaign on the environment, and “the environment surely constitutes an issue with a high valence component” (420-421). This can help to explain the decline in green support by way of the environment’s valence clashing with conservative positional issues. Immigration, which Abou-Chadi describes as a highly positional issue, has dominated conservative platforms in Europe over the last decade. With greens becoming roped in on this policy (among others), and the full extent of their own climate prospects hampered by being a minor partner, the decline in support is an understandable phenomenon.

What relation, then, does this have to the greens in Lithuania and New Zealand? It is because of the environment’s valence, in addition to other factors, that green conservatism finds itself as a self-defeating subset of green politics. The Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union benefited highly from their position as outsiders of the political sphere; as Jurkynas notes in his paper, they were an “alternative, professional and scandal-free party compared to the Social Democrats and the Conservatives who had been running the country for the last 26 years” (125). However, their tenure ended up being rather short. After a few coalition shuffles over the years, LVŽS commandeered a government for only one full term—the 2020 elections saw them replaced with a conservative-liberal government led by the institutional Christian Democrats. Abou-Chadi’s valence-positional dichotomy comes into play once again, as LVŽS campaigned and governed not as environmentalists with conservative values, but moreso conservatives with environmentalist values. As is aforementioned, climate action was only a piece of the party’s larger platform advocating Lithuanian nationalism, conservative family values, and anti-Russian foreign policy.

By campaigning on such a platform, green conservatives find themselves at odds with many of the central tenets of environmentalism. Of course, conservation is an essential piece of

green politics, which parties like the Farmers and Greens Union certainly adhere to; however, progressive policies are also foundational to the philosophy of environmentalism. For example, it is difficult to advocate conservationism without acknowledging environmental racism and the disproportionate impact of pollution on minority communities. As such, it is also contradictory to stand opposed to minority rights as a whole, including those for various races, ethnicities, and sexual orientations. This contradiction applies to a number of other policies, as well, as exemplified by the Global Greens' 2001 charter (updated in 2012 and 2017) advocating Ecological Wisdom, Social Justice, Participatory Democracy, Nonviolence, and Respect for Diversity¹³. Green conservative parties akin to LVŽS pursue policy that run directly opposite of the charter's principles. For example, the document explicitly calls for "equal rights for all individuals regardless of gender, race, age, religion, class, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, disability, wealth or health," while LVŽS, along with other green conservative parties like the Ecologist Green Party of Mexico, oppose LGBTQ+ rights¹⁴. Likewise, LVŽS promised in its 2016 platform to increase military funding to 2% of the nation's GDP, another decision that stands opposed to the Global Greens' principles of nonviolence and demilitarization.

None of this is to say, however, that simply because leftist and conservative greens disagree that one is more 'correct.' Politics, as with many things, is a highly subjective and opinionated field. However, it is deeply questionable to consider green conservatives a subset of green politics entirely—parties are defined not by individual policies but by their expansive

¹³ *Charter of the Global Greens*. 2017. Liverpool.

¹⁴ GR.Staff. *Green Party Rival Crossed the Line, Says Gay Candidate*, web.archive.org/web/20120222124246/guadalajarareporter.com/news-mainmenu-82/guadalajara/24457-jalisco-elections-partido-social-democratica-gay-candidate.html.

platforms, even in the case of once single-issue green parties. Though green conservatives have been found to support and implement climate action policy, they will not go as far as to enact the changes leading climate scientists and policymakers are calling for. Take, for example, the book *The Future We Choose*, written by diplomats Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac, who were central figures in the creation of the Paris Climate Agreement. In the book, they describe the future of society should we take the necessary steps to avoid climatic disaster. Such a society features cities with urban agriculture, far fewer cars, use of railways over airplanes, renewable energy, and strengthened neighborhood communities¹⁵. The parties encouraging such policies are solely on the left; for example, the Canadian municipal party Projet Montréal, sitting centre-left and advocating New Urbanism, environmentalism, and social democracy. Parties like LVŽS and PVEM do not go nearly as far in their climate policy. Perhaps the only potential outlier is Denmark's Conservative People's Party (Det Konservative Folkeparti), which is a stronger climate advocate than even some left-wing parties¹⁶. Nevertheless, even they do not address the social and urban reform detailed in *The Future We Choose*. Such considerations are vital to achieving Figueres and Rivett-Carnac's vision of the future, and therefore, if a party disagrees with such a platform, to what extent can they be considered wholeheartedly 'green?' Pursuing one aspect of a political ideology does not place one within that ideology, and though green conservatives support some amount of climate action, that does not place them in line with green politics.

¹⁵ Figueres, Christiana, and Tom Rivett-Carnac. *The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2020.

¹⁶ "En Grønnere Fremtid for Vores Børn." Det Konservative Folkeparti. March 14, 2021. Accessed May 14, 2021. <https://konservative.dk/politik/klimalov/>.

With all this in mind, the question of LVŽS' identity must be raised: why do they identify as a green party at all? Clearly, an argument exists for their not even being a green party; having refused membership of the European Green Party while going against traditional green policy, LVŽS seems to have distanced themselves from the rest of the movement at every step. Nevertheless, they are the Farmers and *Greens* Union, they advocate strong environmental policy, and are members of The Greens/European Free Alliance within the European Parliament. Further, in 2016, the year LVŽS became the governing party, Lithuania was ranked 20th ('moderate') by the Climate Change Performance Index; in the 2021 report, it had risen to 15th with a rating of 'high' despite a performance decrease¹⁷. Thus, they have clearly implemented successful green policy to some extent, and they could be considered a green party due to their affiliations. The most likely reason why the Farmers and Greens Union continues to associate with the environmental movement is to further green policies within the relatively conservative society of Lithuania. The success of the party is likely owed to their distancing from leftist, progressive policies that hallmark most green parties. Evidence for this lies in the relative unpopularity of left-wing parties in Lithuania: the furthest left party in the current Seimas is the Social Democratic Party, which has governed four times since the establishment of the Republic of Lithuania in 1992. Otherwise, no left-wing parties have seen success in Lithuania since the post-communist Democratic Labour Party, which eventually merged into the Social Democrats. Thus, LVŽS, be it by choice or chance, has filled a strategic niche within Lithuanian politics, finding popularity amongst the generally conservative but ecologically aware populace. Such a strategy is not necessary for the Green Party of New Zealand, for theirs is a democracy more developed and with strong support across the political spectrum.

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Thus, it becomes clear that green conservatives, in truth, bear few similarities to the leftist strains of environmentalism exemplified by New Zealand's Green Party and others. Where the two ideologies converge at conservation and climate action, they deviate in a great many other areas from social justice to militarism. As a result, green conservatism finds itself at odds with a great many of the tenets of green politics, for the movement does not consist solely of conservation. Climate change and environmentalism are subjects that encompass a wide breadth of characteristics and considerations. Climate action is distinctly multifaceted, as its ecological principles overlap with and consist of social, economic, cultural, and historical frameworks. Thus, it is difficult to consider a party one that advocates climate action when many of the constituent pieces to such action are contested. It is for this reason that green conservatism, while a positive development in the growing acceptance of environmentalism in mainstream politics, remains distant from centre-left and left-wing green politics. Organizations more closely resembling the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand—promoting progressivism in all the aforementioned, interrelated spheres—are the best representatives of the environmental movement and what this ideology's leading figures are advocating.

Bibliography

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In this paper, Tarik Abou-Chadi cross-analyzes the success and impact of rising green and radical right parties in Western democracies. Using data from the Comparative Manifestos Project, they find that niche parties play a significant role in shaping multiparty democracies. By pushing “issues they ‘own,’” small parties can thrust their platforms into the mainstream and politicize certain issues—for better or for worse. In particular, Abou-Chadi finds that green parties can benefit highly from the politicization of climate issues thanks to a strong control over and association with the environment. However, Abou-Chadi also determines that right-wing, anti-immigration parties have a much greater impact on mainstream parties than do green parties.

Banducci, Susan A., Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp. “Proportional Representation and Attitudes about Politics: Results from New Zealand.” *Electoral Studies* 18, no. 4 (December 1999): 533–55. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-3794\(99\)00019-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-3794(99)00019-0).

In Banducci, Donovan, and Karp’s paper, the three address New Zealand’s shift from a first-past-the-post (FPP) electoral system to mixed-member proportional representation (MMP) after a referendum in 1993. They document this change as “a prime example of a shift from a majoritarian system toward a more consensual form of democracy” that created greater political plurality and encourages power-sharing. In particular, it challenged the Westminster two-party hegemony between the Labour and National Parties that had previously been in place, replacing it with a system that empowered smaller parties and limited the chances of majoritarian rule. This shift in New Zealand’s politics is notable as an important contributor to the Green Party’s success (and by extension other small parties, as well), allowing the party to remain in Parliament and relevant despite receiving less votes than Labour or National.

Blühdorn, Ingolfur. “Reinventing Green Politics: On the Strategic Repositioning of the German Green Party.” *German Politics* 18, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 36–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644000802649189>.

Focusing on only the German political sphere, Blühdorn looks at their green party—Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/The Greens)—and its recovery following the collapse of its government coalition in the 2005 elections. Blühdorn describes Die Grünen’s lack of political influence despite being in government, and that their unique Green platform of “emancipatory individualism,” “DIY politics,” and “critique of consumer capitalism” had become outdated. Over the 2000s, however, the party managed to reinvent itself, merging its radical and pragmatic wings and updating its programme to fill a new environmental, political niche; yet, Blühdorn holds that while Die Grünen may remain a political force in Germany, it will not be an impactful one.

Charter of the Global Greens. 2017. Liverpool.

As the foundational document for the Global Greens, their charter serves as an important document for understanding the general principles of green politics and environmentalism. Likewise, the charter helps to contrast against green parties whose policy falls short of the progressive, left-of-centre beliefs espoused by most environmentalist movements. As such, the Global Greens’ founding document provides important insight as to what constitutes a modern green party and the stances they hold.

"Green Parties in Western Europe." Global Greens. June 09, 2011. Accessed October 13, 2020.

<https://www.globalgreens.org/literature/maier/westerneurope>

Written by Jürgen Maier from The Greens political party in Germany, this article looks at the niche that green parties filled and how they have grown over time in Western Europe. He begins first by explaining the deterioration of the two main political streams in Europe: labour-oriented social democratic and socialist parties, and bourgeois-originated liberals, conservatives, and Christian democrats. These parties lost their strength as, over time, the middle class lost its identity as “workers” and their strong party association. Within this gap, green parties were able to take hold, finding success as they tackled an issue facing *all* people rather than just a few. Green party success is best represented by the rise of Die Grünen in West Germany, bolstered by anti-nuclear sentiment and dissatisfied progressives from the Social Democratic Party. The 1980s saw historic success for Die Grünen as they entered both state and federal politics for the first time.

Figueres, Christiana, and Tom Rivett-Carnac. *The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2020.

Written by two leading climate diplomats, *The Future We Choose* seeks to provide a comprehensive guide on how civilization can achieve a post-climate prosperity—as well as describe what may happen if we fail. Ultimately, Figueres and Rivett-Carnac’s vision of the post-climate change future is bittersweet. They acknowledge that, with far too much damage already having been done, there will be great loss of life and damage. However, should we succeed in doing what need be done, society will look substantially different. Cities will be unrecognizable amidst greenery and urban agriculture, airplanes will be replaced with high-speed railways, and neighborhoods will become far more communal and tightly knit (amongst other significant changes).

Jurkynas, Mindaugas. “Populist Parties in Lithuania: Curious Case of Party Order and Justice and Its Leadership.” *Polish Political Science Review*, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ppsr-2019-0008>. In Jurkynas’ paper, special attention is given to the Lithuanian party Order and Justice, though there are a number of important takeaways that apply both to Lithuanian politics as a whole and the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union. In particular, Jurkynas addresses the factors that brought LVŽS to power in 2016, attributing it to their being a corruption-free alternative that promised extensive social benefits alongside the protection of family and national values. In addition, the success of LVŽS was furthered by a decline in popularity for major parties like the Labour (Darbo Partija, DP) and Social Democratic Parties (Lietuvos Socialdemokratų Partija, LSDP) caused by corruption charges and leadership squabbles.

Navickas, Andrius. “Lithuania After Politics?” *Political Preferences* 14 (May 16, 2017): 99–114. https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.5216197_journals.us.edu.pl/index.php/PP.

Writing shortly after the 2016 Lithuanian general elections, Navickas addresses a rise of anti-politics in the Seimas, occurring alongside the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union’s rise to power and their unique position as neither anti- nor ex-communist. Navickas first documents the origins of LVŽS as a union between the Lithuanian Peasants Popular Union and disgruntled members of the Lithuanian Green Party, all under the operation of Ramūnas Karbauskis, a

wealthy businessman and politician. Navickas also notes LVŽS' appeal to both the left and right, promising to reduce inequality and increase the minimum wage while also vowing to protect traditional values and the Lithuanian language. Ultimately, Navickas finds that LVŽS' success in 2016 was due to "protest voters" mobilized by anger and disappointment, but this is not a sustainable platform and threatens the party's future.

O'Brien, Thomas. "Leaving the Minors: The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand and the 2011 General Election." *Representation* 49, no. 1 (April 2013): 69–81.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2012.751047>.

O'Brien's paper provides important determinations regarding the Green Party of New Zealand. In particular, he analyzes the modern position of the Green Party in New Zealand politics, finding that it has established itself as a stable political force by way of dependable policies and parliamentary pragmatism. Additionally, O'Brien examines what differentiates the Green Party from other minor groups, finding that its ability to transcend the left-right spectrum and focus on policy has led to unique success. Ultimately, O'Brien's findings are vital to understanding New Zealand's Green Party and comparing it to other examples of green party success.

Schumacher, Ingmar. "An Empirical Study of the Determinants of Green Party Voting." *Ecological Economics* 105 (2014): 306-18. doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2014.05.007.

Using datasets from Germany, Ingmar Schumacher analyzes the factors that determine and explain electoral support for green parties. Ultimately, they find that factors we may have expected to affect green party voting—age, gender, marital status, etc.—have little effect on this. Rather, things like proximity to environmental hazards, less green space, higher income, and better education create greater support for green party platforms. They also find that, while local environmental problems typically do not increase green support, a perception of a serious *global* problem does drive green voting.

Scrimgeour, Frank, and Catherine Iremonger. "Maori Sustainable Economic Development in New Zealand: Indigenous Practices for the Quadruple Bottom Line," October 29, 2011.

Scrimgeour and Iremonger's paper takes a focus on New Zealand's native Maori people who, though colonized and oppressed since the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840, have remained an integral part of the nation's culture. In particular, what is important to understand from this paper is the Maori view of the world and their natural environment; namely, that environmental, social, cultural, and economic stability are all closely intertwined for the Maori people, and that a "unity between the spiritual and material worlds" exists. It was not until recently that the principles of sustainable development began to be practiced in New Zealand, despite the Maori having done so for centuries. Yet, it can be said that the presence of the Maori, their ontology, and their influence in New Zealand's politics have contributed to the success of the Green Party and environmentalism in the country.

Šuminas, Andrius, and Arnas Aleksandravičius. "Negative Political Communication in Online Video Advertisements: Case Study of 2016 Lithuanian Parliamentary Election." *Political Preferences* 14 (April 12, 2017): 47–62. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.5216167>
journals.us.edu.pl/index.php/PP.

Though this paper focuses broadly on the political advertisements used by Lithuanian political

parties in the 2016 elections, it provides significant information regarding the platform, tactics, and appeal of the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union. Šuminas and Aleksandravičius explain that LVŽS was a considerably minor party prior to 2016, but the attraction of Saulius Skvernelis, a popular public figure who previously served as Minister of the Interior, brought significant traction for the party. Additionally, the paper notes that LVŽS' advertisements primarily challenged the "current government's neglect of poor people," focusing more on issues of the economy or society than of the environment or climate change.