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Explaining the emergence of the Green Party in the United Kingdom, 1973-79

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Explaining the Emergence of the Green Party in the United Kingdom, 1973-79

Mitya Pearson



Source: Michael Benfield Personal Archive

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Contemporary History Research (PhD). Research completed in the Department of Political Economy, King's College London.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the emergence of the Green Party in the United Kingdom from its creation in 1973 up until the 1979 general election.¹ The party was first called PEOPLE, then the Ecology Party from 1975 before changing its name again to the Green Party in 1985. The thesis focuses upon the creation and early history of the party, considering the reasons for its emergence. Studies of the UK Greens have examined several areas including their membership, ideology and internal structure. They have not considered in detail the question of why the party emerged. There are more general theories and ideas about the emergence and development of green parties as a phenomenon across numerous countries. Not only do such accounts fail to fully engage with the specific details of the UK case. They have also been the subject of comprehensive criticism, calling into doubt their broader merit as explanations for the emergence of green parties.

This thesis employs historical methods to provide insights into the causes of the party's coming into being. It focuses in particular on the party's founders and early members, looking at their background, the influences on their thinking, and their perceptions, ideas and views. Two main types of sources have been used which together represent the most comprehensive study of the party's history to date. First, 50 oral interviews were conducted with individuals who joined the party between 1973-79. Most of these participants had never previously been interviewed for research into the party. Secondly, thousands of archival documents relating to the party from this period, which were retrieved from public archives and personal collections of papers, have been consulted. A considerable amount of this archive material had not previously been accessed by researchers. The thesis rejects monocausal explanations for the party's emergence. Instead it identifies several important motivations. It does, however, place particular emphasis on some dynamics in the period leading up to and during the party's inception: the increase in concrete environmental problems as a result of population growth and economic development, increased public and media attention on the environment and, in

¹ There are currently three separate but allied green parties in the UK: the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW), the Scottish Green Party (SGP) and the Green Party in Northern Ireland (GPNI). They are commonly grouped together as the Greens or the Green Party.

particular, the emergence of an environmental or ecological ideological project without which the party's existence simply would not have made sense.

The first and most obvious original contribution to knowledge which this thesis makes is in enhancing understanding of the Greens in the UK. This is important because they have achieved the rare feat within the British party system of breaking out of obscurity and establishing themselves as a small but significant and, seemingly, stable force which therefore merits investigation. The nature of the method employed here, including extensive use of interviews and accessing longstanding party activists' private papers, means this was one of the last chances to conduct such work. This thesis will provide a valuable record for future researchers. More generally, the party's emergence during the 1970s was part of a wider set of developments in the form of the fragmentation of the UK party system, the emergence of a broader environmental movement in Britain and internationally, and the collective emergence of green parties across the world. All of these developments have had longstanding and significant political impacts. The research conducted for this thesis enriches academic understanding of them.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Outline

There are currently three separate but allied green parties in the United Kingdom: the Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW), the Scottish Green Party (SGP) and the Green Party in Northern Ireland (GPNI).¹ They are commonly grouped together as the Greens or the Green Party. This thesis concerns the creation and early history of the Greens in the UK, focusing on the period between 1973 and 1979, when there was only one entity, initially called PEOPLE and then the Ecology Party. The thesis examines the question of why this party emerged. This introductory chapter begins by providing an overview of the history of the Greens in the UK. It then briefly sets out the approach and contribution of the thesis (areas which are expanded upon in Chapter 2), prefigures the arguments made in the thesis and details the topics of the forthcoming chapters. Finally, it clarifies issues related to terminology and definitions.

1.2 The Greens in the UK

1.2.1 Origins and Early Development: PEOPLE and the Ecology Party

In the early 1970s, married solicitors Tony and Lesley Whittaker became increasingly worried about ecological issues. The Whittakers' office was in Coventry and they would regularly visit the Napton Bridge Inn on their way home from work. They began to discuss economic growth and the environment with some of the other patrons. Then, influenced by publications such as the global think tank the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth, A Blueprint for Survival* which was originally published in Britain through *the Ecologist* magazine, and

¹ Wolfgang Rudig, 'Green Party Organisation in Britain: Change and Continuity' in E. Frankland, P. Lucardie & R. Rihoux (eds.) *Green Parties in Transition* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), pp.199-225; In 1990 the Scottish Green Party became a separate entity from the rest of the party. The Ecology Party of Ireland and the Ecology Party in Northern Ireland had been established in the 1980s, later changing their names to mirror the party in Britain. The Green Party in Northern Ireland followed the Scottish Greens in becoming a distinct political organisation from the rest of the UK. In 2006 it voted to join with the Irish Greens but remained a separate entity with their own leader, convention, manifesto and members. See: Lynn Bennie, 'United Kingdom and Ireland Greens: Weak but Persistent' in E. van Haute (ed.) *Green Parties in Europe: Party Families in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp.221-44; Sarah Birch, 'Real Progress: Prospects for Green Party Support in Britain', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 62 No 1 2008, p.54

the American biologist Paul Ehrlich's work on population growth, they formed an informal discussion group called the Thirteen Club (reflecting the number of members).² It was not long before a disagreement emerged. The Whittakers and two of their acquaintances, Freda Sanders and Michael Benfield, wished to set up a party while the remainder of the Thirteen Club were not keen on this idea.³ On 31 January 1973, the four founders placed an advert in the local newspaper declaring PEOPLE's establishment.⁴ There is some ambiguity about the exact date the party was formed. There is a plausible case for dating it slightly earlier, when these individuals decided amongst themselves to establish PEOPLE, or dating it later, when they held their first public meeting.⁵ This thesis assumes that 31 January 1973 was the first public announcement of the party's existence and therefore the date of its creation.

There had been a forerunner to PEOPLE in the form of Movement for Survival. A group set up by founding editor of *the Ecologist*, Teddy Goldsmith, in January 1972 to be an umbrella organisation for environmental groups and 'if need be to assume political status and contest the next general election'. This did not develop into anything substantial.⁶ Goldsmith's influence on PEOPLE's early thinking was clear as the first manifesto was entitled *Manifesto for Survival* and mirrored many of the ideas in *A Blueprint for Survival*.⁷ Five standalone PEOPLE candidates took part in the February 1974 general election; polling an average of 1.8 per cent of the vote in the constituencies contested, 3.9 per cent in Coventry North West was the best result.⁸ There was also a PEOPLE and Agrarian Party candidate and an independent candidate affiliated to PEOPLE. In the October 1974 general

² Lesley Whittaker, Freda Sanders & Michael Benfield (Henceforth: The Founders), Interviewed Jointly on 21 June 2014 & 21 October 2017 & by Mitya Pearson; Sara Parkin, *Green Parties: An International Guide* (London: Heretic, 1989), p.218

³ The Founders, Interview; Wolfgang Rudig & Philip Lowe, 'The "Withered" Greening of British politics: a Study of the Ecology Party', *Political Studies*, Vol 34 No 2 1986a, p.269; There is some discrepancy in the literature over whether any of the remaining members of the Thirteen Club did in fact have some involvement with the party - see Derek Wall, *Weaving a Bower Against an Endless Night* (Aberystwyth: Green Party, 1994), p.16. Whatever the exact truth, the four individuals mentioned were the central, founding figures of the party.

⁴ Michael Benfield's Personal Archive (Henceforth: MBPA), 'PEOPLE', Public Notices, *The Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 31 January 1973

⁵ Roger Creagh-Osborne & David Taylor, 'Who was First?', August 2017, <https://green-history.uk/articles/general/who-was-first> accessed 25 July 2019

⁶ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.269

⁷ Gayil Talshir, *The Political Ideology of Green Parties* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p.184

⁸ Michael O'Neill, *Green Parties and Political Change in Contemporary Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), p.283; Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.269; F.W.S. Craig, *Minor Parties at British Parliamentary Elections, 1885-1974* (London: Macmillan, 1975), p.77; See clarifications below Table 1 for breakdown of figures.

election three standalone PEOPLE candidates ran for election, with two PEOPLE and Agrarian Party candidates also standing, averaging 0.9 per cent.⁹

There was some early ideological disagreement in 1974, created by some members having reservations about the potentially authoritarian aspects of 'survival' ideas and seeking a more left-wing agenda.¹⁰ During 1975, the party underwent significant changes as the Whittakers moved to Devon to pursue self-sufficiency and reduced their activity with PEOPLE. Prior to this they had attended the 1975 conference at which it was decided to change the name to the Ecology Party as in Lesley's words 'voters did not connect PEOPLE with ecology'.¹¹ The party came close to drifting out of existence, but Jonathan Tyler took over as chair of the National Executive Committee in 1976 and from 1977 onwards three leading figures, Tyler, Jonathon Porritt and David Fleming, along with many others, helped to reinvigorate the party. An attempt was made to give the party a more professional image and a bold decision was taken to stand 50 candidates in the 1979 general election so they would be allowed a television broadcast.¹² Despite the 53 Ecology Party candidates in 1979 only gaining an average of 1.5 per cent of the vote across the constituencies they contested, the publicity led to significant growth. Party membership rose from around 1,000 members immediately prior to the election to over 5,000 shortly after it.¹³

1.2.2 Rise and Decline

The 1983 general election saw an expansion in the party's ambition as it fought in 108 constituencies, including two joint candidates with Women for Life on Earth.¹⁴ However, the average vote share of 1.0 per cent in the seats they contested was worse than that achieved in 1979. The party name was changed from the Ecology Party to the Green Party in 1985 in part to mirror more electorally successful continental European green parties. In 1987 the 133 candidates averaged just 1.3 per cent.¹⁵ Similarly, the party failed to achieve any

⁹ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a; Parkin, 1989 p.219; See clarifications below Table 1 for breakdown of figures.

¹⁰ Ian Coates, 'Green ideology in theory and practice: an examination of theories of green politics in relation to a sociological investigation of the worldview of Green Party activists' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 1997), p.136

¹¹ Lesley Whittaker Cited in Wall, 1994 p.24

¹² Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p. 272; Wall, 1994 pp.33-6

¹³ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p. 268

¹⁴ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a; Bennie, 2016

¹⁵ Bennie, 2016

significant results in the European elections in 1979 and 1984. Throughout this period, the party had accrued only low levels of general support, failed to develop local concentrations of popularity and made no significant progress towards gaining representation at Westminster.

The party's result at the 1989 European parliamentary election was a step-change in its fortunes as it gained almost 2.3 million votes, equating to 14.9 per cent of votes cast.¹⁶ Although the electoral system employed for European elections at the time meant that the party won no seats, the result was a real achievement, substantially increasing the party's exposure. Membership roughly doubled between 1989 and 1990, peaking at just over 18,000.¹⁷ A combination of factors which were fairly unique to this election made this result possible. First, a 'background perception of economic prosperity and low unemployment', had helped increase the salience of the environment during the late 1980s. Secondly, global issues such as ozone layer depletion and global warming had begun to move up the political agenda, helped in Britain by domestic environmental scandals and Margaret Thatcher's speech on the topic to the Royal Society. Thirdly, of the three main political parties the Liberal Party had traditionally been closest to the Greens on the environment and therefore would have been best placed of the three to gain from increased interest in the environment among the public, but they were in turmoil following a merger with the Social Democratic Party. Finally, European elections are 'second-order elections' at which there is less at stake than first-order elections, such as national parliamentary elections, and 1989 presented the perfect opportunity for voters to protest against the established parties.¹⁸

Accordingly, at the 1992 general election, though they stood their highest number of candidates ever, the Greens failed to build on the 1989 result. The one exception to a poor overall performance was Cynog Dafis who was elected as MP for the constituency of Ceredigion Gogledd Penfro on a joint Plaid Cymru and GPEW ticket.¹⁹ As such, Dafis has a

¹⁶ Andrew Adonis, 'Great Britain', *Electoral Studies*, Vol 8 No 3 1989, pp.265-67

¹⁷ Wolfgang Rudig, 'The Unwithered Greening of the Green Party?' (Unpublished Paper, Political Studies Association Conference, Edinburgh, March 2010), p.24

¹⁸ Rudig, 2010 pp.4-5; Karlhienz Reif & Hermann Schmitt 'Nine second-order national elections: A conceptual framework for the analysis of European election results', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol 8 No 1 1980, pp.3-44; Wolfgang Rudig, Mark Franklin & Lynn Bennie, 'Up and down with the Greens: Ecology and party politics in Britain, 1989-1992', *Electoral Studies*, Vol 15 No 1 1996, pp.1-20

¹⁹ Neil Carter, 'Whatever happened to the environment? The British general election of 1992', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 1 No 3 1992, pp.445-47

claim to be the UK's first Green MP, though this is questionable as Dafis was so firmly identified with Plaid Cymru and not the Greens both before the election and after the arrangement fell apart in 1995. Nonetheless, the pact had an impact in that it led to direct legislative changes as he co-sponsored the Home Energy Conservation Bill which became law in 1995 and introduced a Road Traffic Reduction Bill which eventually led to an Act of Parliament in 1997.²⁰

1.2.3 Entering the Mainstream: Steady Progress

In the 1994 European election, the Greens' vote share in the UK fell to 3.2 per cent, once again with no seats won.²¹ The Greens' membership had also declined meaning that by 1994 the GPEW only had around 5,000 members.²² However, from the mid-1990s the Greens' began to make slow progress towards electoral success. First, coinciding with an explicit GPEW strategy of focusing on local elections with a view to building up to national successes (known as 'target to win' or 'Westminster through the town halls'), it began to win more council seats.²³ From having no principal authority councillors in the early 1990s, the GPEW built up to over 100 by the late 2000s, over 160 by 2017 and over 350 by 2019.²⁴ The Greens also became the official opposition in Norwich in 2008 and took control of Brighton Council in 2011 (though they lost it in 2015).²⁵

Secondly, proportional representation was introduced for European elections in the UK in 1999. The Greens averaged 6.3 per cent of the total vote across the UK and saved all its deposits, securing the election of two MEPs: Jean Lambert and Caroline Lucas.²⁶ The

²⁰ Birch, 2008 p.70; Carwyn Fowler & Rhys Jones, 'Environmentalism and Nationalism in the UK', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 14 No 4 2005, pp.541-45

²¹ Neil Carter, 'The Greens in the 1999 European Parliamentary Elections', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 8 No 4 1999, pp.160-67

²² Rudig, 2010 p.24

²³ Debra Holzhauer, 'The Greens at 30: An Examination of the Place of the Green Party in British Politics' (Unpublished Paper, Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association Chicago, April 2004), p.12

²⁴ Birch, 2008 p.56; The Green Party, 'Elected Greens in England and Wales', <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/people/elected-greens.html> accessed 27 July 2017; The Association of Green Councillors, 'About Us', <https://agc.greenparty.org.uk/about-us.html> accessed 5th August 2019

²⁵ The Green Party, 'Norwich Greens leapfrog Lib Dems to become main opposition to Labour', <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/archive/news-archive/3403.html> accessed 27 July 2017; 'Elections 2015: Green Party loses Brighton Council to Labour', *BBC News*, 10 May 2015 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2015-32680552> accessed 27 July 2017

²⁶ Carter, 1999

party retained two MEPs in 2004 and 2009 and added a third in 2014.²⁷ Other constitutional reforms setting up devolved bodies have allowed the GPEW's sister parties to gain representation in Scotland and Northern Ireland and the GPEW has had representatives in the London Assembly since it was set up.²⁸ Finally, the Greens' general election results began to fit with its results elsewhere. In 2001 they saved their first deposits at a general election.²⁹ In 2005 the Greens registered one per cent of the total UK vote at a general election for the first time. More important still were the signs of concentrated levels of support in some constituencies with large student populations; their best result, in Brighton Pavilion, paved the way for Caroline Lucas' victory in 2010.³⁰ Her election was a hugely significant advance for a party in an otherwise slightly disappointing campaign in which they had stood more candidates than ever before (335) but only increased their number of votes by around 2,000 compared to 2005.³¹ The party was unable to build on the 2010 election by securing more MPs in 2015 but this general election was a significant one for the Greens as it 'became a serious, albeit still minor, electoral force': quadrupling its vote and maintaining, for the first time, a 'significant presence throughout the campaign'. The Greens achieved their 'best-ever performance' in a general election by securing 1,157,613 votes, 3.8 per cent of the total cast in the UK. The 131 deposits saved, compared to a mere seven in 2010, underlined the increase in widespread support.³²

Having declined rapidly in the early 1990s, the GPEW membership had remained fairly stable throughout the remainder of the decade at around 4-5,000. In the early 2000s it began to creep up again, reaching around 7,000 by 2009.³³ In the run-up to the 2015 general election, the GPEW's membership grew at an unprecedented rate in what became known as the 'green surge'. The numbers more than doubled during 2014, from almost 14,000 in January to nearly 31,000 in December, before reaching 66,557 by May 2015.³⁴ Around the

²⁷ Wolfgang Rudig, 'The Greens in the 2014 European elections', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 24 No 1 2015c, pp.156-62

²⁸ Birch, 2008; Rudig, 2008

²⁹ Neil Carter, Chris Rootes, Andy Jordan, Jenny Fairbrass & David Toke, 'One Step Forward? Greens and the Environment in the 2001 British General Election', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 10 No 4 2001, pp.103-20

³⁰ Neil Carter & Chris Rootes, 'The environment and the Greens in the 2005 elections in Britain', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 15 No 3 2006, pp. 473-78

³¹ Neil Carter & Chris Rootes, 'Take blue, add yellow, get green? The environment in the UK general election of 6 May 2010', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 19 No 6 2010, pp.992-99

³² Neil Carter, 'The Greens in the UK general election of 7 May 2015', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 24 No 6 2015, pp.1055-1060

³³ Rudig, 2010 p.24

³⁴ Carter, 2015 p.1057

same time, though in this case principally linked to their support for the ‘Yes’ campaign in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, the SGP’s member rose from 1,500 in August 2014 to 9,000 by May 2015.³⁵ The GPNI has always been tiny so the total combined membership of the UK green parties peaked in this period at around 75,000.³⁶ There was a subsequent drop-off in membership numbers but the GPEW had just under 40,000 members in September 2018 and just under 50,000 members in July 2019.³⁷ The SGP had a membership of 7,000 in December 2017 and 6,500 in August 2019.³⁸

In summary, the Greens struggled for much of their existence to achieve electoral success, especially when compared to many other green parties in Europe. This was due to factors including the single-member plurality electoral system used in parliamentary, local and, until 1999, European elections, the lack of state funding for parties (which was available in many other territories), the relatively high deposits required for candidates to stand, the party’s problems with internal organisation, the party’s weak connections with environmental campaign groups, and the fairly radical programme on which it stood.³⁹ The party has experienced a relative upturn in its electoral fortunes since the mid-1990s for a number of reasons including new opportunities created by constitutional reforms, the political space which was facilitated by New Labour’s move rightwards and a disciplined execution of the strategy of targeting local wins as a basis for further construction.⁴⁰ The 2017 general election saw the Greens’ vote roughly halve compared to 2015, principally due to the competition offered by the Labour Party moving leftwards under Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership.⁴¹ However, Lucas retained her seat and the Labour Party’s ambiguous position on the issue of Britain’s relationship with the European Union provided subsequent opportunities for the Greens which manifested themselves at the 2019 European elections

³⁵ Lynn Bennie, James Mitchell & Rob Johns, ‘Recruited by Referendum: Party membership in the SNP and Scottish Greens’ (Unpublished Paper, Political Science Association Annual Conference Brighton, March 2016), p.3

³⁶ Carter, 2015 p.1057

³⁷ House of Commons Library, ‘Membership of UK Political Parties’, 3 September 2018; House of Commons Library, ‘Membership of UK political parties’, 20 July 2019

³⁸ Electoral Commission, ‘Statement of Accounts for the Year ended 31 December 2017 - Scottish Green Party’, <http://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/Api/Accounts/Documents/20397> accessed 25 July 2019; Scottish Green Party Office E-mail Correspondence with Mitya Pearson, 9th August 2019

³⁹ Holzhauer, 2004 p.9; Chris Rootes, ‘Britain: Greens in a Cold Climate’ in D. Richardson & C. Rootes (eds.), *The Green Challenge* (London: Routledge, 1995a), p.68; Birch, 2008 p.55

⁴⁰ Carter & Rootes, 2010 p.996; Birch, 2008 pp.54-56

⁴¹ Neil Carter & Fay Farstad, ‘The Greens in the UK General Election of 9 June 2017’, *Environmental Politics*, Vol 26 No 6 2017, pp.1152-56

where seven Green MEPs were returned.⁴² The Greens also achieved some moderate improvements on their 2017 result at the 2019 UK general election.

Table 1 - Results of UK Greens at General Elections 1974-2017 (including Scotland and Northern Ireland)⁴³

Election	Number of Candidates	Number of Deposits Saved	Total Number of Votes	National Vote Share (%)	Best Individual Result (%)	MPs Elected
February 1974	5 (plus 2 affiliated candidates: 1 independent and 1 People and Agrarian Party) ⁴⁴	0	4,576	<0.1	3.9	0
October 1974	3 (plus 2 affiliated People and Agrarian Party candidates) ⁴⁵	0	999	<0.1	0.8	0
1979	53	0	39,918	0.1	2.8	0
1983	106	0	53,848	0.2	2.9	0
1987	133	0	89,753	0.3	1.3	0
1992	256	0	171,927	0.5	1.3	0

⁴² The Green Party, 'Greens more than double number of MEPs in spectacular European election result' <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2019/05/27/greens-more-than-double-number-of-meps-in-spectacular-european-election-result/> accessed 25 July 2019

⁴³ Joint candidacies and affiliated independents are highlighted and included for elections in the 1970s but not thereafter. It may be that figures for the number of candidates who stood at elections between 1983-2017 are (very slightly) artificially high if the secondary sources used to inform the table included them in the overall figure without acknowledging they were joint candidates. Where identified, joint candidacies and affiliated independents have been excluded from the figures used in this table between 1983-2017.

⁴⁴ There are occasional discrepancies in how the number of candidates are listed in both archive documents and secondary literature. This figure was arrived at based on five standalone PEOPLE candidates (Coventry North East - Alan Pickard; Coventry North West - Lesley Whittaker; Eye - Edward Goldsmith; Leeds North East - Clive Lord; Liverpool West Derby – David Pascoe), one joint PEOPLE and Agrarian Party Candidate (Hornchurch - Ben Percy-Davis) and one affiliated independent candidate (Birmingham Northfield - M. Newman).

⁴⁵ There are occasional discrepancies in how the number of candidates are listed in both archive documents and secondary literature. This figure was arrived at based on three standalone PEOPLE candidates (Birmingham Northfield - Elizabeth Davenport; Coventry North West - Lesley Whittaker; Leeds East - Norma Russell) and two joint PEOPLE and Agrarian Party Candidates (Hornchurch - Ben Percy-Davis; Romford - Len Samson).

1997	95	0	63,991	0.2	4.3	0
2001	145	10	166,477	0.6	9.3	0
2005	203	24	283,486	1	22	0
2010	335	7	285,612	1	31.3	1
2015	573	131	1,157,613	3.8	41.8	1
2017	467	11	525,435	1.6	52.3	1
2019	497	32	865,707	3.0	57.2%	1

Sources: Rudig & Lowe, 1986a; Green History, 'General Election 1974', <https://green-history.uk/elections/general/1974> accessed 26 August 2019; Bennie, 2016; Carter, 2015; Carter & Farstad, 2017; House of Commons Library, 'General Election 2019', 28 January 2020

1.3 Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 of this thesis provides a more detailed explanation of the research method used in this thesis and how the primary research conducted fits within the pre-existing literature. It will detail how this thesis sits between fields of scholarship. The first comprises studies of the UK Greens which have examined topics including their membership, ideology and internal structure but not considered in detail the question of why the party emerged. The main exception to this oversight is Mark Williams' comparative study of the British, Dutch and Austrian green parties. However, as will be discussed, this is largely concerned with discussing relevant theories with very limited use of historical or primary material. It is therefore far removed from the approach taken in this thesis.⁴⁶ The second body of research has considered green parties across numerous countries as a collective phenomenon and sought to provide general theories for their emergence. As will be argued, not only do such accounts fail to account for the specific details of an individual case such as the UK but a number of these theories have been comprehensively criticised for the explanations they offer for the emergence of green parties. This thesis seeks to understand why the Greens emerged by focusing on their founders and early members, looking at their background, the

⁴⁶ Mark Williams, 'Rethinking Green Parties: the Emergence and Electoral Success of Green Parties in Austria, Britain and the Netherlands' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1999)

influences on their thinking and their perceptions. In addressing the research question two main types of sources have been used: 50 oral interviews with individuals who joined the party between its founding in January 1973 and general election in May 1979, and documents relating to the party from this period which have been retrieved from public archives and personal collections of papers.

The chapters in this thesis consider a series of different aspects of the question of why the party emerged, they are heavily based upon the primary source material reviewed during their development. The answer is a multifaceted one and relies on multiple factors. However, as will be emphasised in the ensuing chapters and then summarised in Chapter 9 there are some points to which this thesis attaches particular significance. First, it engages with a broader, pre-existing debate in the literature about how far green parties and other environmental groups which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s are explained by the objective state of the environment and people's reaction to it. The counterview, implicitly at least, sees the environmental nature of green parties as an almost coincidental manifestation of broader trends such as changes in class structure or shifts in values.⁴⁷ Principally due to several empirical points established through primary research in the following chapters, in addition to the convincing theoretical case made in pre-existing literature, this thesis places the environment at the centre of its explanation for why the party emerged. Indeed, one of the main contributions it makes is in understanding how and why these individuals came to be concerned about the environment and the way in which this concern was translated into political action. Second, this work stresses the idea that post-war economic development and population growth drove people to experience and witness environmental degradation in the 1960s and 1970s. The consequent increase in public and media attention on environmental issues during this period and the development of, what is suggested to have been, an environmental or ecological ideological project are also highlighted as driving the party's emergence. It is argued that without the intellectual influences discussed in the thesis, the party's formation would not have been possible.

⁴⁷ This debate has been explained most clearly in: Wolfgang Rudig & Philip Lowe, 'Political Ecology and the Social Sciences - State of the Art', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol 16 No 4 1986b, pp.513-50; Wolfgang Rudig, 'Explaining green party development: reflections on a theoretical framework' (Unpublished Paper, Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics, 1990a), pp.1-47

Chapter 3 is based on a survey conducted with the 50 interview participants on their background. It provides a vastly more detailed understanding of the membership of the party in its fledgling years than previously existed and considers the extent to which this profile helps explain why the party emerged. Chapter 4 examines the wider background of both broad developments in British post-war history and the events and atmosphere of 1970s Britain. It discusses, based on a review of primary material, the extent to which these contextual factors were important in shaping the views and approach of early party members. The topic of Chapter 5 is what early party members' aims for the party were. It focuses on why they were not deterred by the daunting challenges facing a new and small party seeking to contest general elections under the first-past-the-post system. Chapter 6 details why early party members felt that their concerns could not be adequately integrated into one of the more established political parties or pursued through pressure group activity alone. Chapter 7 considers how and why early party members came to be influenced to take part in political action on the environment. Chapter 8 then investigates how far there was a coherent and comprehensive ideology underpinning the party's early approach and the extent to which such a quality explains its emergence. Finally, Chapter 9 summarises and synthesises the contribution, arguments and ideas provided in this thesis.

1.4 Terminology and Definitions

As has been explained, the Greens in the UK eventually became three different parties and, after being founded as PEOPLE, changed their name twice. One of these name changes also took place mid-way through the period covered in this thesis. This makes labelling the main subject of this thesis a little awkward. Generally, the thesis refers to 'the party', however, where necessary 'PEOPLE', 'the Ecology Party' or 'PEOPLE/the Ecology Party' are used. For example, where comparisons are made between PEOPLE/the Ecology Party and other British political parties such as the Labour Party, and using the term 'the party' would become confusing. Different labels are sometimes used when quoting directly from source material and secondary literature. Occasional references to the Greens, the Green Party or the GPEW, SGP and GPNI are made when a point is being made about the more recent episodes in the party's history. Finally, at points reference is made to green parties generally as a descriptive term for the family of parties which exists internationally. The simplest way

of defining such a group of parties is that they define themselves primarily as 'green parties' and that the formal international networks of green parties recognise them as such.⁴⁸ The environment will be understood here to mean nature or the natural world and the term environmental will be used to describe things pertaining to this. For example, 'environmental politics' refers to political aspects of the environment or nature. Often in the literature both precise and imprecise distinctions are drawn between terms such as ecological, environmental, conservation and preservation. Generally, these distinguish between varying degrees of comprehensiveness and radicalism in approach. For example, both activists and scholars sometimes use the term ecologism to describe a particularly holistic and ideological approach to the environment.⁴⁹ Here, these precise distinctions are occasionally employed, however, generally the wider movement, which the party is a part of, is referred to as either environmental or ecological and these terms are used interchangeably.

⁴⁸ Williams, 1999 p.5

⁴⁹ Neil Carter, *The Politics of the Environment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.6; David Taylor, Interviewed on 23 May 2014 & 20 March 2017 by Mitya Pearson

Chapter 2 - The Thesis in Context: Literature Review, Intellectual Purpose and Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant aspects of existing academic literature in order to situate the primary research conducted for this thesis within its wider context and detail the original contribution it makes to scholarly knowledge. While the British Greens have been studied from various angles, this has rarely engaged in detail with the question of why the party emerged in the UK. There are more general theories about why green parties as a phenomenon have formed, but it will be argued that these are only of limited use and there remains a need for a focused exploration of how and why the British party, specifically, emerged. This is a question which the historical approach taken in this thesis is well-suited to engage with and the insights gained from the primary material examined for this thesis significantly advance understanding of this question and knowledge about the party more generally.

The chapter begins by detailing aspects of the period during which the party emerged, 1970s Britain, and then tracing the evolution of environmental politics within the UK. Both these topic areas are essential points of context for a consideration of the party's history. These topics have been the subject of extensive research which is surveyed in this chapter and returned to in later chapters in the thesis. Following this, the chapter focuses on the literature on the British Greens. A very brief overview is provided of the areas which this literature has focused on but three of the main areas of research into the Greens are explored in detail: membership, internal structure and associated disputes, and ideology. The key point which is established through this review of the literature on the British Greens is that there has not been a detailed, specific historical assessment of why it emerged.

The next section discusses the general theories which have been put forward to explain the emergence of green parties as an international phenomenon. It begins by explaining 'new politics' theories and detailing some of the critiques which have been made of their usefulness to explaining the emergence and development of green parties. Then it sets out the argument that the emergence of these parties must be understood in terms of a response to objective environmental problems and the emergence of an environmental

cleavage.¹ The key point which emerges from the review of this literature is that the pre-existing general theories and scholarly debate related to the emergence of green parties does not provide an adequate answer to the question of why the British Greens emerged. In the case of the 'new politics' theories as explanations for green parties, they have been comprehensively critiqued from a number of angles, so their usefulness is very limited. In the case of the idea that green parties can be explained through environmental problems and the emergence of an ecological cleavage, this is a general, theoretical argument which leaves considerable room to fill in the gaps of how and why this happened in the case of the individuals involved in the party in the 1970s (something this thesis does). These points are developed in the next section of this chapter which sets out the intellectual purpose of the thesis. Finally, having set out the question which this thesis examines and why this is an important exercise, the penultimate section of this chapter explains in detail how this thesis has attempted to provide an answer through a detailed research methodology. The chapter concludes by highlighting some of the additional, specific questions which flow from the main research question and will be examined at points in this thesis.

2.2 The 1970s

Real life 'is not sliced into decades' and putting too much emphasis on specific characteristics of a neat period can obscure the complexities of historical development or reflect particular agendas.² For example, the 'sixties' of popular imagination did not begin until mid-way through that decade, had earlier roots rather than springing from nowhere and continued into the mid-1970s.³ Nonetheless, despite the problems with periodisation, there is a distinct literature on 1970s Britain. A well-known view of Britain in the 1970s has developed, such that 'as an adjective, in popular memory and as a political invocation, the "seventies" has an unerringly, almost normatively, benighted reputation'.⁴ This image of the 1970s 'as a decade of political "crisis" and "decline"' arguably began to take hold early in the

¹ Rudig, 1990a

² Pat Thane, 'Women and the 1970s: Towards Liberation?' in L. Black, H. Pemberton & P. Thane (eds.) *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p.167; Joe Moran, "'Stand Up and Be Counted': Hughie Green, the 1970s and Popular Memory', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol 70 No 1 2010, p.194

³ Thane, 2013 p.167

⁴ Lawrence Black, 'An Enlightening Decade? New Histories of 1970s' Britain', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, Vol 82 2012, p.175

decade.⁵ The ‘sense of a Britain in crisis had been talked up intermittently since the OPEC oil crisis of 1972-3’ by commentators both in the UK and abroad (particularly in America).⁶ Similarly, during the 1970s, commentary on Britain’s economic performance reached such extremes as the idea that it was ‘becoming a third world country’ and in a situation comparable to the Weimar Republic in the 1920s.⁷ Early retrospective accounts of the decade endorsed the idea of the 1970s as a ‘sombre, gloomy’ period which ‘saw crisis become a daily condition of life’.⁸ Such interpretations are in themselves indicative of the difficulty of the period and they were not without basis. The period between 1970 and 1979 witnessed two high profile miners’ strikes, power cuts and the three-day working week, an oil price hike, high inflation, hung parliaments, the ‘winter of discontent’ of 1978–9 with rubbish piling up in Leicester Square and bodies left unburied, persistent economic problems, and a low-level civil war in Northern Ireland which involved terrorist attacks in Great Britain.⁹

However, other historical accounts have offered alternative understandings and sought to ‘restore some of the vivid complexity of the decade as it was actually experienced’.¹⁰ These correctives can be grouped in two broad areas. First, attempts to demonstrate that, both at the time and in subsequent accounts, Britain’s economic decline and descent into crisis in the 1970s has been exaggerated or even constructed. For example, Jim Tomlinson’s critical assessment of ‘declinist’ accounts of the post-war British economy and Colin Hay’s argument that the Winter of Discontent was in many ways ‘a manufactured crisis - lived, experienced and responded to through a particular construction of the events.’¹¹ Recent popular histories of the 1970s can crudely be said to reflect these ideas in adopting a tone of ‘it was bad but not that bad’, highlighting the fact that there were

⁵ Emily Robinson, Camilla Schofield, Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite & Natalie Thomlinson, ‘Telling Stories about Post-war Britain: Popular Individualism and the “Crisis” of the 1970s’, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 28 No 2 2017, p.269

⁶ Moran, 2009 p.176

⁷ Cited in Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun* (London: Penguin, 2012), p.102 & p.132

⁸ Christopher Booker, *The Seventies: Portrait of a Decade* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p.3; Norman Shrapnel, *The Seventies: Britain's Inward March* (London: Constable, 1980) p.13

⁹ Robinson et al., 2017; Hugh Pemberton, ‘Strange Days Indeed: British Politics in the 1970s’, *Contemporary British History*, Vol 23 No 4 2009, p.583

¹⁰ Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out* (Faber & Faber, 2009), p.6

¹¹ Jim Tomlinson, ‘The Politics of Declinism’, in L. Black, H. Pemberton & P. Thane (eds.) *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp.41-60; Colin Hay, ‘Chronicles of a Death Foretold: the Winter of Discontent and Construction of the Crisis of British Keynesianism’, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 63 No 3 2010, p.446

significant ruptures and problems during the 1970s but that these were also exaggerated, often for political purposes.¹²

Secondly, there have been attempts to develop an alternative narrative of 1970s Britain highlighting the radical political activity and exchange of ideas which emerged during this period. This is in part an attempt to repudiate a somewhat simplistic view of the 1970s representing a clean break from the 1960s. For example, Norman Shrapnel argued in 1980 that the 1970s 'diverged from the Sixties as conspicuously as did the Thirties from the Twenties' as suddenly 'it was the morning after, with its splitting headache of unemployment, class and racial friction'.¹³ Andy Beckett challenges this by arguing that 'for many politicized Britons, the decade was not the hangover after the sixties; it was when the great sixties party got started'.¹⁴ Dominic Sandbrook argues that 'there was much more continuity between the 1960s and 1970s' than is commonly remembered and much of what is associated with the 1960s (including some radical political movements) only gathered momentum in the 1970s.¹⁵ Thus the story of the 1970s encompasses 'strikes, car bombs and men in donkey jackets' but also '*Cosmopolitan*, *Men Only*, the Campaign for Real Ale and Friends of the Earth'.¹⁶ Alwyn Turner makes similar points.¹⁷

Academic accounts have provided more developed alternative narratives of the 1970s. Hugh Pemberton and Lawrence Black conclude that 'there is a more positive narrative to be told about the 1970s than is commonly supposed' and that 'historians overlook this at their peril'.¹⁸ While they make some similar arguments to those in the accounts of Beckett, Sandbrook and Turner, they develop this into a concept of 'a market place of ideas' which suggests that because of the problems during the decade it was a period of possibility and debate.¹⁹ Emily Robinson et al. highlight the rise of popular individualism (in a distinctly non-Thatcherite sense) in the post-war period which was

¹² Beckett, 2009; Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency* (London: Allen Lane, 2010); Sandbrook, 2012; Alwyn Turner, *Crisis? What Crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (London: Aurum, 2008)

¹³ Shrapnel, 1980 p.13

¹⁴ Beckett, 2009 p.209

¹⁵ Sandbrook, 2010 p.10

¹⁶ Sandbrook, 2010 p.9

¹⁷ Turner, 2008

¹⁸ Lawrence Black & Hugh Pemberton 'Afterword' in L. Black, H. Pemberton & P. Thane (eds.) *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p.254

¹⁹ Lawrence Black & Hugh Pemberton 'Introduction' in L. Black, H. Pemberton & P. Thane (eds.) *Reassessing 1970s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p.14

‘pervasive by the 1970s and important in shaping the politics of the decade’.²⁰ The key point for this thesis which emerges from a consideration of the historiography is that of a dual narrative of the 1970s, comprising both crisis and gloom, and radicalism and possibility. These ideas will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

2.3 British Environmental Politics

When trying to place the environmental movement within its historical context it is possible to ascribe too much novelty to contemporary developments. There is a danger of suggesting environmental sentiment first emerged at a particular point while ignoring prior examples of it manifesting itself. William Cavert has demonstrated that while many have suggested concern about smoke (what came to be termed air pollution) was a reaction to the industrial revolution, it was actually already present in Britain throughout the early modern period.²¹ WD Solecki and FM Shelley suggest that pollution became a significant national issue in the United States during the late 1950s, ‘many years earlier than is typically acknowledged by environmental historians and policy analysts’.²² Glen O’Hara has demonstrated in his study of the politics of water in post-war Britain that environmental campaigning and concern were manifesting themselves ‘much further back than is usually posited’.²³ For their entire history humans have been necessarily interacting with nature and the environment. Yuval Noah Harari argues that even before the development of agriculture, early human foraging societies were having dramatic impacts on the natural environment.²⁴ Discussion of nature and humanity’s relationship to it has been a feature of Western political thought since the ancient period.²⁵

In Britain, it is possible to discern ‘isolated examples of preservationist sentiment as far back as the Middle Ages’.²⁶ These include the reference to managing ‘fish-weirs’ in the

²⁰ Robinson, 2017 p.272

²¹ William Cavert, *The Smoke of London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.5

²² WD Solecki & FM Shelley, ‘Pollution, Political Agendas, and Policy Windows: Environmental Policy on the Eve of Silent Spring’, *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, Vol 14 No 4 1996 pp.451-68

²³ Glen O’Hara, *The Politics of Water in Post-War Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p.251

²⁴ Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens* (London: Harvill Secker 2011), p.82

²⁵ Clarence Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* (London: University of California Press, 1992); David Pepper, *The Roots of Modern Environmentalism* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p.22

²⁶ Philip Lowe & Jane Goyder, *Environmental Groups in Politics* (London: George Allan & Unwin, 1983), p.15

Magna Carta and the royal bans on sea-coal in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.²⁷ The early modern period is also notable for developments in people's environmental consciousness. Including attempts to protect animals such as the 1533 Act of Parliament which sought to safeguard the eggs of wild-fowl, nature conservation in the form of the Tudor's active management of forests and the beginnings of modern science exemplified by the formation of the Royal Society in 1663.²⁸ For Keith Thomas, at the beginning of the early modern period man's ascendancy over nature was the unquestioned aim of human endeavour but by 1800 although it was still the aim for most people it had started to be questioned by some.²⁹ It is important, however, not to overstate the extent to which the concept of the environment had taken hold within society and nothing approaching the contemporary environmental movement had formed by this point. It is therefore to the nineteenth century that modern British environmental politics is generally traced back to. Mike Robinson has argued that there are two main strands in the development of the environmental movement in Britain. The first is suggested to be the public health reform and sanitary improvements which followed the 1834 Poor Law Commission report and the second is said to be the growing interest in the latter part of the century in rural preservation evidenced by the formation of the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society in 1865 - John McCormick asserts that this was the world's first private environmental group.³⁰ The first strand is questionable in the sense that although obviously linked, it does not necessarily follow that reforms related to planning and sanitation in urban areas were precursors for modern environmental politics. In contemporary terms, such issues would generally be seen as part of health, housing and planning policy rather than core environmental issues. Though pollution does link these issues to an extent because of its negative impacts on people's health.

The second strand, which relates to the protection of the rural and natural world, bears much greater relation to what came to be understood as environmental issues. Philip

²⁷ The Magna Carta Project, 'Fish Weirs', http://magnacarta.cmp.uea.ac.uk/read/magna_carta_1215/Clause_33 accessed 26 July 2017; Devra Davis, *When Smoke Ran Like Water: Tales of Environmental Deception and the Battle Against Pollution* (Oxford: Perseus Books, 2002), p.34

²⁸ David Evans, *A History of Nature Conservation in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.17; John Sheail, *Nature in Trust* (London: Black & Son 1976), pp.1-2

²⁹ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), p.243

³⁰ Mike Robinson, *The Greening of British Party Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1992), pp.8-9; John McCormick, *British Politics and the Environment* (London: Earthscan, 1991), p.31

Lowe and Jane Goyder have argued that only 'during the latter part of the 19th century, in a decisive shift in attitude, did a recognisable sense emerge that the preservation of historic buildings, wildlife and natural beauty should be ensured deliberately rather than left to chance.'³¹ McCormick suggests that the foundations for environmental interest were laid in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by amateur field naturalists but highlights the importance of the late 1800s because of the growth in interest in nature demonstrated by the rise of natural history societies and field clubs.³²

The environment developed very slowly as an issue in British politics from this point but some particularly significant advances took place in the late 1960s and in the 1970s. First, growth in the size and number of environmental groups. The aforementioned Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society was followed by a spate of newly formed dedicated environmental groups between the mid-1880s and the turn of the century such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Coal Smoke Abatement Society and the National Trust. The 'episodic development' of the environmental movement saw organisations continue to emerge during the first half of the twentieth century. This process accelerated dramatically in the late 1960s and the early 1970s meaning that by the early 1980s there were nearly 100 national environmental groups and several thousand local ones. It is estimated that the number of people involved with environmental groups roughly doubled between 1960 and 1970 and by the early 1980s it had approximately doubled again, meaning that by this point there were around 2.5-3 million supporters of environmental groups.³³ The combined memberships of nine national 'voluntary environmental organisations' is said to have grown from half a million in 1971, to over two million in 1981 and the radical group Friends of the Earth alone grew from just 1,000 members in 1971, to 18,000 in 1981.³⁴ A 1977 study of amenity societies found that 85 per cent of them had been founded since 1957 and 37 per cent had been established between 1970 and 1974.³⁵

³¹ Lowe & Goyder, 1983 p.15

³² McCormick, 1991 p.29

³³ Lowe & Goyder, 1983 pp.1-16

³⁴ Chris Rootes, 'The New Politics and the New Social Movements', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol 22 No 2 1992, p.178

³⁵ Anthony Barker & Michael Keating, 'Public Spirits: Amenity Societies and Others' in C. Crouch (ed.), *British Political Sociology Yearbook: Volume 3 - Participation in Politics* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p.146

Secondly, while it is questionable how seriously the main parties took environmental issues, there were significant developments in British party politics regarding the environment during this period. Although it is possible to find much earlier examples of parties discussing what came to be regarded as environmental issues, it was not until the 1970 general election that the three main parties employed the term 'environment' in their manifestos to refer to a specific area of policy.³⁶ The three largest parties' increased interest in this area was also demonstrated by the internal party groups which were set up during the 1970s as well as published documents on the topic.³⁷ Thirdly, at the governmental level there were signs of increased awareness of the environment. Edward Max Nicholson suggests that Henry VIII's aforementioned action 'to avoid the destruction of wilde-fowl' was the first piece of enforceable environmental legislation in England.³⁸ Successive pieces of environmental legislation were passed during the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. Legislation such as the Control of Pollution Act 1974 was therefore not a dramatic break from the past.³⁹ More significant were the changes in administration as the Department of the Environment was created in 1970. This was certainly not the first time that the British government had been reformed to reflect environmental concerns: for example, 1863 saw the world's first environmental agency created in the form of the Alkali Inspectorate. The Department's name was also deceptive in that the natural environment was a fairly small part of a large brief which included transport, housing and local government.⁴⁰ Nonetheless the environment had become more institutionalised within British government.

Fourthly, during this period there were international developments in this area which had relevance to Britain. Initiated in 1968, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in 1972 in Stockholm. This was attended by a British delegation and led to a number of practical outcomes including a convention on marine dumping and the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme.⁴¹ For

³⁶ Robinson, 1992 p.7

³⁷ Lowe & Goyder, 1983 p.73; For example: The Labour Party, *The Politics of the Environment*, 1973

³⁸ EM Nicholson, *The Environmental Revolution* (London: Hodder Stoughton 1970), p.141

³⁹ Robinson, 1992 p.13

⁴⁰ McCormick 1991 pp.9-16

⁴¹ Report on the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972, <http://www.un-documents.net/aconf48-14r1.pdf> accessed 26 July 2017; Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb and the Greening of Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.237

Meredith Veldman, the main significance of the conference was that it represented a 'paradigm shift' from previous international conferences on the environment which had treated the earth purely as a resource to be exploited rather than something to be protected.⁴² Additionally, in parallel with British accession to the European Economic Community in 1973, work was underway in the early 1970s to develop European environmental policies which Britain helped to shape and became subject to.⁴³ Finally, while the growth in the environmental movement clearly demonstrated a rise in concern about the environment among a significant minority of the population, the late 1960s and early 1970s also saw an upsurge in media and public attention devoted to the issue. The most useful snapshot of this is an analysis of the space devoted to the environment in *The Times* between 1953-73. This study documented a modest 28 per cent increase in environmental coverage between 1953-65, but dramatic increases after this point of 182 per cent between 1965-69 and 281 per cent between 1969-73 (compared with the 1953 base line).⁴⁴ This is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the population's level of concern but it does provide 'an indication of the public mood'.⁴⁵

2.4 Existing Research on the Greens in Britain

There are nearly 100 green parties spread across the world and one has been established in every European country.⁴⁶ Because of this, there is a vast literature looking at green parties from a comparative perspective which provides accounts of the parties in different countries.⁴⁷ There are a number of pieces of work which have provided overviews of the history and development of the Greens in the UK.⁴⁸ There are also successive accounts of

⁴² Veldman, 1994 p.238

⁴³ Robinson, 1992 p.15

⁴⁴ S.K. Brookes, A.G. Jordan, R.H. Kimber & J.J. Richardson, 'The Growth of the Environment as a Political Issue in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol 6 No 2 1976, p.249

⁴⁵ Robinson, 1992 p.10

⁴⁶ Global Greens, 'Member Parties', <https://www.globalgreens.org/member-parties> accessed 27 July 2017; Williams, 1999 p.1

⁴⁷ Some examples include: Emilie van Haute (ed.), *Green Parties in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2016); Jon Burchell, 'Evolving or conforming? Assessing organisational reform within European green parties', *West European Politics*, Vol 24 No 3 2001, pp.113-34; Thomas Dietz, 'Similar but Different? The European Greens', *Party Politics*, Vol 6 No 2 2000, pp.199-210; Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists* (London: Westview Press, 1989)

⁴⁸ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a; Parkin, 1989; Paul Byrne, 'Great Britain: the Green Party' in F. Muller-Rommel (ed.), *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists* (London: Westview Press, 1989), pp.101-12;

the Greens' performance in general and European elections since 1992.⁴⁹ There was a particular spike in work on the party during the early 1990s as the shock 1989 European election result sparked interest in the party and scholars sought to explain the rise and subsequent decline in the party's fortunes during this period.⁵⁰ The gains the party made in terms of election performance and membership from the late 2000s have also been noted and discussed.⁵¹ Three additional specific areas of past research into the party are examined in detail below, they are: the party's membership and activists, the party's structure and the related internal disputes over this, and the party's ideology. They are set out in detail because, firstly, they are three of the main topics which the far from exhaustive literature on the British Greens has focused on and are therefore useful general context for the thesis. Secondly, though the studies detailed below are predominantly or exclusively concerned with the period after 1979, all three themes are essential to understanding both why the party emerged and its early history more generally. For this reason, they are topics which are returned to at various points in later chapters.

2.4.1 Party Members and Activists

A substantial literature exists dedicated to understanding members of British political parties and several studies have focused specifically on the membership of the Greens. The first national membership survey of the party was conducted in 1984 for an undergraduate dissertation by Chris Studman with a one page questionnaire filled out by 342 members.⁵² Rudig et al. conducted a much larger survey of 4,375 members in 1990 immediately after

Eugene Frankland, 'Does Green Politics have a Future in Britain? An American Perspective' in W. Rudig (ed.), *Green Politics One* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp.7-28; Wall, 1994; Rootes, 1995a; Holzhauer, 2004

⁴⁹ Carter, 1992; Neil Carter, 'The Greens in the 1994 European Parliamentary Elections', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 3 No 3 1994, pp.495-502; Neil Carter, 'The 1997 British general election', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 6 No 3 1997, pp.156-61; Carter, 1999; Carter et al., 2001; Neil Carter, 'Mixed Fortunes: The Greens in the 2004 European Parliament Election', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 14 No 1 2005, pp.103-11; Carter & Rootes, 2006; Carter & Rootes, 2010; Carter, 2015; Rudig, 2015c

⁵⁰ Mark Franklin & Wolfgang Rudig, 'The greening of Europe: ecological voting in the 1989 European elections' (Unpublished Paper, Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics, 1991); Mark Franklin & Wolfgang Rudig, 'The green voter in the 1989 European elections', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 1 No 4 1992, pp.129-59; Mark Franklin & Wolfgang Rudig, 'On the Durability of Green Politics: Evidence from the 1989 European Election Study', *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol 28 No 3 1995, pp.409-39; Chris Rootes, 'Environmentalism and political competition: the British Greens in the 1989 elections to the European Parliament', *Politics*, Vol 11 No 2 1991, pp.39-44; Rudig, Franklin & Bennie, 1996

⁵¹ Birch, 2008; Neil Carter, 'The Green Party: Emerging from the Political Wilderness?', *British Politics*, Vol 3 No 2 2008, pp.223-40; Bennie, 2016

⁵² Chris Studman, 'Who are the Ecologists?' (Unpublished Dissertation, Hatfield Polytechnic, 1984)

the party had seen a big increase in membership following its results in the 1989 European election.⁵³ Rudig got responses from 1,297 members of the Green Party of England and Wales in 2002 as part of a wider piece of work on European green party members.⁵⁴ In November 2009 a small survey of 337 members was carried out but nothing was published from this.⁵⁵ Rudig conducted another large survey of members in July 2015 which got responses from 8,141 individuals. This was able to shed light on those who had joined the party as part of the 'green surge' and bumped the party membership to around 70,000.⁵⁶ Most recently, James Dennison used data from the ESRC Party Membership Project to analyse the same phenomenon.⁵⁷

Some additional work has furthered understanding of party members and activists. Eugene Frankland collated information from *The Times Guide to the House of Commons* to outline the gender breakdown of the 53 candidates in the 1979 general election as well as the age and occupation of 36 of them.⁵⁸ Adrian Atkinson conducted a number of interviews with activists in 1980 and 1981 which helped to inform Wolfgang Rudig and Philip Lowe's examination of the party's history but seem not to have been drawn from in any other literature.⁵⁹ Alistair McCulloch surveyed all the activists who campaigned for the four parties which contested the St Leonards Ward, Exeter, by-election in June 1980. This included responses from 14 Ecology Party activists.⁶⁰ McCulloch followed this up with a national survey of local branch party contacts in 1981 to which 87 individuals responded; the investigation focused predominantly on party organisation and activity but also asked participants for social characteristics and their previous political involvement.⁶¹ Stuart Kirk conducted some survey work in 1984 looking at national and local party elites.⁶² Ian Coates'

⁵³ Wolfgang Rudig, Lynn Bennie & Mark Franklin, *Green Party Members: A Profile* (Glasgow: Delta Publications, 1991)

⁵⁴ Wolfgang Rudig, 'How Similar, How Different? Comparing Green Party Members' (Unpublished Paper, Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics, 2015b), p.23

⁵⁵ Dominic Turner Survey, Cited in Wolfgang Rudig, 'Green Party Membership Survey 2015: Some Preliminary Results' (Unpublished Paper, Strathclyde Papers on Government and Politics, 2015a)

⁵⁶ Rudig, 2015a

⁵⁷ James Dennison, *The Greens in British Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p.68

⁵⁸ Eugene Frankland, 'Ecology, Ideology and Party Politics: A Comparative Perspective' (Unpublished Paper, Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association, November 1981)

⁵⁹ Adrian Atkinson Interviews Cited in Rudig & Lowe, 1986a

⁶⁰ Alistair McCulloch, 'Joining a Political Party: A Reassessment of the Economic Approach to Membership', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol 41 No 4 1990, pp.497-516

⁶¹ Alistair McCulloch, 'The Ecology Party in England and Wales: Branch organisation and Activity', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 2 No 1 1993, pp.20-39

⁶² Stuart Kirk, 'Ecology Party - Ideology and Characteristics' (Unpublished Paper, Department of Political Science, Plymouth Polytechnic, 1984) Cited in Rudig, Bennie & Franklin 1991 (Unable to Retrieve Original Paper)

work in the mid-1990s was based on qualitative interviews and focused predominantly on ideology but also included examinations of the socio-economic background of members involved.⁶³ Finally, Lynn Bennie has researched Scottish Green Party members in detail.⁶⁴

Since the early 1980s, therefore, successive studies have provided detailed profiles of the membership of the party. In terms of socio-economic characteristics, a fairly common picture has emerged within these texts of the typical party member. They are generally highly educated: Studman reported in 1984 that 42 per cent of members had a university degree, 62 per cent of those sampled in 2002 had one and 64 per cent in the 2015 sample.⁶⁵ They are more likely to be male, but not overwhelmingly, with the proportion of female respondents to the national membership surveys conducted between 1984 and 2015 varying between 37 and 47 per cent.⁶⁶ The average age of party members has repeatedly been shown to be younger than that of the population at large, although a 'greying' process between the 1980s and 2000s was observed which was more recently counteracted by the entry of younger members as part of the 'green surge'.⁶⁷ Additionally, members of the party have been shown to be predominantly non-religious and middle class, with a high proportion working in the public and 'caring' sectors such as health and education.⁶⁸ The comparative work which Rudig conducted in 2002 suggested that many aspects of this membership profile were broadly mirrored across European green parties.⁶⁹

2.4.2 Traditionalists and Decentralists

There are two main studies of the party's structure. McCulloch conducted an investigation in 1981, which he later published as two separate articles, one on the party's structure and one on exploring the party's local branches.⁷⁰ More recently, Rudig produced an analysis of

⁶³ Coates, 1997 pp.205-9

⁶⁴ Lynn Bennie, 'Membership Dynamics of the Scottish Green Party' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2000); Lynn Bennie, *Understanding Political Participation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Lynn Bennie, *Understanding Political Participation* (London: Routledge, 2017)

⁶⁵ Studman, 1984 p.4; Rudig, 2015b p.27; Rudig, 2015a p.5

⁶⁶ Rudig, 2015a p.5

⁶⁷ Studman, 1984; McCulloch, 1993 p.30; Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991 p.15; Rudig, 2015b, pp.10-11; Rudig, 2015a p.4

⁶⁸ McCulloch, 1993; Rudig 2015a

⁶⁹ Rudig, 2015b

⁷⁰ Alistair McCulloch, 'The Green Party in England and Wales: Structure and development: The Early Years', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 1 No 3 1992, pp.418-36; McCulloch, 1993

how the party's structure had developed from its establishment up to 2007.⁷¹ Additionally, Florence Faucher carried out some comparative research looking at the structures of the green parties in France and Britain in the late 1990s.⁷² There has been more extensive discussion of the disagreements within the party over matters related to internal organisation than the actual structure of the party. Similar conflicts have emerged within many green parties over whether to moderate their radical and distinctive approach to politics.⁷³ In the British case, there was widespread disagreement from around 1979 between activists pursuing 'a more traditional mode of political organisation with the aim of capturing governmental power' and others who wanted 'a less formal' party.⁷⁴ These two wings have several (largely interchangeable) labels: pragmatists and fundamentalists,⁷⁵ traditionalists and decentralists,⁷⁶ traditionalists and alternativists,⁷⁷ and electoralists and anarchists.⁷⁸ Here, 'traditionalists' and 'decentralists' will be used.

Decentralists had been attracted by the idea of the party being 'in the vanguard' of the radical environmental movement and 'becoming the party-political arm of a wider social movement'. Decentralists also argued that the party should be organised to support non-violent direct action (NVDA).⁷⁹ In their vision, the party would take a much broader approach than just electoral politics; some even questioned the point of elections.⁸⁰ Conversely, the traditionalist position suggested that the party needed to focus its efforts on elections; assuming that individuals involved in environmental NGOs would come to vote for and join the party if it was successful in this endeavour.⁸¹ This approach meant that activists should 'present a party that would be "respectable" to the middle-of-the-road voter'.⁸² Decentralists viewed 'all talk of leadership as anathema', were in favour of 'maximum

⁷¹ Rudig, 2008

⁷² Florence Faucher, 'Party Organisation and Democracy: A Comparison of France and Britain', *GeoJournal*, Vol 47 No 3 1999, pp.487-96; Florence Faucher, 'Strategies in Les Verts and the Green Party' (Unpublished Paper, Political Studies Association Conference, Belfast, April 1997a), pp.1-14

⁷³ Brian Doherty, 'The Fundi-Realo Controversy: An Analysis of Four European green parties', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 1 No 1 1992a, p.95

⁷⁴ McCulloch, 1993 p.30; Rudig, 2008 p.206

⁷⁵ Holzhauer, 2004 p.2

⁷⁶ Wall, 1994 p.38

⁷⁷ Alistair McCulloch, 'Shades of Green: Ideas in the British Green Movement', *Teaching Politics*, Vol 17 No 2 1988, p.189

⁷⁸ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.275

⁷⁹ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.274-275

⁸⁰ Sara Parkin, 'The Green Breakthrough', ICBH Witness Seminar, held 14 October 2010, <http://www.ngo.bham.ac.uk/GreenBreakthrough.pdf> accessed 15 August 2014 pp.27-28

⁸¹ Holzhauer, 2004 p.21

⁸² Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.275

decentralisation within the party' and saw the party as a means to 'encourage different lifestyles' and highlight 'how society could and should be changed through example'.⁸³ Traditionalists, however, were relaxed about formalising the party's structure and implementing some forms of centralisation. They wanted 'elected leadership' to provide an effective public image.⁸⁴

In reality, members did not reflect either of these ideal types exactly.⁸⁵ However, by the 1980s 'two distinct, recognisable and opposing tendencies' had emerged.⁸⁶ Efforts to create the position of leader and end rotation rules for those in formal party roles were voted down at the 1979 Autumn Conference.⁸⁷ This type of argument was returned to repeatedly in the following decade.⁸⁸ The 'most open and serious clash' became known as 'the Maingreen affair'.⁸⁹ Jonathan Tyler and Paul Ekins created an internal working group called Maingreen, which sought to overhaul the large Party Council and put in place a formalised executive structure.⁹⁰ An effort to implement this change at the February 1986 conference was unsuccessful but some members believed Maingreen was 'an attempted coup'.⁹¹ Following the 1989 European election, many members argued that the party had to reorganise itself to make the most of the party's success. At the 1990 conference the Green 2000 group was created in order to facilitate this.⁹² Their initial bid for internal reform was blocked as the conference was deemed inquorate.⁹³ Around this period, debates within party magazines, such as *Econews*, *Green Activist* and *Green Line*, exemplified 'a party strongly polarised between two hostile factions'.⁹⁴ Running up to the September 1991 conference, Green 2000 advocates worked to enlist member's proxy votes.⁹⁵ This time the

⁸³ Talshir, 2002 p.178; McCulloch, 1993 p.35; Rootes, 1995a p.85; Mitya Pearson, 'How did the electoralist and anarchist divisions within the Green Party begin and what was their long term impact on the party?' (Unpublished MA Dissertation, King's College London, 2014)

⁸⁴ Rootes, 1995a p.85

⁸⁵ Doherty, 1992a p.97

⁸⁶ Alistair McCulloch, 'The Ecology Party and Constituency Politics' (Unpublished Paper, Political Studies Association Annual Conference, Newcastle, April 1983), p.1

⁸⁷ Wall, 1994 p.38

⁸⁸ O'Neill, 1997 p.287

⁸⁹ Holzhauer, 2004 p.26

⁹⁰ Jon Burchell, *The Evolution of Green Politics: Development and Change Within European Green Parties* (London: Routledge 2002), p.114

⁹¹ Parkin, 1989 p.227; Holzhauer, 2004 p.26

⁹² Jon Burchell, 'Here Come the Greens (Again)', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 9 No 3 2000, p.145; Brian Doherty, 'The Autumn 1991 Conference of the UK Green Party', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 1 No 2 1992b, p.294

⁹³ Holzhauer, 2004 p.27; O'Neill, 1997 p.294; Doherty, 1992b p.294

⁹⁴ Doherty, 1992b p.294

⁹⁵ Doherty, 1992b, p.295

changes were passed overwhelmingly but there was a significant fallout from this, including attempts to recall members of the party Executive who had supported them, rancour from those who had opposed them and, eventually, resignations from the party Executive.⁹⁶ However, this was the 'peak' in the acrimony and the debates 'that generated internal tensions in the past seem to have dissipated'.⁹⁷

2.4.3 Green Philosophy and the Ideology of the Party

Since the emergence of modern environmental politics in the 1960s and 1970s, there have been attempts to understand this phenomenon and this has included considerable work trying to analyse its philosophical or ideological underpinnings.⁹⁸ This has raised various points of debates. Most fundamentally, scholars have examined whether there is a standalone green or environmental ideology which can be said to represent a distinct political cleavage. Numerous cases have been made for the existence of such an ideology.⁹⁹ Others have disputed such a notion, suggesting, for example, that the interests of the environmental movement are too disparate to be grouped together coherently, or that environmental politics is merely an updated version of an established ideological approach such as Marxism.¹⁰⁰ The question of the novelty of environmentalism is examined in detail in Chapter 7. However, it is worth noting here that there is a widespread idea that there was a shift in thinking about the environment during the 1960s and 1970s to a more 'holistic vision' which demanded 'social and political change'.¹⁰¹ As an academic account described in 1978, what had emerged in 'the late 1960's and early 1970's' was not just increased public concern about the environment but the idea that 'the future of modern industrial society is

⁹⁶ Talshir, 2002 p.227; Holzhauer, 2004 p.26-27; Faucher, 1997a p.9; Florence Faucher, 'Think Globally/Act Locally Paradox in Les Verts and the Green Party' (Unpublished Paper, ECPR Joint Session of Workshops Bern, February 1997b), p.9

⁹⁷ Holzhauer, 2004 p.29; Carter, 2008, p.234

⁹⁸ Some early examples of examples of scholarship on the British movement include: Hans Enzensberger, 'Ecology and the End of Ideology', *New Left Review*, Vol 1 No 84 March-April 1974 pp.3-31; Philip Lowe & Michael Worboys, 'Ecology and the End of Ideology', *Antipode*, Vol 10 No 2 1978, pp. 12-21; Tim O'Riordan, 'Environmental Ideologies', *Environment and Planning A*, Vol 9 No 1 1977, pp.3-14

⁹⁹ Robyn Eckersley, *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); Andrew Dobson, *Green Political Thought* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990); Robert Goodin, *Green Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992); Tim Hayward, *Ecological Thought: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995)

¹⁰⁰ Eva Kolinsky, 'Introduction' in E. Kolinsky (ed.) *The Greens in West Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 1989), p.8; Andrei Markovits & Philip Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Herbert Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation* (New York: Ithaca, 1989); Talshir, 2002 pp.18-21

¹⁰¹ Veldman, 1994 p.210

threatened by environmental disaster’ - meaning some ‘questioned some of its central social values and aims’ and ‘put forward radical proposals for change and action’.¹⁰²

Amongst those who believe that there is an environmental or ecological ideology, there has been exhaustive work to dissect and categorise what exactly this is based upon. Though this is often referred to as green political thought or theory, overwhelmingly this has been focused upon the ideology of the environmental movement as a whole, of which green parties are only a part, or refining a theoretical understanding of green political philosophy. The more theoretical approach has distinguished between a reformist attitude to the environment which seeks to protect nature, because of its instrumental value to humans, and a more fundamental position which values nature for its intrinsic worth, including categorisations of ‘shallow’ and ‘deep’ ecologists, ‘anthropocentrism’ and ‘ecocentrism’, and ‘environmentalism’ and ‘ecologism’.¹⁰³ Other less theoretical accounts have provided appraisals of the ideology of the modern environmental movement such as Anna Bramwell’s suggestion that it is based upon the combination of resource scarcity economics and holistic biology or David Pepper’s view that ‘the principal ideas of modern environmentalism’ were ‘expounded in three landmark texts: *A Blueprint for Survival*, *Limits to Growth* and *Small is Beautiful*’.¹⁰⁴ Bjorn-Ola Linner makes the case for the emergence of a new global conservation ideology based on the ideas of an order of nature, catastrophe empiricism, endangered humanity, the world household and the ecological society.¹⁰⁵

There have been attempts to ‘bridge the gap’ between ‘academic portrayals of green political theory’ and the ‘beliefs of those actively involved in green politics’ by looking at the ideology of the party.¹⁰⁶ These studies and more general accounts which have dealt with the party’s ideology provide a detailed picture of the political philosophy of the party and how this has developed over time.¹⁰⁷ Rudig et al.’s quantitative survey conducted between 1990 and 1991 identified the party’s membership as strongly favouring a ‘biocentric’ view of the

¹⁰² Lowe & Worboys, 1978 p.12

¹⁰³ Dobson, 1990 p.189; Arne Naess, ‘The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary’, *Inquiry*, Vol 16 No 1-4, 1973, pp.95-100; Carter, 2007 p.14

¹⁰⁴ Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History* (Yale University Press, 1989), p.xi; Pepper, 1986 p.22

¹⁰⁵ Bjorn-Ola Linner, *The Return of Malthus* (Isle of Harris: White Horse, 2003), pp.93-117

¹⁰⁶ Coates, 1997 p.193; Brian Doherty, ‘Ideology and the Green Parties of Western Europe’ (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Manchester); Talshir, 2002

¹⁰⁷ Pepper, 1986 p.190-201; Wall, 1994 p.14; Rudig and Lowe, 1986a; Coates, 1997; McCulloch, 1988

value of nature and believing in the need for redistribution of wealth.¹⁰⁸ Coates conducted his own investigation into the party's ideology between 1994 and 1997 through observation of party meetings and interviews with 32 party activists. The research suggested that party activists had a worldview made up of five themes: ecology and economics, equity and social justice, political alternatives, ethical basis and values, and lifestyle politics.¹⁰⁹ McCulloch and Rudig and Lowe provided some discussion of the party's ideology in its early years. Both accounts identify the heavy influence of Edward Goldsmith.¹¹⁰ Goldsmith's aforementioned *A Blueprint for Survival* was published in 1972. It sought to engage with the challenge of creating a sustainable ecological and economic future in the face of the inevitable 'breakdown of society and the irreversible disruption of the life-support systems on this planet'. This provided a critique of industrialisation and urbanisation on the grounds that humanity's survival depended on ending the disruption to the earth's ecosystem. The vision was thus for small, decentralised and self-sufficient communities.¹¹¹ It also made the case for population control measures such as free contraception, abortion and sterilisation, ending immigration and put forward some socially conservative ideas around promoting the family.¹¹²

Rudig and Lowe suggest that for Goldsmith industrialism had led to a 'disintegration of society' and that his counter to this was 'the resurrection of the authority of the family and community' supplemented by a 'unified science which would provide the basis for planning and directing the society.'¹¹³ The emergence of Porritt, Tyler and Fleming within the party is seen to herald a change in approach as they were unhappy with Goldsmith's 'survivalist' philosophy.¹¹⁴ For McCulloch they introduced a 'pragmatic and humanist emphasis to the party'.¹¹⁵ Though not exclusively focused on the party's early years, Gayil Talshir and Brian Doherty's studies are the most detailed considerations of the party's ideology during the 1970s and these are examined in detail in Chapter 8. Both scholars

¹⁰⁸ Lynn Bennie, Mark Franklin & Wolfgang Rudig, 'Green dimensions: the ideology of the British Greens ideology of the British Greens' in W. Rudig (ed.) *Green Politics Three* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp.217-39

¹⁰⁹ Coates, 1997 pp.204-58

¹¹⁰ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.271; McCulloch, 1988 p.191

¹¹¹ Edward Goldsmith et al., *A Blueprint for Survival* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), p.1

¹¹² Talshir, 2002 pp.188-90

¹¹³ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.271

¹¹⁴ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.271

¹¹⁵ McCulloch, 1988 p.192

agree that the party began with a message predominantly focused on the environment which over time became more associated with the left and a broader set of social issues.¹¹⁶ This is a view of the party's development which is shared widely and Rudig's more recent survey of party members in 2015 added to this by demonstrating party members' steady move to the left since 1990.¹¹⁷

2.5 Explaining the Greens' Emergence and Development

Studies of the British party have certainly offered ideas related to the question of why it emerged, for example in Rudig and Lowe's account of the party's history, which will be drawn upon at relevant points in this thesis.¹¹⁸ In the main, however, the literature on the British Greens has focused on several areas but rarely engaged in detail on the question of why it emerged. The main exception to this is Williams' comparative study of the British, Dutch and Austrian greens but this is principally an account of how well various political and sociological theories can be applied to these cases to explain their emergence and electoral performance.¹¹⁹ This is a useful resource which is referred to at points in the thesis but it is very far removed from the approach and focus of this thesis. Williams' account makes almost no reference to primary material and is a top-down, mainly theoretical discussion of green parties concerned with developing general notions about them as a phenomenon. Whereas this thesis is a bottom-up account, focused on detailed primary research of one individual case. Because of their ubiquity there are also more general theories about the emergence of green parties. Most obviously, 'new politics' theories which highlight the importance of new social movements, class developments and the flourishing of post-materialist values.¹²⁰ Perhaps these general theories render a more specific account of the British party's emergence unnecessary?

¹¹⁶ Talshir, 2002; Doherty, 1994 p.9, pp.151-55, p.162 & pp.170-72

¹¹⁷ Rudig, 2015a p.6

¹¹⁸ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a

¹¹⁹ Williams, 1999

¹²⁰ Carter, 2007 pp.91-96

2.5.1 New Social Movements

New social movements such as the peace, feminist and environmental movements, were responsible for much of the social protest in Western democracies during the 1960s and 1970s.¹²¹ New social movements are seen to represent 'a radical and distinctive break from previous forms of political activism'.¹²² Allan Scott distinguishes between trade unions, as an example of an old social movement, which are close to the political process, have a formal and hierarchal structure and focus on political mobilisation, and new social movements which are located in civil society, are organised in a more grassroots fashion and focus on direct action and cultural innovation. Scott also highlights a difference in aims as trade unions seek political integration and economic rights, and new social movements desire changes in values and lifestyle.¹²³

A number of scholars have emphasised the importance of new social movements in explaining why and how green parties have formed and developed.¹²⁴ For example, the Austrian and Swedish green parties had their origins in referendum campaigns against nuclear power.¹²⁵ A number of green parties also had links with environmental and peace groups at an early stage in their history.¹²⁶ New social movement activity must therefore be seen as an influence on green parties' formation and development. However, many green parties, such as those formed in the UK, Ireland and throughout Eastern Europe, are 'not rooted in the new social movement milieu' so there is clearly a limit to how far this idea can explain the formation and development of all green parties.¹²⁷ Additionally, attempts to group all the different social movements together are often unconvincing. Adam Lent's account of social movements in Britain emphasises how these groups were defined by their focus on personal liberation and pride in individuals' differences. This perspective makes

¹²¹ Carter, 2007 p.91

¹²² Burchell, 2002 p.9

¹²³ Alan Scott, *Ideology and the New Social Movements* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.16-19

¹²⁴ Evert Vedung, 'The Formation of Green Parties: Environmentalism, State Response, and Political Entrepreneurship' in J. Hansen (ed.) *Environmental Concerns: An Inter-Disciplinary Exercise* (London: Elsevier Science Publishers, 1991), pp.257-74; Herbert Kitschelt, 'New Social Movements and the Decline of Party Organization' in R. Dalton and M. Kuechler (eds.) *Challenging the Political Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1990), pp.179-208; Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, 'New Political Movements and New Politics Parties in Western Europe' in R. Dalton and M. Kuechler (eds.) *Challenging the Political Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) pp.209-31

¹²⁵ Chris Rootes, 1995a p.237

¹²⁶ Carter, 2007 p.96

¹²⁷ Carter, 2007 p.96

sense for feminist and gay rights groups but is less useful in describing environmental groups.¹²⁸ Russell Dalton and Manfred Kuechler describe part of the 'ideological bond' between the feminist, peace and environmental movement as their 'deep concern about the threats to the future of the human race'.¹²⁹ This supposedly connecting thread makes sense for peace and environmental groups but not the others.

2.5.2 A New Middle Class

Some scholars have described changes in the structures of advanced capitalist societies since the end of the Second World War whereby the growth of the service sector has led to a shift in occupational structures and increases in the number and proportion of white-collar workers. This change, in addition to other developments such as increased material standards of living and wider access to higher education, has been seen to amount to the emergence of a new middle class which is highly educated, fills professional and welfare jobs, and is economically secure.¹³⁰ This structural shift has been repeatedly linked to the rise of environmentalism and emergence of green parties.¹³¹ Class is helpful in examining green parties, as studies have consistently shown that the socio-economic profile of supporters of green parties, and environmental movements more generally, in advanced capitalist societies, such as Britain, is generally predominantly made up of the new middle class.¹³² One important addition to this comes from Clause Offe who suggests that two further groups are also involved in new social movements: 'decommodified' groups, such as students; and elements of the 'old middle class', such as farmers.¹³³ However, as Luke

¹²⁸ Adam Lent, *British Social Movements Since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) p.97

¹²⁹ Manfred Kuechler & Russell Dalton, 'New Social Movements in Perspective' in R. Dalton and M. Kuechler (eds.) *Challenging the Political Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.280

¹³⁰ Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of the Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979); Hanspeter Kriesi, *Political Mobilisation and Social Change: The Dutch Case in Comparative Perspective* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1993); Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968); Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (New York: William Morrow, 1980); Ronald Inglehart & Jacques-Rene Rabier, 'Political Realignment in Advanced industrial Society: from Class Based Politics to Quality of Life Politics', *Government and Opposition*, Vol 21 No 4 1986, pp.456-79

¹³¹ Suzanne Berger, 'Politics and Anti-Politics in Western Europe in the Seventies', *Daedalus*, Vol 108 No 1 1979, pp. 27-50; Ronald Inglehart, 'Post-Materialism in an Environment of Insecurity', *American Political Science Review*, Vol 75 No 4 1981, pp.880-900; Gouldner, 1979; Dorothy Nelkin & Michael Pollak, *The Atom Besieged: Extra-Parliamentary Dissent in France and Cambridge* (London: MIT, 1981)

¹³² Carter, 2007 p.96; Chris Rootes, 'A New Class? The Educated and the New Politics' in L. Maheu (ed.) *Social Movements and Social Classes: the Future of Collective Action* (London: SAGE, 1995c), p.225

¹³³ Clause Offe, 'New Social Movement: Challenging the Boundary of Institutional Politics', *Social Research*, Vol 52 No 4 1985, p.834

Martell has argued, concern for the environment may be 'class-based' but not 'class-driven'. He asserts that attempts to argue that environmentalism is an extension of the class interests of the new middle class are flawed.¹³⁴

2.5.3 Post-materialism

The leading exponent of post-materialist theory is Ronald Inglehart who has suggested that generations born since 1945 throughout Western Europe have grown up under conditions of relative peace and prosperity. Accordingly there has been a value shift as people have placed less importance on economic and physical security and instead focused on post-material concerns such as the environment and women's issues.¹³⁵ The theory was not initially focused on the environment or green parties but Inglehart and other scholars have linked post-materialism to green parties, for example Ferdinand Muller-Rommel highlighted that the majority of supporters of both the Greens in Germany and green parties across Europe displayed post-material values.¹³⁶ Thomas Poguntke argued in his study of the German greens that 'post-materialist value orientation is the single most important explanatory factor for the emergence of the New Politics and - as a consequence - the Green Party vote'.¹³⁷ However, significant doubt has been cast on the usefulness of post-materialism as an explanation for the rise and support for green parties. Leaving aside questions about the validity of post-material value shift theory and whether the environment can be satisfactorily categorised as a post-material issue, studies have undermined the claim of a simple statistical relationship between post-material values and green party formation and support.¹³⁸ Even in Germany, other dynamics were important in

¹³⁴ Luke Martell, *Ecology and Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) Cited in Carter, 2007 p.93

¹³⁵ Ronald Inglehart, 'Values, Ideology and Cognitive Mobilization in New Social Movements', in R. Dalton and M. Kuechler (eds.) *Challenging the Political Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.43-66; Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977)

¹³⁶ Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, 'Social Movements and the Greens: New Internal Politics in Germany', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol 13 No 1 1985, pp.53-67; Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, 'Green Parties under Comparative Perspective' (Unpublished Paper, Barcelona, 1994) p.4

¹³⁷ Thomas Poguntke, *Alternative Politics: The German Green Party* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p.59

¹³⁸ Martin Bennulf, 'The Rise and Fall of Miljopartiet de Grona' in D. Richardson & C. Rootes (eds.), *The Green Challenge* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.135; Masja Nas, 'Greener, Greener, Greenest' in J. van Deth & E. Scarborough (eds.) *The Impact of Values* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.275-300; Chris Rootes, 'Environmental Movements and Green Parties in Western and Eastern Europe', in M. Redclift & G. Woodgate (eds.) *The International Handbook of Environmental Sociology* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1997), pp.319-48; Robert Harmel & Jerry Mitchell (1985) 'Formation and Success of New Parties: A Cross-National Analysis', *International Political Science Review*, Vol 6 No 4 1985, pp.516; Detlef Jahn, 'The

the party's emergence.¹³⁹ Additionally, Ramachandra Guha has argued that the widespread existence of non-Western environmental movements undermines the explanatory value of post-materialism for the rise of environmental groups and green parties.¹⁴⁰

2.5.4 The Environment

This brief review of 'new politics' theories and their connection to green parties reveals that while they 'do help explain the rise of green parties', there are also considerable limits to their usefulness.¹⁴¹ The criticisms set out are only a very small selection of a wide range of critiques which have comprehensively disputed the notion that the emergence of new social movements, a new middle class or a post-material value shift can in themselves explain the emergence of green parties. The criticisms have refuted both the underlying assumptions of such theories and their relationship to empirical reality. One area of contention with 'new politics' theories is worth highlighting in detail. This is the idea that they describe green party formation and development as part of broader structural and social changes and therefore fail to account for the distinctiveness of green parties as entities which seek to place the 'issues of environmental protection at the top of the political agenda' and provide a voice for 'issues and debates surrounding "ecologism and environmentalism"'.¹⁴² Put differently, there is a danger of the simplest and most obvious explanations of the rise of green parties, namely the objective state of the environment and rising public concern about it, are ignored in pursuit of grander new politics accounts.¹⁴³ This point is summarised by Rudig:

Why is it that most social scientists analysing green parties regard the 'ecologist' identity of these parties as irrelevant, unimportant, or at best, marginal? There seems to be a consensus that somehow they cannot be what they appear to be, that their appearance as ecological parties has to be a manifestation of some

Determinants of New Protest Potential and the Institutional Conditions for Open Articulation' (Unpublished Paper, 1986) Cited in Rudig, 1990a p.14

¹³⁹ Gene Frankland, 'Germany: the Rise and Fall and Recovery of Die Grunen', in D. Richardson & C. Rootes (eds.), *The Green Challenge* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp.24-25

¹⁴⁰ Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History* (Harlow: Longman, 2002), pp.98-99

¹⁴¹ Carter, 2007 p.98

¹⁴² Burchell, 2002 p.12

¹⁴³ Carter, 2007 p.110

other social force which is totally unconnected to the material content of their demands.

Rudig builds on this by stating that green parties represent a new political cleavage and that new politics ideas are useful in explaining their development as they highlight a series of 'facilitators' for green party development.¹⁴⁴ Linking the formation and development of green parties to environmental concern also has the advantage of helping to explain the establishment of green parties in countries which have not experienced the same structural changes described in new politics theories.

2.6 Intellectual Purpose

Reviewing the literature which has sought to explain the emergence and development of green parties reveals some key points. There are general, 'new politics' theories which are useful to refer to but have been disputed to such an extent that they have only very limited explanatory power. It has been suggested that explanations for green party emergence and development need to put the environment at their heart. The debate in the literature over whether green parties should be understood predominantly in environmental terms or as part of wider categories or social trends is something which will be returned to at various points during this thesis. There also remains a significant need for a deeper understanding of how people came to be sufficiently motivated to form green parties. In the British case at least, no such account exists.

The process of the British Greens emerging was clearly a complicated and multi-faceted one which cannot be dealt with adequately by applying one or two general theories. If the explanation does lie in the objective state of the environment and the emergence of a new associated cleavage, then the process by which the party founders and early activists responded to environmental problems and embraced this new thinking is likely to have been a subtle one that requires detailed and focused consideration of this individual case. This is supported by the fact that the emergence and success of green parties in different countries has a complicated relationship to objective environmental problems and the levels

¹⁴⁴ Rudig, 1990a p.31

of environmental consciousness.¹⁴⁵ Rudig and Lowe suggested in 1986 that there 'is a clear need for basic research on the significance people attach to changes in their own environment and what makes some translate concern into action'.¹⁴⁶ This is not a call which has since gone unheeded in relation to subsequent environmental groups and developments. Part of the contribution of this thesis, however, is to retrospectively fill this research gap by examining how the founders of the British Greens and early party members became concerned about the environment and then translated this concern into action. In doing so, it responds to a similar argument made by two historians, Stephen Hussey and Paul Thompson, that only 'when the stories of far more' environmental activists have been heard 'will we begin to be surer about why some people care about their environment'.¹⁴⁷

The historical approach and methodology have considerable potential to engage with these intellectual challenges and deepen understanding of why the British Greens emerged - aside from the obvious point that it was created in the 1970s and has therefore passed chronologically into the realm of history. First, compared to the approach taken by political scientists, political history is less concerned with using data and primary material to build general models and theories. This approach is more suited to focusing down on the specific, idiosyncratic and contingent elements of a particular case (here the early history of the British Greens). Although theory and international comparators will be used and referred to at times in this thesis, the primary aim is to unashamedly provide a detailed account of the emergence of the British party. Secondly, searching archive documents and conducting extended retrospective interviews has uncovered a vast amount of previously unexamined material which substantially advances scholarly understanding of the topic.

This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge in several important areas. First, and most obviously, it enhances understanding of the Greens in the UK. It is particularly important to research the Greens because, as was set out in Chapter 1, they have, gradually, achieved the rare feat within the British party system of breaking out of obscurity and establishing themselves as a small but significant and, seemingly, stable force. This includes building up their numbers of local councillors, winning seats in the devolved

¹⁴⁵ Carter, 2007 p.110

¹⁴⁶ Rudig & Lowe, 1986b p.518

¹⁴⁷ Stephen Hussey & Paul Thompson, 'Introduction' in S. Hussey & P. Thompson (eds.) *The Roots of Environmental Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.17

bodies in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the London Assembly, the European Parliament and the House of Commons, and increasing their membership. It is impossible to understand the Greens properly without a comprehensive account of their origins, formation and early development. Secondly, this thesis does not claim to have uncovered any general rules about green parties and their emergence or the environmental movement generally. Nonetheless, by developing understanding of the British Greens it allows for more informed comparison with other green parties and environmental campaign groups. The thesis therefore enriches understanding of the history of the environmental movement in the UK and internationally as well as adding to the body of work on green parties as a phenomenon. The emergence of green parties during the 1970s and 1980s across western democracies was the 'most significant innovation' in party systems 'since the 1920s' as 'no similar diffusion of a new type of party' had occurred in that time.¹⁴⁸ Nor, arguably, has it since. Applying historical methods to individual cases of this broader development has considerable potential to advance understanding of the whole picture. This has already begun to happen with green parties in other countries and this thesis attempts to do so for the British party.¹⁴⁹

Thirdly, as Beckett argues, contrary to some interpretations, for 'many political people in Britain in the seventies, the time was not dominated by Heath and Thatcher and Callaghan' but by a series of 'new forms of politics with their own rhythms and preoccupations, only sometimes connected to those of the House of Commons'.¹⁵⁰ By exploring a particular aspect of this period, which has been somewhat neglected by historians but had far reaching consequences for the UK political system, this thesis adds to academic understanding of 1970s Britain. Finally, the 1970 general election is said to have marked the close of a quarter-century of 'stable two-party voting' with the 1974 elections heralding the beginning of a new era of 'partisan dealignment'. The public's commitment to the two main political parties was becoming 'weaker, more conditional and less predictable'. Declining party membership and decreasing levels of 'identification' with the

¹⁴⁸ Rudig, 1990a p.5 Stewart Jackson, *The Australian Greens: From Activism to Australia's Third Party* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2016)

¹⁴⁹ Sari Aalto, *Alternative Party: The Path from Green Movement to Green Party* (Helsinki: Into, 2018);

¹⁵⁰ Beckett, p.5

two main parties were additional symptoms of this process.¹⁵¹ Simultaneously, other parties began to make minor erosions into the dominance of Labour and the Conservatives including the Liberal Party, the Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties, and the National Front.¹⁵² The overall advance of small parties is demonstrated by the dramatic increase in the number of candidates contesting general elections in the 1970s compared to the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁵³ One of the most notable developments in British politics in the post-war period is this long-term fragmentation of the party system.¹⁵⁴ This thesis sheds light upon a key aspect of this process by adding to the literature on the histories of small parties in the UK.¹⁵⁵

2.7 Methodology

This thesis is deliberately not aiming to provide a general theory for why green parties as a phenomenon emerged and is instead focusing down on the specificities of the UK case. The research has focused particularly on the party's early members; looking at their background and, predominantly, their motivations, ideas and approach. An historical, predominantly qualitative, research methodology has been developed and applied in line with this. The approach taken was based on a detailed scoping process once the research topic and question had been determined to refine a clear idea of 'what sources [were to be] deployed and how'.¹⁵⁶ This was important, firstly, in order to avoid the 'lack of methodological

¹⁵¹ Ivor Crewe, Bo Sarlvik, & James Alt, 'Partisan Dealignment in Britain 1964-1974', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol 7 No 2 1977, p.430 & pp.448-60; Ivor Crewe, 'The Electorate: Partisan Dealignment Ten Years On', *West European Politics*, Vol 6 No 4 1987, pp.183-88

¹⁵² Chris Cook, *A Short History of the Liberal Party* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984); Peter Lynch *The Scottish National Party* (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2013); Laura McAllister, *Plaid Cymru: The Emergence of a Political Party* (Bridgend: Seren 2001); Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Turner, 2008 p.215; In the case of the National Front they achieved almost nothing in elections but succeeded in worrying mainstream politicians and parties.

¹⁵³ Munroe Eagles & Stephen Erfle, 'Variations in Third/Minor Party Support in English Constituencies: One-party Dominance and Community Cohesion Perspective', *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol 23 No 1 1993, p.93

¹⁵⁴ Paul Webb, 'The Continuing Advance of the Minor Parties', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 58 No 4 2005, pp.757-75; Patrick Dunleavy, 'Facing Up to Multi Party Politics', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 58 No 3 2005, p.503-532

¹⁵⁵ Some examples of work on small parties in the UK include: Martin Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts!* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005); Jon Tonge, Maire Braniff, Thomas Hennessey, James McAuley & Sophie Whiting, *The Democratic Unionist Party* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Martin Walker, *The National Front* (London: Fontana, 1977); Andrew Thorpe, 'The Communist Party and the New Party', *Contemporary British History*, Vol 23 No 4 2009a, pp.477-91; Angus Calder, 'The Common Wealth Party, 1942-45' (Unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of Sussex, 1967)

¹⁵⁶ Simon Gunn & Lucy Faire, 'Introduction' in S. Gunn & L. Faire (eds.), *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p.4

precision' and 'rigour' which it has been suggested has afflicted some approaches to developing ideas and arguments in contemporary academic history.¹⁵⁷ Secondly, as will become clear, trying to approach the topic and materials used in this thesis without the guidance of a systematic methodology would have resulted in a large amount of wasted effort and leant a lack of credibility to the findings. There are two main sources used in this study: oral interviews and archive sources. It is difficult to know for certain whether aspects of the source material have been used before for research (some of it definitely has), a substantial amount of the source material used here has definitely not previously been accessed by researchers. The details of the sources, the challenges associated with using them, and the opportunities and insights they provided are detailed below.

A clearly defined period of study has been chosen between when the party was set up in 1973 and until the date of the 1979 general election. The first reason for this relatively short time period is that the 1979 general election is significant because this is the point at which the party become a much more secure and stable (if still very marginal) part of British politics than it had previously been. Since the sudden spike in membership which occurred around the 1979 general election, the party's membership has never dropped below around 2,500-3,000. Before this, the party's membership had generally been in the low hundreds, reaching around 500 in 1978 and around 1,000 in the lead-up to the 1979 general election. At points during the 1970s party activists had been worried that it was in serious danger of petering out.¹⁵⁸ The party stretched itself to stand 53 candidates in 1979 but it has always stood at least around 100 candidates in general elections since then (the lowest being 95 in 1997).¹⁵⁹ Additionally, shortly after the election, the contact address the party had used in Norwich moved to London to become the official party office and, although initially unpaid, the party got its first full-time member of staff, meaning greater infrastructure was in place to manage the party.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, although four individuals were key in the initial setting up of the party, arguably the emergence of the Greens in a fully sustainable form should, in

¹⁵⁷ Gunn & Faire, 2012 p.3; Peter Mandler, 'The Problem with Cultural History', *The Journal of the Social History Society*, Vol 1 No 1 2004, pp.94-117; Paula Fass, 'Cultural History/Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue', *Journal of Social History*, Vol 37 No 1, 2003, p.41

¹⁵⁸ Wall, 1994 p.26; Rudig, 2010 p.24

¹⁵⁹ Carter, 1997 p.157

¹⁶⁰ McCulloch, 1992 p.426

some ways, be seen as a collective effort, over an extended period of time, among all those involved up to the 1979 general election.

The second reason for this period of study is practical. Overviews of the party's history have already been written, with the key events during the 1970s and in subsequent years largely established. There would be little value in repeating this either for just the 1970s or for a longer period. Such overviews have tended to deal with the entirety of the party's history, from its creation up to the date when each text was published, surveying some archive material and sometimes using some interviews. The approach here is deliberately different in focusing on a relatively short time period (around six-and-a-half years) to allow for a comprehensive assessment of the source material and to provide an answer to a specific question. Depth has been prioritised over breadth. As is set out below, it has required significant time, effort and resources to generate and access the sources used in this thesis. A vast amount of material has ultimately been examined. Indeed, one of the main challenges of the research process has been interrogating the sheer amount of material obtained.

2.7.1 Oral History

Extended, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 50 individuals who joined PEOPLE/the Ecology Party at some point before the 1979 general election. These interviews have been referred to extensively throughout the thesis. The selection criteria for participants reflected the defined parameters and period of the project which have been set out above. It would not have been feasible, given the time and resources available to produce this thesis, to interview more than 50 participants and use the material collected systematically. Because of the small size of the party during the period of study (up until the 1979 general election), the 50 individuals interviewed provided a very strong representation of the party at the time. Most individuals are fully identified and named, while a small number wished to remain anonymous and have been listed accordingly (for example 'Participant 1').¹⁶¹ The interviews began with a survey to help build up a profile of the

¹⁶¹ Prior to conducting the research in this thesis, five of the 50 core interview participants had been interviewed for an earlier research project (Mitya Pearson, 'How did the electoralist and anarchist divisions within the Green Party begin and

participants and, by extension, the party's early membership. Interviewees were then each interviewed based on a standard set of prepared questions. These questions were developed from the literature review and focused primarily on issues pertaining to the topic of why the party emerged including asking individuals about their motivations for joining the party. In line with standard, qualitative interview practices, the questions were generally designed to be 'broad', aiming to elicit detailed responses from participants and focusing on their perceptions of aspects of their early involvement with the party. Occasional use was also made of 'narrow' questions demanding only short answers such as confirming whether they remembered if a specific event or development had taken place. This variation reflects 'the specificity that good interviewing requires' to match the demands of a particular research topic or interviewee.¹⁶² Appendix 1 provides a template of the interview questions used. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed flexibility for the researcher to ask spontaneous follow up questions in reaction to participants' answers and freedom for participants to bring up relevant points which had not been anticipated in the interview planning.¹⁶³

To complement this set of 50 core interviews, a further 30 extended semi-structured interviews were conducted with other individuals who did not meet the criteria of having joined the party before the 1979 general election. These individuals had either joined the party shortly after the 1979 general election, had never been involved in the party but were heavily involved in other environmental campaign groups during the 1970s, were relatives of deceased individuals who were involved with PEOPLE/the Ecology Party during the defined period of study or had some other relevant connection to the subject matter of this thesis. This latter set of interviewees have only been quoted directly in this thesis very occasionally. Where they are quoted this is marked clearly and general references throughout the thesis to 'interviews', 'interviewees' and 'interview participants' relate to the 50, core interviews only. These 30 supplementary interviews were useful in the early

what was their long term impact on the party?' (Unpublished MA Dissertation, King's College London, 2014)). Each of the individuals were re-interviewed for this project and are included within the set of 50 interviews. Occasional, direct reference has been made to material from the earlier interviews as well as the follow-up interviews conducted specifically for this project.

¹⁶² Robin Legard, Jill Keegan & Kit Ward, 'In-Depth Interviews' in J. Ritchie & J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), pp.153-54

¹⁶³ Legard, Keegan & Ward 2003 p.141; Svend Brinkmann, 'Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviewing' in P. Leavy (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.277-99

scoping of the project and in providing further context to the issues and events considered in this thesis.

In addition to the interviews, a group Witness Seminar was organised at King's College London in June 2019. This brought together interview participants, along with additional early party members who had not been interviewed, to discuss and debate the issues and events examined in this thesis in a group setting. Generally, 'people cannot be expected to say the same things in a group that they might say to an interviewer in private'.¹⁶⁴ The Witness Seminar therefore provided alternative angles and insights to the face-to-face interviews which had been conducted predominantly on an individual basis (though occasionally in groups of two, three or four). Many individuals who were involved with environmental politics outside of the party during the 1960s and 1970s also contributed to the Witness Seminar. These were predominantly people who had been involved in pressure groups, as well as participants who had been journalists and civil servants, during this period. Only very limited direct use of quotes from the Witness Seminar has been made in the thesis but it was useful in deepening understanding of the subject matter discussed and thus enriched the findings of the thesis. It was not possible, due to time and resource constraints, to conduct extensive primary research, either through wide-ranging archive searches or a large number of one-to-one interviews, into the wider environmental movement during the 1960s and 1970s. The Witness Seminar was an efficient way to reach individuals involved with environmental pressure groups but not the party and gain insights into this subject matter.

There were a series of challenges associated with collecting and using oral accounts in the thesis. First, oral historians need to identify and reach relevant interview participants.¹⁶⁵ As almost none of the individuals interviewed are public figures, there was a practical challenge to find and contact individuals who met the relevant criteria (individuals who joined the party before the 1979 general election). In the first instance a list of potentially relevant individuals was developed through a survey of archive documents such as membership lists, and pre-existing academic literature on the party. Some of the individuals on the original list were easily traceable through an internet search. Two

¹⁶⁴ Robert Bogdan & Marjorie DeVault, *Introduction to Qualitative Methods* (New Jersey: Wiley, 2016), p.129

¹⁶⁵ Yow, 2005 pp.80-84; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016 pp.106-10

strategies were followed to reach a wider set of participants. Where interviews had already been secured, these participants were able to provide contact details for other individuals on the list, as well as the names of additional relevant individuals. A series of appeals were also made through local branches of the Greens which were successful in reaching a number of individuals who had either remained active in the party since the 1970s or left and re-joined. By the end of the first year of the research period, a total of 50 people had been contacted and either interviewed or arranged to be interviewed, meeting the target for participant numbers which had been set at the start of the project. The ethical procedures defined by King's College London were followed whilst arranging and conducting interviews in line with broader established principles of research ethics, for example ensuring clear consent was obtained for use of the material in the thesis.¹⁶⁶ Many of the interviews were conducted face-to-face but a number of them were conducted via telephone or Skype which created some trade-offs. For example, it is well-established that paying attention and responding to interview participants is key to building a rapport with them and drawing out useful information. Interviewing remotely may have slightly reduced the chance to do this.¹⁶⁷ This is unlikely to have significantly affected the responses of participants, however, and was a necessary decision given the number of interviews which were conducted combined with time and resource constraints.

Secondly, once the accounts had been collected, the next challenge was to systematically process the large amount of data and make effective use of this material in the thesis. This is a hurdle all those using oral history and qualitative data more widely for research purposes face.¹⁶⁸ Most of the interviews lasted around 45 minutes but some ran for almost three hours. A significant amount of time within the project was allocated to transcribing the interviews. This could have been avoided either through using a computer programme or professional transcribing service. However, manually transcribing the material was an important first stage in reviewing the material.¹⁶⁹ The particular topics and

¹⁶⁶ King's College Research Ethics Committee Reference Number: LRS-16/17-3808; Martyn Hammersley & Anna Traianou, *Ethics in Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2012); Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); Maurice Punch, 'Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research' in N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (eds.) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research* (California: Sage Publications, 1998), pp.156-85

¹⁶⁷ Yew, 2005 pp.92-118; Anthony Seldon & John Pappworth, *Elite Oral History* (London: Methuen, 1983), pp.73-77; Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003 pp.138-69; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016, pp.114-17

¹⁶⁸ Seldon & Pappworth, 1983 pp.124-33; Liz Spencer, Jane Ritchie and Williams O'Connor, 'Analysis: Practices Principles and Processes' in J. Ritchie & J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), pp.199-218

¹⁶⁹ Seldon & Pappworth, 1983 p.87

themes examined in the thesis were identified early on in the research process through the literature review. They were then reflected in the interview questions and chapter topics. Consequently, generally the oral material used in individual chapters has been drawn from the answers to one or two specific questions which, in each case, were relatively easy to compare across the 50 participants' responses. Particularly as the interviews were semi-structured and participants would often bring up different issues at unpredictable points within the interviews, a series of reviews of the full interview transcripts were also conducted to aid the development of each chapter.

Finally, a perennial challenge with oral history is the reliability of the information provided by individuals. The retrospective nature of the interviews, generally referring to a period around 40 years prior to the date of the interview, creates the danger of memory failure, distortions influenced by subsequent changes in values and norms, and the deliberate pushing of particular agendas.¹⁷⁰ These issues were mitigated because interviews were used predominantly to understand the attitudes, ideas and motivations of participants. Individual accounts were also cross-checked against other interviews, secondary literature and archive material.¹⁷¹ It has been particularly useful to not only triangulate points of fact like dates against archive material but also attitudes, arguments and debates. This has been possible because, as is detailed in the following section, a lot of the archive sources record relevant expressions made at the time by both interview participants and other activists involved in the party during the period of study, such as in letters between members. Ultimately, interviews are similar to any other source in that they can advance understanding of a subject, and provide useful evidence to support an argument, but must be approached sceptically, with an awareness of potential limitations. This is the approach that has been followed in this thesis.

Oral interviews were used firstly because there were some specific topic areas being researched which would not have been possible to consider in detail without gathering data via interviews. Chapter 3 examines the profile of members; the existing literature does not provide a detailed picture of the party's earliest members and the archive material does not

¹⁷⁰ Paul Thompson (2000) *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.110; Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp.78-106; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016, pp.123-24

¹⁷¹ William Foddy, *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.2

hold such information. It was necessary to retrieve this through interviews. Similarly, Chapter 6 examines the key influences on early members' concern about the environment and their life stories. These would not have been possible to ascertain in any other way as there is almost no relevant record in party archive material and almost none of the party's early activists have written autobiographies or other records of their lives. Researchers have explored the 'life stories' of environmental activists through interviews in other contexts because one of the strengths of oral history is that it allows for an exploration of the relationship between the personal and the political in addition to changes in political engagement over time.¹⁷² It is an approach which merited repeating to investigate the subject matter of this thesis.

More generally, oral accounts have been used so extensively in this thesis because they held so much potential to advance understanding of the main question examined by this thesis. Oral history's 'subjectivity' is both 'inescapable and crucial' in helping to 'reveal meanings of lived experience'. Through collating such records, gleaning insights from them and combining them with other sources 'we can come to an understanding of the process by which we got to be where we are'.¹⁷³ This thesis answers the question of why the party emerged and the approach taken is to focus on those who set up the party or joined it in its fledgling years, examining who they were, what was motivating them and what they were seeking to achieve. It also focuses on the specificities and intricacies of the British case. Here, speaking to those who were directly involved in the party's formation and early years had an obvious use. Trying to take such an approach without putting questions to these individuals would have meant this thesis had a clear deficiency.

The use of interviews is a viable and established research method across many academic disciplines which has been used to examine a variety of different aspects of British political history including campaign groups and political parties, both on the elite and non-elite level.¹⁷⁴ Oral history represented a particularly significant opportunity for this thesis

¹⁷² Andrew Tompkins, *Better Active than Radioactive!* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.12; Hussey & Thompson, 2000

¹⁷³ Yow, 2004 p.23

¹⁷⁴ Valerie Janesick, 'Oral History Interviewing: Issues and Possibilities' in P. Leavy (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.300-14; British Library, 'Oral histories of politics and government', <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/oral-histories-of-politics-and-government> accessed 9 August 2019; Sam Carroll, 'I Was Arrested at Greenham in 1962': Investigating the Oral Narratives of Women in the Anti-Nuclear Committee of 100', *Oral*

because so few of the eventual participants had ever been interviewed for research purposes. Also, where interviews have been used as part of previous research into the party's history these have generally been used to provide context for the author and only limited use of direct quotes has been made in the actual text. An oral history approach designed to bring the direct voice of early party activists into the historical narrative has been pursued here. This is important not just as an academic exercise but because several participants were aware of some existing accounts of the party's history and aggrieved, either about a particular interpretation within these or the fact that they had not been consulted as part of the research. Overall this source material has allowed for substantial new insights into the party's history and a new approach to studying the subject matter.

Despite the challenges outlined above, oral history was also so appropriate to this thesis because the size of the party means it was feasible to reach a varied mix of those involved in it. Participants ranged from passive members to the party's founders and early National Executive Committee members. Researching other, larger parties would have brought with it issues of access with more senior figures potentially more reticent about taking part in research, not least because, in many cases, they would have already been approached by researchers several times. The relatively small size of the party's membership during the 1970s also meant that it was possible to reach a proportion of the membership which would not have been feasible with a larger party. Given the age of participants this was one of the last chances to collect these oral accounts. Thus, it was not just a useful way to gather evidence to answer the question explored in this thesis, but a valuable record and point of reference about the party more generally, which should provide a useful source of information for future researchers.

2.7.1 Archive Sources

In addition to the oral interviews, a wide range of archival sources were accessed and used to develop the arguments made in this thesis. Appendix 2 provides a detailed list of the

History, Vol 32 No 1 2004, pp.35-48; Aaron Edwards, *A History of the Northern Ireland Labour Party* (Manchester University Press, 2013); Oliver Daddow, 'New Labour: A Witness History', *Contemporary British History*, Vol 29 No 1 2015, pp.106-36; Celia Hughes, 'Narratives of radical lives: The roots of 1960s activism and the making of the British left' in E. Smith & M. Worley (eds.) *Against the Grain: The British Far Left from 1956*, pp.62-79; Seldon and Pappworth, 1983

public archives in the UK holding documents related to the Greens, including local and national record centres. The first challenge with such source material was identifying the material which was held on the party in public archives. This is because, unlike larger parties in Britain, there is not a well-known Green Party archive equivalent to the Labour History Archive in the People's History Museum.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, general guides on British political archives such as *The Routledge Guide to British Political Archives* contain only very short excerpts on the party, if they refer to it at all.¹⁷⁶ It was therefore necessary to undertake a full survey of the main national archives in the UK such as the National Archives and British Library collections, university archives, and local record centres to ascertain if they held material on the party. If they did, the next stage in the process was to determine if any of this related to the period between the party's formation and the 1979 general election. This investigation also included archives which held television and radio material, as well as newspaper archives, in particular the British Newspaper Archive, and various repositories of environmental magazines and journals from the 1970s. It has been particularly useful here that so many newspaper archives have been digitised in recent years.¹⁷⁷ This is because of the high number of local and national newspapers in circulation in Britain during the 1970s combined with the small media presence of the party. Targeted searches, such as for the names of early party figures, allowed for an effective survey of newspaper coverage of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party during the 1970s. In comparison, the back-catalogue of more niche environmental journals and magazines, generally produced on a monthly basis during the period of study, could be reviewed in full.

Where any of the archives surveyed held party documents from the 1970s, they were accessed and viewed. Substantial direct use has been made of such documents throughout the thesis. While some public archives hold significant amounts of relevant documents, such as the Warwick Modern Records Centre and the European Green Archive at the University of Teesside, often where material is held this is only a small set of documents. For this reason, often it was not necessary to visit the archive but as copies of all the relevant material could be obtained remotely at limited cost. Where archives held

¹⁷⁵ European Green Archive, University of Teesside is the most obvious equivalent. It has an extensive collection but only a limited amount of material from the 1970s.

¹⁷⁶ Chris Cook, *The Routledge Guide to British Political Archives* (London: Routledge, 2012)

¹⁷⁷ Robert Allen & Robert Sieczkiewicz, 'How Historians use Historical Newspapers', *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, Vol 47 No 1 2010, pp.1-4

more general material with aspects relating to the party, such as television and radio programmes with party representatives taking part or collections of environmental magazines from the 1970s with articles about the party, these have been examined as comprehensively as possible. Such sources have also been used extensively within the thesis.¹⁷⁸ Most of the party documents from the period which were accessed, such as newsletters, meeting minutes and campaign material, however, were obtained via the interviewees. Many participants had retained, what may be grandiosely referred to as private archives of party material but, in most cases, should perhaps more accurately be referred to as large wads of paper kept in basements and lofts. The volume of this material dwarfed the amount of material which was accessed via public archives. A number of these personal collections amounted to thousands of pages of party material from the 1970s.

Once the relevant material had been identified and accessed the key challenge was to systematically examine and process it: a process Michelle King describes as ‘wrestling with unruly primary source documents, [and] taming them into some coherent written form’.¹⁷⁹ This required different approaches for different materials. For example, where a significant amount of material was held in public archives, this required site visits, but there were ultimately no constraints on how many times these could be visited (barring practical issues). In these situations, the material could be sifted effectively at the archive with detailed note taking and selective copying of relevant documents. In the case of personal archives, often these were vast and stored in people’s homes. Permission was generally granted for access for a few hours following an interview, so this required blanket copying of all potentially relevant material, with sifting and detailed examination at a later date. More generally, a systematic approach to examining the archive material was possible for two main reasons. First, identifying the key themes of the research early in the process allowed for effective sifting through documents for relevant material, rather than studying all the material with little strategic guidance. Secondly, many of the documents were either donated by individuals, photographed or copied from public and private archives. This

¹⁷⁸ It has obviously been impossible to find every single media item on the party during the period of study. Indeed, some specific television and radio programmes which party representatives took part in are no longer accessible.

¹⁷⁹ Michelle King, ‘Working With/In the Archives’ in S. Gunn & L. Faire (eds.), *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p.13

allowed for repeated, extended and thorough examinations of the source material throughout the period of research.

Using archival sources is the most standard 'bread and butter' form of primary, historical research and a well-established approach to examining aspects of contemporary British political history.¹⁸⁰ It made sense to apply this method to this subject matter as the best available route to accurately establish points such as the key dates, events and issues pertaining to the party's early history which were not already set out in the secondary literature. The archival approach offered particularly useful opportunities to this project for three principal reasons. First, it quickly became clear that there was substantial, relevant archive material which had not previously been examined for research purposes. Almost all of the private collections of party documents provided by the interview participants had not been seen or used by previous researchers (it is also likely that a sizeable amount of the materials accessed from public archives have also not been viewed or used before). Many of the documents held by interviewees were copies. For example, duplicates of manifestos, leaflets and newsletters retrieved from interview participants had often been used by previous scholars who had accessed these by another route such as a public archive. It is also difficult to gauge if previous researchers have viewed particular documents but not referred to them directly. This thesis does, however, rely on by far the most detailed survey of archive material relating to the party's early history ever conducted and a substantial amount of the archive material had not been accessed for research purposes before. The private papers of early activists did contain a large amount of material that was more unique than copies of generic documents such as campaign leaflets. These included sources like diaries, letters and personal scrapbooks of election campaigns.

Secondly, the focus of this thesis is on early members and their motivations and thinking. Within the accessed material, there was an abundance of available sources providing insights into these areas, such as records of meetings from the time, magazines with articles written by members and internal party newsletters. Television and radio programmes from the period of study, with appearances from party members, have also been particularly helpful in this regard. One example of the usefulness of such material to

¹⁸⁰ King, 2012 p.13

this thesis is seen in Chapter 6 which looks at the party's relationship with pressure groups and the wider party system. Not only has it been possible to directly ask 50 early members why they favoured pursuing their aims through a new party over joining an established party or purely through pressure group activity. It has also been possible to refer to the debates that were taking place between members at the time over this very issue, recorded in sources such as environmental magazines. Finally, some points have already been highlighted in this section which demonstrate the degree to which the oral and archival sources have complemented one another in this project. There is a final point to make in this regard. Interviews were often very useful in highlighting potentially useful individual archive sources to search, which would never have been found in general searches. For example, interviewees mentioned radio or television appearances that they had made during the 1970s, generally detailing the programme name and a rough date. This could be searched for in television and radio guides and then, in some cases, retrieved from an archive.

2.8 Conclusion

This review of relevant literature has provided the context for the forthcoming chapters which draw predominantly from the primary material used in this thesis. The Greens in the UK have been researched from numerous angles, including examinations of their membership, structures and ideology. The question of why the British party emerged has been much less of a focus and more general theories of the emergence of green parties provide at best a partial insight into the question. This thesis seeks to address this gap by providing a retrospective, historical account of how and why the party emerged. It does so by focusing on the background and motivations of the party's founders and early members.

To provide an answer to this overall guiding research question several related questions are addressed, either directly in dedicated chapters or at different points in the thesis. These questions relate to themes and topics in the literature which has been surveyed in this chapter. Having set out theory which has emphasised the importance of social class and other demographic factors to environmental politics as well as details of surveys of the party's membership, one question to be engaged with is: does the profile of

early party members explain why it emerged? The specific period in British history in which the party was created provides a particular context for it, which has been briefly described in this chapter but requires further investigation. To what extent was the party a product of the events and atmosphere of the 1970s, and wider social, political and economic trends in post-war Britain? It has been explained that arguments have developed in the course of the party's history over whether it should reflect alternative models of political organisation, how far was the party seen by early members as a vehicle for achieving power or a way of doing politics differently?

As has been noted, other political parties did engage, to an extent, with environmental issues during the 1970s and there were significant developments around this time in environmental campaigning. Why was it not possible for the concerns of early members to be integrated into the existing party system or channelled into pressure group activity? Given the critiques outlined of literature which has, in part at least, sought to account for the motivations of environmental activists there is considerable potential for the source material in this thesis to provide new insights on the question of how and why early members came to be concerned about the environment. As well as, given the debate in this area outlined in this chapter, providing an assessment of the extent to which the party that emerged was an environmentally-related phenomenon or a component of broader trends and concerns. Finally, having detailed the literature on the ideology of the party specifically, and environmentalists more generally, this thesis will examine early members' understanding of this and consider how far the party was based around the emergence of an environmental or ecological ideological project. These different strands will be synthesised in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 3 - The Profile and Background of Early Party Members

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the profile and background of the early members of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party. Retrospectively using the tools available to historians to investigate not just 'high politics' but rank-and-file activists and community-level activity in parties is vital to provide a comprehensive understanding of contemporary British political history.¹ As DT Denver and JM Bochel suggested in their study of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 'British parties and British politics derive much of their "style" from the character of party activists'.² Understanding who the early party activists were is also potentially useful to understanding why it was that this party emerged. As part of the interviews conducted with 50 early members, a detailed questionnaire was answered by each participant focusing on their characteristics and background, looking at topics including sex, class and previous political experience. Additionally, participants were also asked for their recollections of the profile of other party members when they joined. This material has been augmented with use of some relevant archival sources such as photographs of party meetings.

This chapter begins by presenting the collated information on the early party members in a series of categorised sections, with the data set out in tables. Where useful, this material is contrasted with relevant comparators such as the general population, information on how demographics tend to affect political participation in general and survey data on the memberships of other green parties. Following this, the participants' memories of the types of people who were involved are summarised. Once the profile of early members has been set out this is discussed and analysed in relation to what this means for explaining why the party emerged. There is a focus on the areas which scholars have previously seen as potentially useful in explaining the emergence of green parties and new politics campaign groups more widely: class and occupation. It will be argued that there is a distinct social profile of the early party activists which is consistent with subsequent surveys

¹ Andrew Thorpe, Stuart Ball & Matthew Worley, *Researching the Grass Roots: the Records of Constituency Level Political Parties in Five British Counties, 1918-40*, *Archives*, Vol 29 No 110 2004, p.78; Andrew Thorpe, 'Reconstructing Conservative Party Membership in Second World War Britain', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 62 No 2 2009b, pp.227-41

² D.T. Denver & J.M. Bochel, 'The Political Socialization of Activists in the British Communist Party', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol 3 No 1 1973, p.53

of the party membership. Setting this out in detail is illuminating about the nature of the party's early history and the question of why it emerged, particularly when this is linked to evidence on broader demographic changes and social development. As has been determined in literature on the emergence of green parties generally though, there are significant limits to how far the social basis of early party membership can be used to explain its emergence. It is suggested that the class and occupation of early party members are more useful in understanding why these individuals were participating in politics generally than why they were involved in the party specifically.

3.2 Methodology and Sources

There are some obvious difficulties with trying to conduct a party membership survey retrospectively and some topics have been particularly challenging to detail. Categories such as participants' sex are unlikely to have changed throughout their life, so it is relatively simple to detail the balance between men and women among participants. Information such as occupation, location and education levels are more changeable, so participants have had to be asked to pinpoint this at the exact time at which they joined. This means the data presented is not based on a snapshot in time and participants' answers correspond to the point when they joined the party. There are significant limits to the representativeness of the sample taken. However, given the size of the party during the period of study, the 50 participants were sufficient to provide a substantial sample of early members and significantly advance understanding of the profile of the early party's membership.

The data are presented alongside comparators to give them proper context. These are the population at large during the 1970s, studies on political participation generally, historic surveys of other parties' memberships, subsequent surveys of the membership of the British Greens, information on green parties' memberships generally and information on members of radical environmental campaign groups in the 1970s in Britain. Often the sources of information are far from perfect and, given issues of space, not every single category has been compared to each of these other areas. Instead, comparisons have been made where they are possible and useful. Information on the population of the UK or Great Britain is generally taken from two main sources: census data and Crewe et al.'s samples of

the electorate from the British Election Study.³ Two books summarising international studies on political participation and how demographics tend to affect this are used to highlight general patterns of political participation, one published in the 1970s and the other in the 2000s.⁴ There are no comprehensive surveys of the three main parties' members from this period. However, a survey of each parties' conference delegates in the late 1970s and some local studies have been examined.⁵ Finally, a survey of members of the Conservation Society and Friends of the Earth in the late 1970s provides some useful points of comparison.⁶

3.3 The Size of the Party

Before examining the background of party members, it is worth examining the evidence on the exact size of the party during the 1970s. Wolfgang Rudig and Philip Lowe suggest that the membership did not reach above around 200 or 300 until 1978, during which it climbed to around 650, and then reached around 1,000 in the early part of 1979. It then grew significantly following the 1979 general election, reaching over 5,000.⁷ This research did not find comprehensive annual records of membership figures, but it has been possible to view membership lists from particular points and membership figures are detailed in various internal documents which mirror the numbers set out by Rudig and Lowe. In the early part of the 1970s members were paying a standard membership rate of £1.00 to join through a local group and £1.50 to join as an individual member not linked to a local group. Standard membership was increased to £4 in the latter part of the 1970s.⁸ A list of PEOPLE members

³ Ivor Crewe, Neil Day, & Anthony D. Fox, *The British Electorate 1963-1987: A Compendium of Data from the British Election Studies* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); Census data taken from *The Annual Abstract of Statistics* from various years in the 1970s.

⁴ Russell Dalton, *Citizen Politics* (Washington: CQ Press, 2006); Lester Milbrath & ML Goel, *Political Participation* (Chicago: Rand McNally College, 1977)

⁵ Frank Bealey, Jean Blondel & WP McCann, *Constituency Politics: A Study of Newcastle-under-Lyme* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965); David Berry, *Sociology of Grass Roots Politics* (London: MacMillan, 1970); Jean Blondel, *Voters, Parties and Leaders* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974); Barry Hindess, *The Decline of Working-Class Politics* (London: Granada, 1971); Edward Janosik, *Constituency Labour Parties in Britain* (London: Pall Mall, 1968); Mark Benney & Phyllis Geiss, 'Social Class and Politics in Greenwich', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol 1 No 4 1950, pp. 310-27; Anthony Birch, *Small Town Politics: A Study of Political Life in Glossop* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959); Terry Barton & Herbert Döring, 'The Social and Attitudinal Profile of Social Democratic Party Activists', *Political Studies*, Vol 34 No 2 1986, pp.296-305; Paul Whiteley, 'Who are the Labour Activists?', *Political Quarterly*, Vol 52 No 2 1981, pp.160-70

⁶ Stephen Cotgrove, *Catastrophe or Cornucopia: The Environment, Politics and the Future* (Chichester: Wiley, 1982)

⁷ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a pp.266-68

⁸ Lesley Whittaker Personal Archive (Henceforth: LWPA), PEOPLE Newsletter, September 1974; LWPA, PEOPLE 'What You Can Do' Leaflet, Undated; MBPA, PEOPLE Subscription & Open Letter, 1 January 1975; LWPA, Ecology Party Registration Form, Undated

dated from 1974 lists around 80 people and although this is likely to be an underestimate - two individuals who were interviewed for this project and were members of the party at that time are not included - it provides an indication of the approximate size of the formal membership.⁹ Another PEOPLE membership list (undated but definitely from either 1973, 1974 or 1975) details just over ninety members and includes those interviewees.¹⁰ At the National Executive Committee Meeting in June 1975 membership was reported as 91.¹¹

An additional list, which is not dated or labelled as PEOPLE or the Ecology Party but is most likely from 1976 or 1977, details around 240 members.¹² At various points in the latter part of the 1970s updates on the party's membership figures are provided in the newsletter suggesting that the totals were 200 in April 1977 and 370 in March 1978.¹³ In the Secretary's Report for 1977-78 the membership is said to have risen from 300 to 500 and in the 'Chairman's Report' for a similar period it is suggested to have doubled to over 600.¹⁴ In line with this, the 'Chairman's Report' from September 1979 describes a six-fold increase in membership over the previous year to 3300.¹⁵ In an address in February 1979 Jonathon Porritt had suggested that the membership at that point was around 1,000.¹⁶ Another indicator of the party size during the 1970s is attendance at the national conferences, which is detailed in Table 2. Although progress was made during the 1970s in growing the party, it was clearly a small outfit prior to the 1979 general election and amusingly one member wrote into the newsletter in 1978 to ask '[if] it is a Party of the People, how come there are no people in it?'.¹⁷

⁹ LWPA, PEOPLE Membership List, 1974

¹⁰ LWPA, PEOPLE Paid Up Members List, Undated

¹¹ LWPA, Minutes of the PEOPLE NEC Meeting, Leeds, 13 June 1975

¹² LWPA, Party Membership List, Undated

¹³ Peter Frings Personal Archive (Henceforth PFPA), Ecology Party Newsletter, April 1977; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, March 1978

¹⁴ PFPA, Ecology Party Secretary's Report, 1977-78; PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report, 1977-78

¹⁵ Sarah Parkin Personal Archive (Henceforth SPPA), Ecology Party Chairman's Report, 1977-78

¹⁶ People's History Museum, Michael Steed Papers (Henceforth MSP), Summary of an Address by Jonathon Porritt, 19 February 1979

¹⁷ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, March 1978

Table 2 - Party Conferences and Attendance

Date	Location	Attendance
June 1973 (Planned date)	Coventry (Planned venue)	Cancelled. ¹⁸
June 1974	Coventry	60 ¹⁹
June 1975	Coventry	30 ²⁰
September 1976	Sheffield	26 ²¹
September 1977	Birmingham	50 ²²
September 1978	Birmingham	101 ²³
September 1979	Keele	200 ²⁴

Source: Green History, 'Political Party Conferences', <https://green-history.uk/articles/organisations/other-groups/eco-green-party/political-party-conferences> accessed 21 June 2019. Additional details retrieved from various newsletters and conferences reports from PFPA, MBPA and LWPA.

3.4 The Profile and Background of Party Members

3.4.1 Sex

Table 3 - Sex of Party Members

Male	Female
30	20

Table 3 shows a clear majority of men among participants in a straight 60 per cent to 40 per cent split. This is disproportionate compared to the UK population at large which, in 1971, was slightly over 50 per cent female.²⁵ This finding is in line with the general understanding that men have historically often (though not always) been more likely to formally participate in politics than women.²⁶ However, as far as it is possible to compare with members of other parties in Britain from the same period, PEOPLE/the Ecology Party may have been a more gender-balanced party than the three main parties. Less than a quarter of delegates surveyed at their conferences during the late 1970s were female, with Labour as low as 14

¹⁸ The Founders, Interview; MBPA, Jigsaw Conference Leaflet, 1973

¹⁹ LWPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, June 1974

²⁰ LWPA, Minutes of the PEOPLE NEC Meeting, Leeds, 13 June 1975

²¹ PFPA, Ecology Party Conference Summary, 1976

²² PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, November 1977

²³ PFPA, Ecology Party Conference Supplement, 1978; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, October 1978

²⁴ *The Ecologist*, Vol 9 No 7, October/November 1979, p.247

²⁵ Central Statistical Office, *Annual Abstract of Statistics* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Service, 1979), p.7

²⁶ Dalton, 2006 p.51

per cent.²⁷ Similarly, Eugene Frankland found that around 80 per cent of the 1979 Ecology Party candidates were men compared to the 97 per cent of MPs who were men.²⁸ The sex composition of the early members found here is broadly similar to the results of Chris Studman's 1984 survey of Ecology Party members in that this found them to be more likely to be male than the general population, though not overwhelmingly so.²⁹ Additionally, Rudig et al.'s 1990 survey found 47 per cent of party members to be women and 53 per cent to be men.³⁰

3.4.2 Age

Table 4 - Age Make-Up of Party Members

Age Range	Numbers of Members Who Joined within this Age Range
0-18	1
19-29	26
30-39	21
40-50	2
51+	0

A retrospective survey, particularly one conducted so many years later, is particularly problematic when it comes to looking at the age of participants. This is principally because the sample of people it has been possible to reach for this research will naturally tend towards those who were younger when they joined the party. People who were older at the time are less likely to either still be alive or still be actively involved with the party and are thus harder to track down via online research. It is therefore unsurprising that the participants were overwhelming relatively young when they joined. Consequently, it is necessary to be careful about using what is likely to be, in terms of age at least, an unrepresentative sample, and be wary of making assumptions about all the early members of the party. Nonetheless, even if this group is not entirely representative of the party at the

²⁷ Paul Whiteley & Ian Gordon Survey Evidence Cited in Studman, 1984; Paul Whiteley & Ian Gordon surveyed attendees at the Liberal, Labour and Conservative party conferences in 1978 and 1979. Herbert Doring carried out a survey at the SDP Council for Social Democracy in 1982. In both cases it has not been possible to retrieve the full, original data. However, Studman quotes from these sources and some information from the survey was published which have provided the basis for comparison.

²⁸ Frankland, 1981 p.44

²⁹ Studman, 1984 p.3

³⁰ Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991 p.15

time, it was such a small organisation at this early stage that the 50 people interviewed were themselves a significant proportion of the party. They therefore provide us with some idea of the age profile of people involved in the party in its fledgling years.

The fact that over half of the participants were 29 or under when they joined and all but two were 39 or under demonstrates that there were a significant number of younger people involved with the party in its early years. Less than 60 per cent of the UK population as a whole were 39 or under in 1971 and the proportion of surveyed delegates who were under 35 at the three main parties' conferences during the late 1970s ranged between 41 per cent and 24 per cent.³¹ Perhaps more illuminating is the fact that, within the group interviewed for this project, so many had prominent roles within the party during the 1970s, including the party founders, many of the key individuals providing overall central organisation and coordination of the party, several members of the National Executive Committee during the 1970s, the party's first councillor and numerous local and national election candidates. Although it is important to note that almost every participant was in their twenties or thirties when they joined, and, barring one or two individuals, the party was not being run by teenagers. This chimes with Eugene Frankland's finding that the party's candidates in 1979 were considerably younger on average than the MPs elected that year.³² So, at the very least, it is clear that there was a decidedly youthful feel to many of those who had some sort of responsibility within the party and, speculatively, it seems likely that this would have been in part because of the absence of large numbers of more senior and experienced party members to take those roles on.

Interviewees were asked what the profile of early members had been. When they mentioned age in their answers, they generally suggested the party had been a mixed group in this regard. Guy Woodford said members were 'varied...quite a lot of young people' and Norma Russell suggested that 'there were young people, there were old people'.³³ Though many participants raised the point that lots of members were working professionals. There are several useful photos which appear to provide evidence of the early party membership's

³¹ Roger Mortimore & Andrew Blick, *Butler's British Political Facts* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p.474; Paul Whiteley & Ian Gordon Survey Evidence Cited in Studman, 1984 p.3

³² Frankland, 1981 p.44

³³ Guy Woodford, Interviewed on 10 April 2017 by Mitya Pearson; Norma Russell, Interviewed on 30 November 2017 by Mitya Pearson

youth. John Ingham's personal archive had a whole album capturing his campaign in Bristol in 1979 and the South West Green Party website has a set of photos from that region during the same campaign.³⁴ Michael Benfield's personal archive also has a collection of photographs from either the 1974 or 1975 conference and the 1978 conference.³⁵ The examples vary slightly but in all cases those individuals that appear around 40 years old or older are at most a small minority.

ML Goel and Lester Milbrath's review of work on political participation internationally highlighted studies which show older people were more likely to be interested in politics than younger people and Russell Dalton suggests that older people are more likely to be active in politics than younger people.³⁶ So the youthfulness of the PEOPLE/Ecology Party activities runs against some general rules about political participation. However, this apparent youthfulness, relative to the makeup of the population at large and other parties, is in keeping with evidence from later surveys of members of the party such as those conducted by Studman in 1984 and Rudig et al. in 1990.³⁷ This age balance among members was also seen in other green parties such as the German greens in the 1980s.³⁸ Similarly, Stephen Cotgrove's survey of Conservation Society and Friends of the Earth members in 1978 found them to be overwhelmingly in their twenties and thirties and significantly younger on average than the population at large.³⁹

3.4.3 Ethnicity

The participants in this research were overwhelmingly white and predominantly British, with a handful identifying as specifically English or Scottish. Only one of the interviewees chose the category non-white.⁴⁰ It seems therefore that the party was an overwhelmingly white organisation with very few ethnic minorities involved. Supplementary evidence is

³⁴ John Ingham Personal Archive (Henceforth JIPA), Personal Photo Album of John Ingham 1979 General Election Campaign in Bristol West; South West Green Party, '1970's Photos' <https://southwest.greenparty.org.uk/southwest-green-history/history-resources/1970s-photos.html> accessed 30 August 2019

³⁵ MBPA, Photos of 1978 Ecology Party Conference; MBPA, Photos of 1974 or 1975 Ecology Party Conference

³⁶ Milbrath & Goel, 1997 p.48; Dalton, 2006 p.51

³⁷ Studman, 1984 p.2; Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991

³⁸ Rudig, 2015b p.10

³⁹ Cotgrove, 1982 p.19

⁴⁰ Participants were allowed to self-identify. Two individuals did not refer to their race when they responded so it is possible that up to three participants were non-white.

provided by the aforementioned surviving photos and one interviewee commented on ethnicity when asked to recall their impressions of the profile of members when they joined, describing their local party in Bristol as ‘predominantly ethnic white, middle class people.’⁴¹

Table 5 - Ethnicity of Party Members

Ethnic Origin	Number
White (British)	38
White (English)	3
White (Scottish)	2
White (English and British)	2
White (Danish)	1
White (European)	1
British / English	1
British	1
Non-White (Scottish)	1

Figure 1 - The 1978 Ecology Party Conference



Source: MBPA

It is hard to accurately compare this with the population of the UK as a whole because direct data on the ethnic minority population was not collected during the 1970s. The census counted the number of people living in households whose head was born in

⁴¹ JIPA, Personal Photo Album of John Ingham 1979 General Election Campaign in Bristol West; South West Green Party, ‘1970’s Photos’, <https://southwest.greenparty.org.uk/southwest-green-history/history-resources/1970s-photos.html> accessed 30 August 2019; MBPA, Photos of 1978 Ecology Party Conference; MBPA, Photos of 1974 or 1975 Ecology Party Conference; Alan Clarke, Interviewed on 1 May 2017 by Mitya Pearson

various countries outside the UK. From this Muhammad Anwar suggested that the ethnic minority population was around 2.2 million (around four per cent of the whole population) by 1981 - but this is far from a perfect measure.⁴² It is difficult to find information on the proportion of other parties' members who were ethnic minorities during the 1970s. The fact that there were only six ethnic minority candidates standing in the February 1974 general election - and three and twelve at the following general elections - suggests they had low levels of participation in British party politics at this time.⁴³ Similarly, a study of Asians and Afro-Caribbeans in 1974 suggested that they were five times more likely not to be registered to vote than whites in the same area though some studies of voter turnout conducted during the 1970s suggested higher rates among ethnic minority voters than white voters.⁴⁴ Ethnicity also appears to have been left out of later surveys of the party's membership, though Rudig's 2015 survey demonstrated that ethnic minorities made up five per cent of longstanding members and 4 per cent of newly-joined members.⁴⁵

3.4.4 Religion

Table 6 - Religion of Party Members

Religion	Number
Agnostic	1
Atheist / No Religion	25
Buddhist	2
Christian	9
Humanist	1
Pagan	1
Quaker	5
Scientologist	1
Spiritual (No Religion)	5

Half of those interviewed suggested that they were not religious when they joined the party, while over three-fifths were not part of any sort of organised religion. Accurately

⁴² Muhammad Anwar, *Race and Politics: Ethnic Minorities and the British Political System* (London: Tavistock, 1986), p.10

⁴³ Anwar, 1986 pp.100-2; Anthony F. Heath, Stephen D. Fisher, Gemma Rosenblatt, David Sanders & Maria Sobolewska, *The Political Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.81

⁴⁴ Muhammad Anwar & David Kohler, *Participation of Ethnic Minorities in the General Election, October 1974* (London: Community Relations Commission, 1975); Anwar, 1986 p. 57

⁴⁵ Rudig, 2015a p.5

comparing this to the population at large during the 1970s is difficult to do. There are absolute figures for members of specific religious organisations, but these were compiled by the churches themselves in different ways and are often estimates.⁴⁶ Among those surveyed for the British Election Study in 1970, 4 per cent said they had no religion and 33 per cent and 41 per cent said the same in 1974 and 1979 respectively. The jump is due to question phrasing changes after 1970.⁴⁷ McCulloch's survey of party branch contacts in 1981 found that 80 per cent did not belong to an organised religious group and Rudig et al.'s membership survey in 1990 showed that over 70 per cent did not consider themselves to be a member of a church or religious movement.⁴⁸

3.4.5 Marital Status

Table 7 - Marital Status of Party Members

Marital Status	Number
Single	24
Married	23
Divorced	3

There is a roughly even split between those who were married or single when they joined the party and a number of married couples who got involved in the party together were interviewed for this project (some had got married subsequent to joining).⁴⁹ The even split is roughly similar to the UK adult population more widely in the 1970s.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Mortimore & Blick, 2018 pp.585-87

⁴⁷ Crewe, Day, & Fox, 1991 p.458

⁴⁸ McCulloch, 1993 p.30; Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991 p.29

⁴⁹ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interviewed Jointly on 6 April 2017 by Mitya Pearson; Keith & Christine Rushworth, Interviewed Jointly on 3 November 2017; Linda & David Whitebread, Interviewed Jointly on 2 October 2017 by Mitya Pearson; Jean & Steve Lambert Interviewed Separately on 12 January 2017 and 19 July 2017 Respectively by Mitya Pearson

⁵⁰ Central Statistical Office, 1979 p.18

3.4.6 Schooling

Table 8 - Type of School Attended by Party Members

School Type	Number
State School	32
Private School	8
Both State and Private Schools	7
Direct Grant Grammar School	3

Table 8 shows that the majority of early party members attended state school though the proportion that attended non-state schools is higher than the proportion of pupils who attended non-state schools in the 1960s and 1970s in England and Wales.⁵¹ Tentative comparisons may be made with local studies of other parties' members. Members of the three main parties were all interviewed for David Berry's research in a ward in Liverpool in the mid-1960s. A lower proportion of members had attended private school in all three than in PEOPLE/the Ecology Party.⁵² McCulloch's 1981 survey of Ecology Party members which was responded to by 87 local Ecology Party branch contacts found that 21 per cent went to public or direct grant schools and Rudig et al.'s membership survey in 1990 found that 31 per cent of respondents had attended a fee-paying, independent school.⁵³

3.4.7 Higher Education

Table 9 - Levels of Education of Party Members

Highest Level of Education When They Joined the Party	Number
Had completed an undergraduate degree	24
Had completed a post-graduate degree	5
Undergraduate Student	3
Had attended university but did not complete the course	2
Degree equivalent training course	5
Did not attend university	11

⁵¹ House of Commons Library, 'Education: Historical Statistics', 27 November 2012

⁵² Berry, 1970 p.73

⁵³ McCulloch 1993 p.30; Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991 p.19

Table 10 - Subject Studied⁵⁴ at University (or for degree equivalent) by Party Members

Subject Studied (By Group)	Number
Arts and Humanities (e.g. languages, philosophy, history, etc.)	8
Social Sciences (e.g. sociology, psychology, politics, economics, planning)	6
Engineering	2
Natural sciences (e.g. physics, chemistry, biology) and maths	10
Other	9
Mix of Subjects	4

Table 9 shows the high levels of education that early PEOPLE/Ecology Party members had reached when they first joined the party. Almost 80 per cent had either completed a degree when they joined, were a student at the time, had started but not completed a degree or completed a degree equivalent such as a professional training course. This is notably different to the national picture. The expansion of higher education was well underway by 1970 but even then only around 15 per cent of those of a relevant age were in higher education.⁵⁵ This finding is in line with a longstanding and widely agreed understanding that those with higher levels of education (particularly a university degree or equivalent) are more likely to participate in politics.⁵⁶ Data on the three main British party conference delegates in the 1970s follows a similar pattern with a larger proportion having been educated beyond the age of eighteen than the general public: 53 per cent of Liberals, 25 per cent of Labour Party members and 27 per cent of Conservative Party members.⁵⁷ However, with early PEOPLE/Ecology Party members the difference is even more stark.

This disproportionality with the UK population at large has been replicated in successive surveys of the party's membership. In 1981 69 per cent of the local area organisers surveyed had left full-time education aged 19 or older.⁵⁸ In 1984 63 per cent were found to have, or be studying for, a degree.⁵⁹ In 1990 around 54 per cent of those

⁵⁴ Where an individual had undertaken multiple degrees, the subject picked is the one they studied at their highest qualification.

⁵⁵ Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000* (London: Penguin, 2004), p.288; Susan Robertson, 'Globalising UK Higher Education', *LLAKES Research Paper 16*, <https://www.llakes.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Paper%2016%20-%20Robertson.pdf> accessed 21 September 2019

⁵⁶ Milbrath & Goel, 1977 p.47; Dalton 2006 p.50

⁵⁷ Paul Whiteley & Ian Gordon Survey Evidence Cited in Studman, 1984 p.4

⁵⁸ McCulloch 1993 p.31

⁵⁹ Studman, 1984 p.4

surveyed already had at least an undergraduate degree and 77 per cent had continued in full-time education beyond the age of sixteen.⁶⁰ Cotgrove's sample of environmentalists in 1978 also tilted significantly towards higher levels of education (62 per cent with 14 or more years of education).⁶¹ Table 10 is less worth comparing with other data but shows the spread of subjects which those members that did undertake a degree or equivalent studied.

3.4.8 Occupation and Class

Table 11 - Social Grade of Party Members

Social Grade⁶²	Number⁶³
A	0
B	24
C1	13
C2	3
D	2
E / Other	7

The occupational and class profile of the interview participants has been assessed in four different ways: social grade, sector of work, self-identified class and parents' class background. Social grade has been assessed by asking participants what their occupation was when they joined and matching this to the standard social grade categories. Due to time constraints during the interviews a full probe into participants' exact past job roles was not possible but the brief answers given were enough to give a good indication of the occupational position of early members. An element of subjective judgement had to be exercised to group them within each category, particularly when deciding between categories 'B - intermediate managerial, administrative or professional' and 'C1 - supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional'.⁶⁴ It is clear though that the participants were overwhelmingly concentrated in these two groups rather than manual occupations. During the interviews it was also ascertained from almost all

⁶⁰ Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991 pp.19-21

⁶¹ Cotgrove, 1982 p.19

⁶² Trainee Teachers were classified as teachers.

⁶³ One participant did not answer the question.

⁶⁴ Ipsos (2009) 'Social Grade: A Classification Tool', https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/publication/6800-03/MediaCT_thoughtpiece_Social_Grade_July09_V3_WEB.pdf accessed 27 June 2019

respondents whether they worked in the public or private sector. Respondents were predominantly public-sector workers when they joined the party. Additionally, 20 of these worked in caring professions such as teaching, social work or nursing.

Table 12 - Employment Sector of Party Members

Sector	Number
Charity Sector	2
Public Sector	28
Private Sector	9
Both Public and Private	1
Did Provide a Clear Answer	2

Table 13 - Self-Identified Social Class Background of Party Members

Self-Identified Class	Number
Working Class	2
Middle Class	24
Lower Middle Class	7
Upper Middle Class	1
Professional Middle Class	2
AB Professional	1
Middle Class but came from a Working Class Background	5
No Class / Don't Like Class Categories	8

Respondents were also asked to self-identify their own class. Table 13 shows that there were several answers provided but ultimately four-fifths identified themselves as some form of middle class. When Roberts et al. conducted sociological research into class in Liverpool in the 1970s they found middle class people with high levels of education were particularly likely to find the concept of class distasteful when asked about it.⁶⁵ In this case a number of participants suggested that they might be considered middle class by others but caveated their answers, for example one participant suggested that 'you could call me middle class but I don't like to call myself middle class. Others would think of me as middle class.'⁶⁶ Eight participants felt they could not name a specific class category they fell into. It was also complicated by the fact that a number of participants highlighted that they had come from working class family backgrounds but then, having attended university and gone

⁶⁵ Kenneth Roberts, FG Cook, SC Clark & Elizabeth Semeonoff, *Fragmentary Class Structure* (London: Heinemann, 1977), p.156

⁶⁶ David Taylor, Interview

into white collar work, crudely, became middle class. This theme will be explored in more detail later in this chapter but this reflects aforementioned social trends during this period of an expanding professional class and a decreasing blue collar workforce. Definitely plotting at what point these people became middle class and if this preceded them joining is impossible to do retrospectively. However, they were also asked about their parents' occupation and class background. Some responded directly with a definitive classification such as working class while others gave more general information, in which case a crude class distinction of upper, middle or working has been made to provide the information for Table 14.

Table 14 - Class Background of Party Members' Parents

Parents' Class Background	Number
Working Class	11
Middle Class	37
Upper Class	2

Predominantly early party members came from middle class family backgrounds. As has been shown, almost all of those that had come from working class or upper class backgrounds felt that they had become middle class or did not fit into a class category. The party then was an overwhelmingly middle class organisation with early members in non-manual occupations, predominantly in the public sector of whom a large contingent were in caring jobs. Every interviewee was asked what their impressions were of the type of people who were involved with the party when they first joined. A more detailed consideration of their answers is provided later in this chapter, but it is worth noting how consistently participants emphasised that people were middle class, professional and educated. Here are three such examples:

I would guess thinking about it most people involved were middle class, educated.⁶⁷

I would say professionals. So we had teachers, health professionals, university lecturers and researchers...we had a lawyer...an anaesthetist.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ David Kemball-Cook, Interviewed on 14 July 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁶⁸ Claire Nash, Interviewed on 6 July 2017 by Mitya Pearson

I would say most of them were well-educated middle class but not exclusively.⁶⁹

Class and occupational profile are additional areas where the profile of party members differs markedly from society at large. In 1971 among the working population in Great Britain just under 55 per cent were in manual work and only 17 per cent of the population worked in the public sector.⁷⁰ In Crewe et al.'s February 1974 sample of the British electorate 46 per cent were in the social grade categories C2 or D (manual work) and 49 per cent were in such grades in 1979.⁷¹ In February 1974 66 per cent identified as working class and 64 per cent did in 1979.⁷² Milbrath and Goel suggested in their review of studies of political participation in the 1970s that people of higher socio-economic status were more likely to participate in politics. This meant people with higher levels of education and more prosperous people. Occupation was a murkier picture though, they suggested that blue collar political participation was likely to be lower in countries with party systems less linked to class which the UK was starting to become during the 1970s.⁷³ Dalton suggested that individuals of higher status, similarly defined, are more likely to participate in politics.⁷⁴

The delegates surveyed at the three main parties' conferences during the 1970s were classified slightly differently than in this questionnaire, but around 70 per cent of Labour delegates were in white collar occupations and around 95 per cent of Liberals and Conservatives were too. Around 80 per cent of Labour and Conservative delegates identified themselves as some form of middle class (upper, middle or lower) and around 85 per cent of Liberals did. There are more differences between the three main parties in terms of their delegates' family background, with those from Labour much more likely to have had parents in blue collar occupations and to have grown up in less good living standards.⁷⁵ There is also information on the professions of Labour conference delegates which suggested that there

⁶⁹ Alan Clarke, Interview

⁷⁰ Frank Bechhofer, Brian Elliott & David McCrone, 'Structure, Consciousness and Action: A Sociological Profile of the British Middle Class', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol 29 No 4 1978, pp.412-4

⁷¹ Crewe, Day, & Fox, 1991 p.459

⁷² Crewe, Day, & Fox, 1991 p.459

⁷³ Milbrath & Goel, 1977 pp.95-102

⁷⁴ Dalton, 2006 p.50

⁷⁵ Barton & Döring, 1986 pp.299-300

was a higher percentage of teachers and 'caring' professionals than the population at large.⁷⁶

Among Frankland's list of 36 1979 Ecology Party general election candidates, the largest single group was twelve 'teachers and lecturers' and the second was five categorised as 'business and other professional'.⁷⁷ In McCulloch's survey of branch contacts over 70 per cent were in non-manual occupations (ranging from professional to routine non-manual occupations) and in Studman's survey 60 per cent were in what was termed classes one or two and in 'classic middle-class occupations'.⁷⁸ Rudig et al.'s 1990 survey provided a more detailed picture of members' class and occupation. It found, compared to the general population, professionals to be 'heavily overrepresented within the Greens, while manual workers are heavily underrepresented' and a substantial share worked in the public sector, particularly in 'caring' professions.⁷⁹ Only 10 per cent considered themselves working class, around 50 per cent thought of themselves as middle class in some form and around 40 per cent did not think of themselves in class terms.⁸⁰ A very similar occupational picture was present in Cotgrove's survey of environmentalists where manual workers were significantly under-represented compared to the general public and group members mostly worked in professional roles, predominantly in the service, welfare and creative sectors.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Whiteley, 1981 p.162

⁷⁷ Frankland, 1981 p.44

⁷⁸ McCulloch, 1993 p.31; Studman, 1984 p.3

⁷⁹ Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991 p.23-25

⁸⁰ Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991 p.26

⁸¹ Cotgrove, 1982 p.18

3.4.9 Social and Economic Status

Table 15 - Trade Union Membership of Party Members

Trade Union Member?	Number
Yes	29
No	20
Could Not Recall	1

Table 16 - Home Ownership of Party Members

Owned Their Own Home?	Number
Yes	31
No	18
Could Not Recall	1

There are two other factors worth noting which are linked to the economic and social status of party activists: trade union membership and home ownership. Three-fifths of all members interviewed suggested that they were members of trade unions when they joined (seven were not economically active at the time). As would be expected given the average age of party members, this is a higher proportion than the one-fifth of the UK population which were members of a trade union in 1975.⁸² It has been shown that members were overwhelmingly middle class and in non-manual occupations so they will have been part of the growth of white collar trade unionism which took place in the 1960s and the 1970s in Britain.⁸³ This differs slightly from Studman's survey in 1984 where only half of the economically active party members were in a trade union.⁸⁴ Three-fifths of participants suggested that they already owned their own home when they joined the party. This was a slightly higher rate than the British electorate in the 1970s which was 51 per cent, 54 per cent and 57 per cent in 1970, 1974 and 1979 respectively, further reflection of the profile of most interviewees as professional middle class people in their twenties and thirties.⁸⁵

⁸² Nikki Brownlie, 'Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – Trade Union Membership 2011', https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/16381/12-p77-trade-union-membership-2011.pdf accessed 24 September 2019; Office for National Statistics, 'Overview of the UK Population', <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/mar2017> accessed 24 September 2019.

⁸³ Bechhofer, Elliot and McCrone, 1978 pp.418-19

⁸⁴ Studman, 1984 p.4

⁸⁵ Crewe, Day, & Fox, 1991 p.456

3.4.10 Previous Political Activity

Table 17 - Political Activity of Party Members' Parents

Parents Active Beyond Voting ⁸⁶	Number
Yes	12
No	38

Table 18 - Voting Preferences of Party Members' Parents

Party Parents Voted For	Number
Conservative (Both Parents)	16
Floating Voters (Both Parents)	8
Labour (Both Parents)	8
Conservative and Liberal	3
Don't Know	3
Conservative and a Floating Voter	2
Liberal (Both Parents)	2
Conservative and Labour	1
Conservative and the Progressive Party	1
Labour and Socialist Party of GB	1
Labour and Conservative	1
Labour and then Ecology Party ⁸⁷	1
Liberal and Floating Voter	1
Liberal and Scottish Socialist Party	1
Did Not Vote	1

Aside from their social and economic background, participants also provided an indication of their political background and experience. Most participants suggest that their parents had not participated in politics in a deeper way than by voting. Around a fifth of them had been politically active beyond this such as standing at local or national elections or campaigning for a political party. Parents' political leanings can be an important influence on their children's political outlook.⁸⁸ One interview participant's parent had joined the party before them, and this has had then influenced them to do the same. However, unsurprisingly, generally the interviewees' joining this new party were not copying their parents in terms of party choice. Around half of participants' parents had both consistently

⁸⁶ Comprising activity such as campaigning for a party or standing for election and/or significant trade union or pressure group activity.

⁸⁷ This individual's parent voted Labour and then became active in the Ecology Party during the 1970s which influenced them to join before the 1979 General Election.

⁸⁸ M. Kent Jennings, Laura Stoker & Jake Bowers, 'Politics across Generations: Family Transmission Re-examined', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol 71 No 3 2009, pp.782-99

voted for one of the three main parties in Britain, mainly the Conservative Party, and within the other half their parents were either floating voters, did not reveal their choice to their children, or voted different ways (including for one or two smaller parties). The early members of this new party were therefore by no means all from the same type of political background.

Table 19 - Previous Political Activity of Party Members

Prior Political Involvement	Number
First Political Activity	17
Previous Political Activity of Any Kind	33
Previous Party Political Activity	9

Around a third of participants suggested that joining the party was their first significant political activity. However, many were much newer to politics than this might suggest as this included political activity in a very broadly defined manner such as joining a local nature conservation group. Of the 33 who had had some kind of political involvement before, only nine had been involved in party politics previously and this had been with a mix of different parties. Not only were early members inexperienced in party politics, but, as Brian Doherty has noted, PEOPLE/the Ecology Party is notable compared to many international comparators because it did not grow from new social movement activity and therefore was not based on this 'learning process'.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Doherty, 1994 p.120

3.4.11 Location

Figure 2 - Location of Early PEOPLE/Ecology Party Members When They Joined



Compiled on 'zeemaps.com' based on information provided in interviews conducted for this thesis.

The participants provided information about where they were living when they joined the party and these locations are plotted on Figure 2. There is an obvious caveat to how useful a record this is in showing where local parties were clustered during the 1970s. Once some individuals had been identified and interviewed a lot of information for how to contact further early members or suggestions for additional individuals to speak came from interviewees themselves. They were likely to highlight the people they knew within the party at the time which, for many, were others in their local area. However, given the size of the party then, knowing where 50 people were located when they joined still gives an indication of where the party had active groups. No interviews were conducted with people who were located in Wales or Northern Ireland when they joined. There were numerous people interviewed who lived in Edinburgh, Leeds and Yorkshire, parts of the Midlands, Bristol and the South West, and London when they joined. In 1990 Rudig et al. found that party members were more likely to live in rural areas than the population at large though

the majority still lived in urban or suburban areas.⁹⁰ Among the 50 people interviewed for this project on a simple rural and urban split something similar is present with two-fifths living in rural areas but the majority in urban areas. Therefore, on this evidence the party was not a movement of the countryside.⁹¹ The importance of experience of the countryside and nature to party activists' political position is discussed in Chapter 7 though.

3.5 Members' Own Perceptions

It is also worth examining interview participants' own recollections of the backgrounds and profiles of their fellow member as each one was asked directly about this. Their answers focused predominantly on issues of class, occupation and education (though they also mentioned some other issues). This perhaps suggests that these were the main areas which stood out about the membership and made an impression on early activists, though it could also have been influenced by the phrasing of the question. One of the interviewees was a purely passive member during the 1970s so did not encounter anyone, while another was only involved on the local level in an area where there were very few other people in the party.⁹² In the main, however, participants had views on the subject based on either local activity with relatively sizeable groups or involvement in national activity such as conferences. Participants were broadly split between two sets of views which might appear to be contradictory, as one emphasises the heterogeneity of the membership and the other emphasises its homogeneity. These are three examples of the former:

It was a very diverse group...there were sort of intellectual types and ordinary working people and public-school background and people who were into the alternative lifestyle.⁹³

⁹⁰ Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991 p.18

⁹¹ Small towns were defined as rural.

⁹² Participant 4, Interviewed on 17 March 2017 by Mitya Pearson; Geoff Garbett, Interviewed on 16 March 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁹³ David and Linda Whitebread, Interview

...incredibly diverse...[people] from school, moneyed background, there were gentleman farmers, there were librarians, there were lecturers, there were people...with a public school background.⁹⁴

They were all different...some were self-employed. Others I think had some form of education.⁹⁵

The alternative view is expressed in the following three examples:

Exclusively middle class.⁹⁶

It had a distinctly middle class feel, we're talking As and Bs here.⁹⁷

I think they were all university educated...similar type of...status...Coming from relatively comfortable backgrounds if you like.⁹⁸

Upon closer inspection these two views are however both reconcilable and revealing about the nature of the individuals in the party in its early years. Aside from perhaps a very small group who were working class, such as the two participants who identified themselves as such, the interviews suggest that there were three main profiles of people involved with the party in its very early years. First, was middle class, educated people in non-manual occupations, often in the public sector and 'caring' roles. These conform very closely to the idea of the new middle class.⁹⁹ The second group were people who conform to the old or traditional idea of the middle class, those who were self-employed or in classically middle class professions, such as solicitors as well as those who were upper class.¹⁰⁰ Finally, there were those who were 'decommodified' and peripheral to the labour market, such as students and those who were unemployed or in casual work, often in part because they had chosen to pursue alternative lifestyles.¹⁰¹ These descriptions are themselves simplifications. Some people were members of the party who fit none of these and some fit into more than

⁹⁴ Peter Frings, Interviewed on 5 May 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁹⁵ Richard Oldfield, Interviewed on 21 May 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁹⁶ Bill Badger, Interviewed on 20 July 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁹⁷ Dean Wayland, Interviewed on 26 July 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁹⁸ Participant 3, Interviewed on 13 May 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁹⁹ Paul Bagguley 'Middle Class Radicalism Revisited' in T. Butler & M. Savage (eds.) *Social Change and the Middle Classes* (London: UCL Press, 1995), p.293

¹⁰⁰ Offe, 1985

¹⁰¹ Offe, 1985

one, but these categories are highlighted by a number of participants' answers. Many interviewees felt there were both middle class people and those who were either middle class but slightly higher status in some way or even upper class:

Well it was just average middle class...I mean Benfield and the Whittakers I don't know whether you might get round to calling them upper middle class.¹⁰²

The people I knew best were my fellow members of the National Executive as it was then known in those days and the people would tend to be lawyers and solicitors and bankers, fairly well to do people...we used to meet in London in pretty salubrious [lawyers'] offices and the Oxford and Cambridge Club.¹⁰³

Some of them like Teddy Goldsmith, independent wealth. Most but not all university educated which affected what they were then doing so most of them were from an educated, professional background.¹⁰⁴

Secondly, a number of participants highlighted a split between people who were middle class professionals and those coming from more alternative backgrounds.

I think possibly overwhelmingly middle class in origins but a large number and to some extent myself had espoused a sort of more fringe lifestyle with sort of whole foods and less income and not working full-time.¹⁰⁵

I think the movers and shakers tended to be middle class...But there was also a large group of people who came from very varied backgrounds.¹⁰⁶

It was always a curious mix of middle class conservationists on the one hand and counter-cultural revolutionaries on the other.¹⁰⁷

The early activists had a particular profile which was summed up by one interview participant when they stated that 'I think you probably have to say that they were middle class rather than shop floor workers.'¹⁰⁸ The dominance of the middle class in

¹⁰² Adrian Williams, Interviewed on 25 November 2016 by Mitya Pearson

¹⁰³ Biff Vernon, Interviewed on 21 March 2017 by Mitya Pearson

¹⁰⁴ Jean Lambert, Interview

¹⁰⁵ Participant 2, Interviewed on 13 March 2017 by Mitya Pearson

¹⁰⁶ Terry King, Interviewed on 17 November 2017 by Mitya Pearson

¹⁰⁷ David Taylor, Interview

¹⁰⁸ John Luck, Interviewed on 24 October 2017 by Mitya Pearson

environmental politics was also noticed at the time. For example, the May 1972 'Teach-In For Survival' event, held in response to the publication of *A Blueprint for Survival*, featured discussion of the middle class nature of the environmental movement and an article in *the Ecologist* in February 1973 debated the same issue.¹⁰⁹ This was also discussed by members of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party in the 1970s too with a 1977 newsletter highlighting that *the Guardian* had described their 'middle-class, sandal-wearing, vegetarian characteristics' and *Undercurrents* magazine's report on their 1979 election plans referring to their 'predominantly middle-class' support.¹¹⁰ A few months after the 1979 general election a letter from one Ecology Party activist to another explains how 'the Ecology Party has got an image as a bit of a middle class intellectual party which branches all over the country are fighting to lose'.¹¹¹

Early PEOPLE/Ecology Party members were homogenous in the sense that there were not groups of coal miners and steel workers turning up to conferences and meetings alongside middle and upper class people. However, within these confines there was a variation of profiles and backgrounds. While the early party had a big group of people broadly fitting into the categories of the new middle class and those pursuing alternative lifestyles, the interviews reveal a notable contingent of those from the traditional middle class and even the upper classes. The founders were solicitors and estate agents, effectively self-employed business people. Biff Vernon recalled having some early national executive meetings in the London office of the legal firm which Jeremy Faull (another early member) was a partner in.¹¹² Jonathon Porritt was the son of a hereditary Baron and one of at least two early party members who attended Eton.¹¹³ Goldsmith was also a very influential figure in the party's early years and a wealthy, well-connected individual who fundraised for *the Ecologist* at the private Clermont Club.¹¹⁴ Goldsmith's general election campaign in 1974 provided a great example of this mix when some long-haired party members turned out to

¹⁰⁹ Michael Schwab (ed.), *Teach in for Survival* (London: Robinson & Watkins Books, 1972), pp.102-7; *The Ecologist*, Vol 3 No 2 February 1973, p.61

¹¹⁰ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, November 1977; *Undercurrents* Online Archive (Henceforth: UOA), *Undercurrents*, Issue 33 April-May 1979, https://issuu.com/undercurrents1972/docs/_uc33_mar10a accessed 6 September 2019

¹¹¹ David Fleming Personal Archive (Henceforth: DFPA), Peter Clarke Correspondence with David Fleming, 14 December 1979

¹¹² Biff Vernon, Interview

¹¹³ Jonathon Porritt, Interviewed on 15 May 2018 by Mitya Pearson; Beckett, 2009 p.236

¹¹⁴ Beckett, 2009 p.236

help him campaign and, in his words, 'I dressed all my hippies up as Arabs'. Along with two camels provided by his friend John Aspinall, zoo-owner and Clermont Club founder, this formed a stunt about desertification.¹¹⁵

Figure 3 - Teddy Goldsmith Campaigning in Eye in 1974



Source: Green History, 'General Election 1974' <https://green-history.uk/elections/general/1974> accessed 15 December 2018

3.6 Discussion and Analysis

This chapter has so far examined data on early PEOPLE/Ecology Party members collected for this thesis and provided brief comparators for this as well as members' recollections of the profile of people that were involved. The remainder of this chapter discusses and analyses this material, focusing on whether the profile and background of early activists is useful in helping to explain why these people got involved with the party and it emerged within British politics. Based on the research conducted for this project, the typical early activist was male, white, in their twenties or thirties and not likely to follow an organised religion. They were in the social grades B or C1, identified as middle class and worked in non-manual occupations in the public sector, most likely in a 'caring' profession. They would also have

¹¹⁵ Edward Goldsmith interviewed in Beckett, 2009 p.239

been a member of a trade union, owned their own home and have attended a state school. They would be just as likely to be married as single, would very likely have had parents who were not politically active, and this would most likely have been their first experience of party politics.

Many aspects of this profile of PEOPLE/Ecology Party members are, unsurprisingly but significantly, similar to those which have been highlighted in successive studies of the party's membership since the 1970s as well as in studies of the membership of other green parties.¹¹⁶ It is also a similar profile to the members of radical environmental campaign groups in Britain in the 1970s.¹¹⁷ The consistent profile of party members, over time and with other green parties and environmental groups (though in each case there have been variations), including from the beginning of the party's history, suggests that it may be important to explaining why the party emerged. This is particularly true because several of the social characteristics of party members also fit with broad social trends in Britain and other western democracies in the post-war era - many of which are discussed in Chapter 4. It is easy therefore to construct a narrative around factors such as declining religious following, increasing participation in higher education or changes in social class configurations as providing the basis for the emergence and development of green parties. Rather than examine how each characteristic detailed above could, to a greater or lesser extent, explain the party's emergence, it is sufficient to detail the general problems that have already been highlighted with such an approach in Chapter 2. These types of explanation highlight 'facilitators' for the emergence of the party but they are lacking in terms of providing a convincing, direct rationale and link between such categories and environmental politics.¹¹⁸ They are also general explanations which are deficient because of their lack of reference to the 'situational' and 'concrete' factors affecting the environmental activism of individuals and groups.¹¹⁹

As Doherty notes, the three social characteristics which appear to have most consistently stood out about green parties' members over time and in different countries

¹¹⁶ Studman, 1984; McCulloch, 1990; Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991; Bennie, 2004; Rudig 2015a; Rudig, 2015b; Rudig, 2015a; Bennie, 2017

¹¹⁷ Cotgrove, 1982 p.19

¹¹⁸ Rudig, 1990a p.31

¹¹⁹ Rudig & Lowe, 1986b p.521

has been their youthfulness, high levels of education, and occupational and class positions.¹²⁰ Age can be thought of as providing a potential reason for the party's emergence in two ways. First, a link between being young and open to environmental politics. If this is true, however, there have obviously been generations of young people prior to PEOPLE's formation who did not form a green party and most younger people in 1970s Britain did not join PEOPLE/the Ecology Party, so it has only very limited explanatory value. Secondly, individuals' propensity to get involved in green politics may not reflect their youth but rather their generational experience, most obviously the idea that many individuals growing up during or after the immediate post-war era have been part of a value shift in societies making them predisposed to new types of politics.¹²¹ There is little that the material examined for this thesis can add to the debate about whether such a value shift has taken place but the issues with such an idea and, in particular, with trying to use this hypothesis to explain the emergence of green parties has been covered in Chapter 2. The related topic of experience of higher education as an explanation for the emergence of the party is examined in more detail in Chapter 4 and Chapter 7.

Before concluding, the penultimate section of this chapter examines the final of the three factors mentioned: the class and occupational positions of early party members. As has been shown in Chapter 2 there were some significant changes in the social and occupational structure of Britain which were underway by the time PEOPLE was formed. In Britain the non-manual proportion of the labour force rose from 30 per cent in 1931 to 45 per cent in 1971.¹²² Within the middle classes there were also significant changes which had manifested themselves by the 1970s as they were increasingly employees rather than independent, self-employed people and public rather than private sector workers.¹²³ The overall effect was that, certainly by the 1970s, a larger (in absolute numbers and proportionate to the population) and more diverse middle class had emerged in Britain than had previously been in existence.¹²⁴ These trends, which were largely mirrored in many other western democracies, led to the belief that a new middle class was emerging which

¹²⁰ Doherty, 1994 p.74

¹²¹ Inglehart, 1977

¹²² Roger King, 'The Middle Class in Revolt?' in R. King & N. Nugent (eds.) *Respectable Rebels: Middle Class Campaigns in the 1970s* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.11

¹²³ King, 1979 p.11

¹²⁴ Bechhofer, Elliot and McCrone, 1978 p.415

was highly educated and in professional and welfare occupations.¹²⁵ Accordingly, assessments of the politics of the middle classes in Britain noted its fragmentation, in particular the division between this new middle class and a traditional, petit-bourgeoisie likely to be self-employed or in high status professional occupations. The latter had a propensity to be attracted to the politics of the right and there was notable activism of this type in 1970s Britain. While the new middle classes tended to be attracted to forms of left-wing politics or other radical movements such as those focused on the environment, women's rights and peace.¹²⁶

3.6.1 Class, Occupation and the Emergence of the Party

An outline of new politics accounts of the emergence of green parties was provided in Chapter 2. However, it is worth noting here some of the causal mechanisms that have been put forward to explain the supposed link between social and occupational changes and the emergence of green parties and social movements more generally. One of the main arguments in this area is that the relative economic security of the people involved in environmental groups or green parties explains their focus on these issues. They are suggested to have a material comfort which means they can indulge in issues other than economic management and military security.¹²⁷ One obvious issue with this idea is why so many people brought up and living in affluence, such as industrialists, did not have an interest in the environment or other new politics movements. Andrew Duff and Stephen Cotgrove argue members of environmental groups had ultimately joined them because of their underlying (post-material) values, but such values were not the result of being in a materially secure social and economic position.¹²⁸ A related feature of the debate around the new middle class and their involvement in new politics and environmental campaign groups is whether their occupational position and profile has influenced their political approach or if their values have informed their choice of occupation.¹²⁹ It may be that rather

¹²⁵ Kriesi, 1993

¹²⁶ Roger King & Neill Nugent (eds.) *Respectable Rebels: Middle Class Campaigns in the 1970s* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979); Parkin, 1968; Bagguley, 1995 pp.293-99

¹²⁷ Parkin, 1968 pp.145-61; Inglehart & Rabier, 1986 pp.456-79; Rootes 1992 p.171

¹²⁸ Stephen Cotgrove & Andrew Duff, 'Environmentalism, Values, and Social Change', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol 32 No 1 1981, p.93

¹²⁹ Carter, 2007 p.93; Bagguley, 1995 p.294

than people in white collar public sector jobs being influenced to pursue environmental campaigning, their already formed political outlook leads them to select these type of jobs. Part of this discussion is whether through their public-sector jobs people from the new middle class are alienated (or alienating themselves) from the institutions of industrial capitalism. For example, Cotgrove and Duff dubiously suggest that the new middle classes' environmental political activity is motivated by their desire to influence decision making in industrial societies which they are peripheral to as they are not working in the private sector.¹³⁰

Another way of justifying the causal link between the new middle class membership of green parties or new social movement campaign groups would be to demonstrate how these political campaigns fitted with this class' interest. Descriptions of green parties as the expression of the new middle class' interest have been attempted by scholars but none of these have been convincing.¹³¹ Also while both environmental groups and new social movements have generally been dominated by the new middle class their social base can be much more varied than this.¹³² For example, German campaigns against nuclear power stations were often made up of groups including students and farmers.¹³³ The three groups of people found by this research to be most prominent in the early members fit perfectly with the qualified outline suggested by Clause Offe that new social movements were made up of the new middle class, the old middle class and decommodified groups.¹³⁴ This presents a problem because these are three distinct groups which it is difficult to group together as having naturally identical class interests, let alone justify how such interests were met simultaneously by the politics of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party. In particular, many of the key figures in the early party, including those that actually founded it, were clearly part of the old middle class. As will be explored in detail in Chapter 4, some of the early figures had quite a lot in common with many of the right-wing, political campaigners advancing the interests of the old middle class during the 1970s. Their involvement in the early party

¹³⁰ Stephen Cotgrove & Andrew Duff, 'Environmentalism, Middle-Class Radicalism and Politics', *The Sociological Review*, Vol 28 No 2, 1980 p.341

¹³¹ Rudig & Lowe, 1986b pp.522-23

¹³² Russell Dalton, Manfred Kuechler & Wilhelm Burklin, 'The Challenge of New Social Movements' in R. Dalton & M. Kuechler (eds.) *Challenging the Political Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.12

¹³³ Tompkins, 2016

¹³⁴ Offe, 1985

suggests it was a more complicated organisation than simply the natural political voice of the growing new middle class. Indeed, studies of middle class politics in this period concluded that the fragmentation within the middle class meant that it was impossible to talk of a coherent, single middle class political interest.¹³⁵

Aside from the academic view, a more general notion of environmentalism as a middle class pursuit, connected to material security, has permeated public consciousness since the emergence of modern environmental politics.¹³⁶ Although such a view is based on reality in terms of the objective profile of environmental groups' membership this is often a pejorative way of dismissing environmental concerns. In some ways the focus on the middle classness of environmental politics is surprising, particularly when it is used to explain the rise of green politics. This is because the comparators provided in the earlier chapter show clearly that in general people who are higher status, such as being better educated and better off, are more likely to be involved in politics.¹³⁷ Additionally, the comparisons with what evidence there is about the activists of other parties suggested a strong middle class bias. Barry Hindess' study published in 1971 was devoted to the decline of working class participation in party politics in Britain.¹³⁸ Returning to the specific group of the new middle class, in Roger King's assessment of class and party politics in 1979 he suggested that the new middle class had a tendency to support the Labour Party.¹³⁹ As is explored in Chapter 6, those individuals that did support PEOPLE/the Ecology Party felt that all existing parties, including Labour, fundamentally could not represent their interests so this further contradicts the notions of a uniform political perspective among the new middle class and an explanation for the emergence of the party which places the rise of the new middle class at its centre.

While the growth of the new middle class was 'conducive to green parties emerging', it is only of limited use in explaining their creation.¹⁴⁰ It was no doubt helpful that these

¹³⁵ Roger King & Neill Nugent, 'Conclusions' in R. King & N. Nugent (eds.) *Respectable Rebels: Middle Class Campaigns in the 1970s* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.184; Roberts, Cook, Clark & Semeonoff, 1977

¹³⁶ A notable early example of such a view was expressed by Anthony Crosland in *A Social Democratic Britain* (London: The Fabian Society, 1971)

¹³⁷ Dalton, 2006 p.50

¹³⁸ Hindess, 1971

¹³⁹ Roger King, 'The Middle Class Revolt and the Established Parties' in R. King & N. Nugent (eds.) *Respectable Rebels: Middle Class Campaigns in the 1970s* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.172

¹⁴⁰ Williams, 1999 p.78

early activists, while not necessarily particularly wealthy, were not living in poverty and were able to dedicate time and resources to the party. It is also perhaps possible that the class position of early activists had an impact on their psychology in responding to environmental problems - helping them to have the confidence to take part in political campaigning. The occupations and social positions of early activists were, in a small way, helpful for some of the practical aspects of setting up and getting the party going. The occasional use of offices and clubs for National Executive Committee (NEC) meetings was set out earlier in this chapter and the three co-founders interviewed for this thesis described how, as solicitors and estate agents, the early administration of the party such as the printing was 'all run out of our two offices'. The inaugural meeting of the party took place in Michael Benfield and Freda Sanders' estate agent show-room.¹⁴¹ Early meetings of the party's London branch took place in an empty house on Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, the use of which had been offered to them as a favour.¹⁴² The 1977 and 1978 conferences were held at Birmingham University in part because the chair of the party NEC, Jonathan Tyler, worked there and could book the venue.¹⁴³ Ultimately, the class and occupational position of early activists seems to explain more about the fact that they were participating in politics than the specific nature and content of their (environmental) political project.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter began by presenting the information collected on the profile and backgrounds of the 50 early party activists interviewed, including areas such as age, sex and ethnicity. Some documentary sources were also drawn upon, such as photos, to support the points advanced. This evidence was contrasted with relevant comparators such as the general population of the UK or Great Britain at the time, information on how demographics affect political participation in general and, where possible, survey data on other parties and environmental groups from the same period. Although there were challenges associated with undertaking such a survey of members retrospectively, the information presented significantly advances understanding of who the early members were. In addition to the

¹⁴¹ Interviews, The Founders

¹⁴² Steve Lambert, Interview; Adrian Williams, Interview; Coincidentally, the same street which the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the British government had met secretly earlier in the decade.

¹⁴³ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

quantitative data presented, some qualitative material was then provided in the form of interview participants' recollections of the type of people who were involved when they first joined.

The picture presented of the profile of early activity has been one which fits very closely not only with subsequent surveys of members of the party but also with those of many other green parties in similar countries and other environmental groups. It is easy to see why scholars have observed the consistently high concentration of middle class, educated, non-manual and public sector workers in green parties and felt that the social and demographic trends moving in these directions explain their emergence. Focusing on this case, however, the limits to this approach for explaining the emergence of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party are clear. First, although the evidence presented here demonstrates a high proportion of people who could be categorised as part of the new middle class, by reviewing the literature it is clear no convincing explanation has been advanced as to why environmental politics represents the natural or inevitable interest of this group. Secondly, the party was not completely homogenous and there were a significant number of key individuals involved in the party's early days who fitted more into the category of the old middle class. This is important because it suggests that when it first emerged the party was a relatively complicated one and not just something that can be explained by the growth of one specific social group. Finally, the tentative comparisons that it is possible to make with the three main British parties' activists at the time are instructive. They all appear to have had a middle class-leaning profile to them by the 1970s. By the time PEOPLE was formed, even the Labour Party and trade unions had experienced a substantial growth in the number and proportion of members who were middle class, educated, non-manual public sector workers. This suggests that the growing new middle classes could find a political home in a very different party. It also implies that the generally middle class nature of early party activists had more to do with the greater likelihood of those in higher status social positions (higher income and higher levels of education) to participate in politics than environmental politics being explained by structural changes in class groupings.

The deeper understanding of the profile of early members which this chapter has provided has helped broaden understanding of the party's history and explain why it emerged, but it is not as simple as identifying one or two structural developments in society

leading inevitably to the party's creation. To get a more comprehensive answer it is necessary to look in much further detail at the thinking, ideas and motivations of these individuals. This is the focus of the remainder of this thesis and these are examined principally through the accounts given in the interviews conducted to develop this thesis and the expressions made in surviving archival sources. The next chapter reflects this approach and examines to what extent the broad social trends of post-war Britain and developments during the 1970s linked in with and shaped the early party activists' actions and approaches.

Chapter 4 - Post-War British History, 1970s Britain and the Party

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides insights relating to the overall question examined in this thesis: why the party emerged in Britain. Chapter 2 detailed how there is considerable literature on the creation of green parties generally and how, previously, much of the attention has been on finding commonality between international case studies of green parties rather than looking extensively at the circumstances of a specific case. This thesis looks in detail at the contextual factors affecting the origins, creation and early development of the party. This chapter is based on a detailed review of the primary material, both oral interviews and archive documents, examined to research this thesis. In keeping with the approach of the thesis as a whole, this chapter focuses on the perspectives of not just the individuals who first formed the party but a range of the early membership. It examines the extent to which broad social, political and economic developments in the post-war period and during the 1970s, as identified in pre-existing literature, shaped the ideas and approach of early party members.

The first section of this chapter details how some of the key trends in post-war British history, which were clearly manifesting themselves by the 1960s and 1970s, shaped early party members' thinking and therefore help to explain the emergence of the party. They have been grouped and labelled here as affluence, car use and roadbuilding, deference and partisan dealignment, and progress, technology and education. The second, and larger, part of this chapter focuses on how the events and atmosphere of 1970s Britain contributed to the emergence and early development of the party. This draws from the review of historical narratives of 1970s Britain which was set out in Chapter 2. The chapter looks at how some of the specific topics which dominate such historiography are important to understanding the party and its emergence. These topics are labelled as energy crises, a series of wider problems and key events during the 1970s, a general sense of crisis in society, middle class discontent, and the radicalism and opportunity of the period. It will be argued that the wider events and atmosphere of the 1970s intertwined with, and helped to fuel, early party activists' concern about environmental collapse. As will be described, this

interaction played out both in ways that one might expect and in a more unpredictable fashion.

Many of these topics have been linked to environmental politics before. For example, Meredith Veldman has suggested that the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s can be explained as a reaction against post-war affluence.¹ The approach in this chapter differs from such discussions because of the focus on the party rather than talking more broadly about the environmental movement. Additionally, the arguments and points made are based on detailed and extensive reference to the primary material surveyed for this piece. Often when connections have been drawn between broad historical trends and the emergence of the environmental movement this has been done with only limited reference to primary material.² Such links have generally therefore been supposed rather than clearly demonstrated in the way that they are here.

4.2 Trends in Post-War Britain

4.2.1 The Affluent Society

Associated with the expansion of the middle class in Britain in the post-war period, which was discussed in Chapter 3, was the development commonly referred to as affluence. By the 1960s 'a distinctive condition, well described as "the affluent society", undoubtedly existed' in Britain which entailed dramatic increases in average wages combined with the increased availability and widespread diffusion of consumer goods.³ This was not an entirely new phenomenon as consumption had increased since the Industrial Revolution and many staple items of the 1930s were luxuries 50 years earlier.⁴ It is also possible to identify substantial increases in national income, some redistribution of this and an increase in household expenditure on durable goods during the inter-war years.⁵ Nonetheless, a substantial shift took place immediately after the Second World War. First, the post-war period saw the

¹ Veldman, 1994

² This is not the case with Veldman's argument, specifically.

³ Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p.114

⁴ Charles More, *Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Harlow: Pearson, 2007), p.228

⁵ Peter Scott, 'Consumption, Consumer Credit and the Diffusion of Consumer Durables' in J. Strange & F. Carnevali (eds.) *Twentieth-Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2007), pp.162-65

biggest improvement in the material standard of living in Britain since the middle ages.⁶ In what was a significant change for many working class households, unemployment had disappeared during the war and remained minimal after it. This trend was combined with extensive rises in average earnings (faster than price rises).⁷ Secondly, during the inter-war period working class households gained much greater access to simple luxuries like bathrooms, readily available hot water and radios. The full scale 'consumer revolution', however, had not progressed beyond the salaried middle classes.⁸ This changed after 1945 and by 1965 88 per cent of households had televisions, 39 per cent had refrigerators and 56 per cent had washing machines.⁹

Despite the obvious benefits of affluence, this phenomenon created new challenges and had significant political ramifications. For example, it has been suggested that the Labour Party struggled to come to terms with a newly affluent working class.¹⁰ Veldman has suggested that the environmental movement in Britain was a romantic response to post-war affluence.¹¹ This is seen in two ways in relation to PEOPLE/the Ecology Party. First, 'postwar affluence rested on environmentally destructive industrial expansion' leading to developments such as agricultural practices which destroyed areas of natural beauty and increased pollution.¹² Increased consumption contributed to objective environmental degradation which environmentalists reacted against, and in this way the party was a practical response to objective environmental problems. One example of this is the amount of waste produced in Britain which, partly because of increasing material living standards, rose by 50 per cent during the 1960s.¹³ From the outset waste, resources and recycling were a central part of the party's programme. A PEOPLE campaign leaflet for the February 1974 general election argued that more effort 'must be put into recycling useful materials, i.e. paper and cardboard, metal and glass, all of which are at present used once and then

⁶ Lawrence Black, 'The Impression of Affluence' in L. Black & H. Pemberton (eds.) *An Affluent Society?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.85

⁷ David Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History* (London: Routledge, 2001), p.79

⁸ Scott, 2007 p.177

⁹ Childs, 2001 p.79

¹⁰ Richard Toye, 'The Forgotten Revisionist: Douglas Jay and Britain's Transition to Affluence, 1951-1964' in L. Black & H. Pemberton (eds.) *An Affluent Society?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.61

¹¹ Veldman, 1994;

¹² Veldman, 1994 p.243

¹³ Lawrence Black, 'The Impression of Affluence' in L. Black & H. Pemberton (eds.) *An Affluent Society?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.87

discarded'.¹⁴ The founders of the party suggested in interview that the industrial policy of 'built-in obsolescence', whereby products are designed to deliberately break down after a certain period of time so they have to be replaced, was one of the aspects of the economy they were reacting against.¹⁵ Secondly, bound up with a rejection of some of the consequences of affluence, there was a more emotional response to the 'Western World's obsession with material things'.¹⁶ Affluence and its associated effects therefore influenced the thinking of early members and impacted upon the approach the party took. Population growth in the post-war period also clearly contributed to the amount of economic development taking place in Britain.¹⁷

4.2.2 Cars and Roads

One significant development in post-war Britain associated with affluence was the much wider availability of cars and consequent increase in road building. After falling during the Second World War car ownership began to rise, particularly with the end of petrol rationing in 1953. As measured by thousand million passenger miles, private road transport increased from 47 in 1954 to 217 in 1974.¹⁸ This rise came at the expense of public transport by road and rail, still the most common form of transport in the early 1950s but with passenger numbers declining in the following decades.¹⁹ Although initially quite slow - the first motorway was built in 1959 and there was still less than 400 miles of motorway by the mid-1960s - road construction developed to support these changes in mobility patterns.²⁰ There were obvious environmental ramifications to this. Arthur Marwick suggests that in the post-

¹⁴ Leslie Mutch Private Archive (Henceforth LMPA), Alan Pickard General Election Leaflet, February 1974

¹⁵ The Founders, Interview

¹⁶ LMPA, Alan Pickard General Election Leaflet, February 1974

¹⁷ Glen O'Hara, "'We are Faced Everywhere with a Growing Population': Demographic Change and the British State, 1955–64", *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 15 No 3 2004, pp.243–66; Office for National Statistics, 'Overview of the UK Population',

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/mar2017> accessed 27 March 2019; There is a long-running and highly contentious debate over whether consumption patterns or population numbers are the ultimate cause of environmental problems. This thesis is not seeking to engage with such questions but merely highlighting that, given the economic system in place in post-war Britain, the higher numbers of people contributed to more developments of the kind being discussed here such as roads and houses.

¹⁸ Jeremy Black, *A Short History of Britain* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), p.24

¹⁹ Andrew Rosen, *The Transformation of British Life, 1950–2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p.25

²⁰ Rosen, 2003 pp.24–25; Colin Pooley, *A Mobile Century?: Changes in Everyday Mobility in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2017); Joe Moran, *On Roads: A Hidden History* (London: Profile, 2009)

war era a 'new activism was afoot among middle-class residents' groups...Motorway schemes, urban and rural, the siting of new airports, the invasion of suburban streets by heavy goods vehicles, all of these brought militant, and often highly successful, protest groups of (relatively) ordinary citizens into being'.²¹

This is highly relevant to the question of why the party emerged. One activist 'moved house mainly to get away from the traffic' because of 'the noise, the, how can I explain, the way things were in Leeds, round about where we lived, it was quite a busy road, and we bought a derelict cottage on the Pennines'.²² Another suggested 'I think we were probably quite anti-car, anti-traffic, anti-big lorry, lot of antis in there aren't there? We, yeah trying to, because traffic had become quite a big issue in the 1960s, ring roads round cities that were just horrible...I would...single out the traffic issue.'²³ Two individuals suggested it was roadbuilding plans near their homes which got them involved in environmental politics. For one, living in the countryside, 'there was a road proposal, which was the first thing I'd ever heard of, to get involved with to bring it right by the canal which would have spoiled everything. So I think that was probably the first time I thought of doing something about it all.'²⁴ Jonathan Tyler, chair of the party National Executive Committee between 1976-79, suggested that:

During the later 1960s I became increasingly involved in London in transport environmental activity...we were living in the lower part of Hampstead and I was one of the group campaigning very strongly, there was huge potential damage to Hampstead Heath and I appeared at the inquiry. Through that I met a lot of people in the London Amenity and Transport Association which formed, I was a fairly active member.²⁵

From the outset, the party placed a strong emphasis on transport issues. Throughout the 1970s, the manifestos have some consistent themes of criticising the pollution and destruction of the countryside associated with car use and roadbuilding, raising concerns

²¹ Marwick, 2003 p.172

²² Norma Russell, Interview

²³ Participant 2, Interview

²⁴ Bill Badger Interview

²⁵ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

about reliance on fossil fuels and advocating a reversal of the trend away from communal forms of transport towards individual forms.²⁶ Therefore this particular aspect of affluence can be seen to be a particularly important driver for the party's emergence. Individuals encountered local examples of traffic and road building which helped to motivate their interest in the party. This trend then fed a perception of a wider structural problem which needed to be challenged and reversed as part of a political project.

4.2.3 Deference and Partisan Dealignment

A classic theme of historical discussion of post-war Britain is a general decline in deference to authority. This decline in deference can be linked to a rising individualism which equated to an 'insistence on the individual's right to respect, to make their own choices, to define their own goals.'²⁷ Thatcher is often presented as the chief architect or beneficiary of the rising individualism which undermined deference and, it has been suggested that, during his premiership, Tony Blair presided over a further collapse in deference as people lost faith in experts. As Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite writes, this process should be dated to earlier in the twentieth century and 'across the postwar period, Britain has become less bound by tradition and convention; people are more keen to make up their own minds, less willing to accede to the rightness of hierarchies and snobbishness.'²⁸

Partisan dealignment and fragmentation of the party system, which have been discussed in Chapter 1, are political phenomena bound up with a perceived decline in deference as strict two-party voting for Labour and the Conservatives immediately after the Second World War was undermined not only by changes in the size of social class groups but the weakening link between the class group individuals belonged to and the way they voted. Declining deference in the second half of the twentieth century has often been seen as particularly problematic for Labour, with working class voters no longer providing such uniform support for the party. However, it was in fact a wider cultural change which was

²⁶ MBPA, *PEOPLE: A Manifesto for Survival*, June 1974; SPPA, *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*, 1976; JIPA, *The Real Alternative: 1979 Election Manifesto*, 1979

²⁷ Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 'The Decline of Deference and the Left: An Egalitarian Moment for Localism', *Juncture*, Vol 23 No 2 2016, p.132;

²⁸ Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 2016 p.132

'larger than either left or right.'²⁹ PEOPLE/the Ecology Party's emergence is an interesting case in this regard.

In the process of forming the party, the individuals in the Thirteen Club, who were becoming increasingly concerned about environmental issues, sought to find out if the established political parties were engaging with issues by contacting the Conservative, Liberal and Labour parties.³⁰ As Lesley Whittaker suggests, the sense that those in charge did not have a grasp of the problems they were concerned about spurred them on to set up their own party: 'we decided there was only one way to go really, we knew what all the issues were, the feedback to our group had been that Liberal, Conservative, Labour didn't really know anything about it.'³¹ The founders and many other early activists also typified the wider political trend of partisan dealignment and fragmentation, coming from families which had generally always voted Labour, Conservative or in some cases the Liberals, but deciding they were not willing to defer to these established voting patterns and would instead get involved with a new party. Dealignment and party fragmentation is clearly part of the story of why the party emerged in the UK, just as it is in several other West European countries.³²

4.2.4 Progress, Technology and Education

There is an additional area, linked to the idea of declining deference in the post-war era, which helps explain the creation of the party. This is not so much a lack of deference to authority or established political parties as to the idea of linear progress itself. Modernity is an amorphous concept that captures an Enlightenment idea of improvement of the world based on rational thought. The modern world, which was emerging in twentieth century Britain (as elsewhere), was one which included urbanisation and continued industrial and technology innovation based on scientific advance.³³ It has been suggested that in the latter half of the twentieth century technological advance was creating a 'new ugliness and a new

²⁹ Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, 2016 p.133

³⁰ Parkin, 1989 p.214

³¹ The Founders, Interview

³² Williams, 1999 pp.183-205

³³ Harry Crafts, 'Modernity and Modernism' in J. Strange & F. Carnevali (eds.) *Twentieth-Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2007), pp.26-42

species of modern conveniences', which affected 'the urban and rural environment. The environmental movement was therefore questioning the 'general acceptance of the view that science and technology offered great boons to society.'³⁴ The relevance of this to the party is summarised by two activists' accounts of why they were attracted to it during the 1970s:

We were post-war, most of us were post-war born. And so we were born into this whole notion, which was really pushed by our parents, that they'd sacrificed their youth so we could be free and therefore we were born into this time where our future was upwards and onwards...But then there was a realisation that actually it wasn't all OK...So that's why you had the anti-nuclear movement and all the other things like peace and environment movements, because our generation became disappointed at the way things were going.³⁵

We were basically a bit against what was becoming the modern world I suppose.³⁶

Veldman convincingly depicts the modern environmental movement in Britain (including the party) as a romantic reaction against developments in post-war society and David Pepper sees a 'postmodern mistrust of high science and technology' as central to the modern green movement.³⁷ The green movement's relationship with science is complicated, however, and the party's emergence cannot be purely explained as an updated romanticism. For many of the early activists, questioning of the way society was developing was based on a rational response to increasing awareness of the scientific evidence of environmental degradation. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, one of the most commonly cited reasons for interview participants becoming interested in the environment was their experience at university. This was often either through studying relevant subjects, such as sciences or economics, or through becoming aware of alternative political ideas.³⁸ Two contributors underline the dual importance of universities:

³⁴ Marwick, 2003 p.257

³⁶ Participant 2, Interview

³⁷ Veldman, 1994; David Pepper, *Modern Environmentalism: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.5

³⁸ Adrian Williams, Interview; Biff Vernon, Interview; Claire Nash, Interview; David & Linda Whitebread, Interview; Gundula Dorey, Interviewed on 8 May 2017 by Mitya Pearson; Julia Leyden, Interviewed on 25 September 2017 by Mitya Pearson; Participant 3, Interview; Steve Lambert, Interview; Val Stevens, Interviewed on 17 May 2017 by Mitya Pearson

Because I did an economics degree and two of my lecturers...wrote books on environmental economics and so, obviously there was that kind of influence going on the economic book side. Things like, well, there was obviously the *Limits to Growth* and *Steady State Economics*.³⁹

The 1960s was a time, as you know when a lot of people were going to university for the first time, I was the first person in my family to go to University. The undergraduate scene was very alternative. It was a kind of flower power kind of time and there was a strong interest in any alternative comments on the way the world was going.⁴⁰

In this sense the emergence of the party was also facilitated by the increased proportion of people attending universities in British society in the post-war era. In 1968 Britain experienced its own 'more modest and more moderate' form of the student protests which were taking place on campuses in France and elsewhere.⁴¹ These demonstrated the extent to which students and university life had become synonymous with rebelliousness and radical ideas.⁴² Though this would proliferate further during the latter part of the twentieth century and the twenty-first centuries, the immediate post-war period saw a dramatic expansion of higher education. The proportion of those of relevant age in university went from around five per cent in the 1940s to eight per cent by 1962.⁴³ In 1963 the Robbins Report recommended a major expansion of higher education. Though to some degree this report reflected changes which were already underway, it was followed by the creation of polytechnics and new universities. Student numbers doubled between 1963 and 1970.⁴⁴ This therefore provided a larger constituency of people to potentially join a political party, which has always been made up largely of graduates, as outlined in Chapter 3.

³⁹ Claire Nash Interview

⁴⁰ David and Linda Whitebread, Interview

⁴¹ Childs, 2001 p.146

⁴² Clarke, 2004 pp.290-91; Kenneth Morgan, *The People's Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.292

⁴³ Anthony Heath, 'Education Since 1945' in J. Hollowell (ed.), *Britain Since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), p. 303

⁴⁴ Clarke, 2004 p.288; Heath, 2003 p. 303

4.3 The Events and Atmosphere of 1970s Britain

Reviewing the primary material accessed for this thesis has demonstrated that several major social, political and economic trends in post-war Britain, which were clearly manifesting themselves by the 1960s and 1970s, were important in shaping the thinking and approach of early party members. They are therefore important in explaining why the party emerged. The party was formed in 1973, during a decade which in Britain was characterised by several notable events with political significance and a particular atmosphere. Chapter 2 described how the 1970s has come to be understood through a dual narrative which comprises ideas of crisis and gloom, and radicalism and possibility, with different accounts emphasising either one of these viewpoints or both ideas simultaneously. The remainder of this chapter uses examples from the interviews and archive research conducted for this thesis to demonstrate the extent to which the events and atmosphere of 1970s Britain shaped the thinking and approach of early party members. This is relevant to understanding why the party emerged because, as will be shown, the wider events and atmosphere of the 1970s influenced the party founders' approach to politics, the perspectives of early members who joined throughout the decade, and early members' understandings of the purpose and importance of the party.

Numerous popular histories of the 1970s have specific chapters on the topic of the environment. These texts highlight developments including the emergence of pressure groups such as Friends of the Earth, as well as often PEOPLE/the Ecology Party, the publication of key texts like *A Blueprint for Survival*, an increasing awareness of the idea of the environment both among the public and elites, and the manifestations of this awareness in popular culture such as the television series *Doomwatch* and a *Doctor Who* story entitled 'The Green Death'.⁴⁵ Activists' concerns about looming environmental disaster during this period are generally tied into wider narratives of a decade dominated by a succession of crises and a pessimistic national mood. For example, Andy Beckett states that 'the disconcerting aspects of life in the sixties and early seventies predisposed people to doomy thoughts....for Britain, which soon sprouted an environmental movement of its own, there was the prospect of national decline.'⁴⁶ Such accounts, as survey histories, make

⁴⁵ Shrapnel, 1980; Sandbrook, 2010; Turner, 2008; Beckett, 2009

⁴⁶ Beckett, 2009 p.235

only very limited reference to primary material from environmental groups and leave considerable scope to examine and demonstrate how environmental activists interacted with the wider events and atmosphere of 1970s Britain.⁴⁷ The remainder of this chapter does this by looking in detail at the case of the party.

It has been particularly important here to use a mixture of both oral accounts and archive documents because of the extent to which the reputation of the 1970s has been 'seared onto popular memory'.⁴⁸ A phenomenon Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton call the 'hegemonic memories and popular representations of the seventies'.⁴⁹ It is therefore possible that interviewees may retrospectively suggest a particular event was important in influencing their approach when in fact at the time it had little impact. Additionally, there is a strong emphasis here on using documents which were largely internal, such as notes from meetings and newsletters, as well as published documents like election leaflets. This is because they are likely to reflect, to a greater extent, the private motivations of activists; whereas the documents designed for public consumption, whilst still useful indicators of early members' thinking, would be expected to refer to wider, topical questions as a means of appealing to voters. The next section demonstrates the importance of energy crises in the 1970s to early party members' thinking. The section after that examines the degree to which a number of other political issues in the 1970s, less obviously connected to the environment, impacted upon the party and its early members. The following sections explore how some less concrete aspects of the decade, which are discussed in the relevant historiography, were influencing early party members: the supposed general feeling of crisis, middle class discontent and the sense of opportunities opening up for new ideas to be explored.

⁴⁷ Although Andy Beckett's chapter 'Get Out of the City' in *When the Lights Went Out* makes extensive reference to interviews with Edward Goldsmith and Nicholas Hildyard from *the Ecologist* (the latter was also interviewed for this project).

⁴⁸ Black, 2012 p.177

⁴⁹ Black & Pemberton, 2013 p.9

4.3.1 Energy Crises

One of the overriding themes of the Heath Government, between 1970-74, was energy shortages. Having been elected in June 1970, already by December of that year, Prime Minister Edward Heath was dealing with an industrial dispute with power workers which led to widespread power cuts.⁵⁰ In the winter of 1971-72 the National Union of Mineworkers organised an overtime ban which depleted coal reserves and led to (planned and unplanned) power cuts.⁵¹ In October 1973 following the invasion of Israel by Egyptian and Syrian troops and America's support for Israel, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced an increase of over 70 per cent in the posted price of oil.⁵² This, combined with industrial action from the National Union of Mineworkers led the government to ban electrical advertising and floodlighting, require reductions in power consumption in public buildings and, at midnight on New Year's Eve, implement a three-day working week.⁵³

Even if the real causes were different, these events and, in particular, the oil crisis, were taken by early party members as vindication for a party which had come into existence warning of the potential for shortages of finite resources. An outline of the party's policies from the early 1970s states that 'already there is a major World crisis owing to over reliance on the supply of fossil fuel such as coal, natural gas and oil'.⁵⁴ Internal party documents from the early 1970s, such as newsletters, refer to the 'power failures' and one highlighted how there had been public discussion of 'energy and resource conservation'.⁵⁵ A slightly later newsletter urged activists to volunteer to stand in local elections by joking that they would only have a few chances to do so before 'the next major oil crisis'.⁵⁶ Oral testimonies of early activists regarding the development of their interest in the environment further strengthen the view that individuals were making a link between the energy shortages of

⁵⁰ Sandbrook, 2010 p.76

⁵¹ Beckett, 2009 p.65

⁵² Fiona Venn, *The Oil Crisis* (London: Routledge 2017), pp.8-13; Peter Allen, *The Yom Kippur War* (New York: Scribner, 1982)

⁵³ Sandbrook, 2010 pp.576-95

⁵⁴ Bill Badger Personal Archive (Henceforth BBPA), A Precise of PEOPLE's Policies Leaflet, Undated

⁵⁵ MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, September 1974; MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, July 1974

⁵⁶ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, February 1977

the 1970s and critiques of the economic system by environmentalists. Norma Russell, who joined the party during 1973, stated that:

At the time we were coming up to the oil crisis and the realisation that we were wasting so many resources and that we live in a finite world. Trying to find ways to conserve resources. I remember...we had this van that we had boards on it with plastic bottles on it everywhere and everything that was made with oil that we could think of trying to say look we're wasting our resources, we can't go on like this and so on.⁵⁷

For other activists who joined the party later these issues were similarly important. Jean Lambert, who joined in 1976 and went on became an MEP, recounted that her interest in the environment was awoken by:

The issues around the three-day week, where's your energy coming from? How are you using it? What can you do to actually reduce your vulnerabilities to elsewhere in the world?⁵⁸

John Ingham, was blunter in stating that:

My interest was under the cloak of what was going on on the world stage. I firmly believed that oil would run out by the year 2000.⁵⁹

Finally, Keith and Christine Rushworth suggested that their interest in the environment had come from them reading the book *Limits to Growth* and taking a trip to India. The oil crisis appeared to confirm their fears of impending ecological disaster.

Christine: When we came back from India, it was darkness when we came on the train from Dover because there was a crisis with the oil.

Keith: This was the Israeli...the Arabs turned the oil tap off so there was a huge energy crisis and power cuts and shortage of petrol at petrol stations. So we arrived back from India and we thought crikey it's happening already we've already run out of energy...You saw how important energy was. I don't think it was much else, it was

⁵⁷ Norma Russell, Interview

⁵⁸ Jean Lambert, Interview

⁵⁹ John Ingham, Interviewed on 10 March 2017 by Mitya Pearson

India and the personal experience when we came back. And the *Limits to Growth* book and that just seemed to put the science on it all.⁶⁰

The energy shortages and international oil crisis of the early 1970s were therefore important to the early stages of the party's development. They helped to awaken an interest in the environment among individuals who then joined the party, as well as providing encouragement to individuals who were already members.

4.3.2 Other Political Events During the 1970s

There is a logical connection between the oil crisis, energy shortages and environmental politics.⁶¹ It is therefore unsurprising that a detailed exploration of primary evidence helps corroborate the importance of these events to individuals involved in the party in its early years. The 1970s, however, included a much broader set of dramatic events and issues which can be grouped under a set of themes. First, extensive industrial disputes remembered particularly for experiences like the three-day week and the Winter of Discontent as well as events like Saltley gate and the Grunwick strike.⁶² Secondly, sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, including skirmishes with deployed British troops and related terrorism in Great Britain.⁶³ Thirdly, persistent economic difficulties including stagflation, problems with sterling and even a negotiated IMF loan.⁶⁴ Fourthly, perceived social decline manifesting itself in public discussion of issues like rising crime.⁶⁵ Rudig and Lowe note the influence that local industrial decline in Coventry had on the founders' decision to found PEOPLE, with initial meetings taking place in a factory being put into receivership.⁶⁶ This was also highlighted by the founders as a factor in the interviews for this project.⁶⁷ What is notable though is that there is not necessarily a logical connection with ecological politics

⁶⁰ Keith & Christine Rushworth, Interview

⁶¹ Bramwell, 1989 p.211

⁶² Richard Clutterbuck, *The Media and Political Violence* (London: MacMillan, 1983); Linda McDowell, Sundari Anitha & Ruth Pearson, 'Striking Narratives: class, gender and ethnicity in the "Great Grunwick Strike"', London, UK, 1976–1978', *Women's History Review*, Vol 23 No 4, pp.595-619

⁶³ Paul Bew & Gordon Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: A chronology of the Troubles 1968-1999* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1999); Richard English, *Armed Struggle: the History of the IRA* (London: Pan, 2008)

⁶⁴ Richard Roberts, *When Britain Went Bust: the 1976 IMF Crisis* (London: OMFIF, 2017); Kathleen Burk & Alec Cairncross, *Goodbye, Great Britain: the 1976 IMF Crisis* (London: Yale University Press, 1992); Kevin Hickson, *The IMF Crisis of 1976 and British Politics* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2005)

⁶⁵ Sandbrook, 2012 pp.283-85 & p.391

⁶⁶ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.269

⁶⁷ The Founders, Interview

beyond the general sense that things were breaking down. In fact, from the radical ecological viewpoint the party espoused early on, which provided a critique of the environmental degradation and resource depletion associated with economic growth and industrialisation, factories closing down should perhaps have been cause for celebration. Though it should be noted that part of the argument early party activists were making was that ecological constraints would eventually manifest themselves in widespread job losses and economic problems. However, this is part of a wider point: the extent to which broad social and economic problems in the 1970s were linked in a complicated way to ecological ones by early party activists.

In interviews, the party founders not only mentioned ecological concerns but ‘terrorist activity’, ‘trade union conflict’, and violent crime as important issues for them during this time.⁶⁸ Some of these quotes may reflect the retrospective nature of the interviews and their perspective at the time may have been different. For example, the suggestion during the interview that ‘we had the Winter of Discontent of ‘73-74’ is a reminder of the dangers of relying on oral accounts. However, many similar ideas are present in the documents from the time.⁶⁹ One of PEOPLE’s first leaflets states ‘Unemployment, inflation, drugs, crime, violence, spiritual decline, over-population, pollution, resource consumption, a general disillusion. Is this the good life?’⁷⁰ Similarly, PEOPLE’s first manifesto states that ‘Conventional wisdom is increasingly perplexed by the mounting problems of our society: viciously accelerating inflation, pollution, overcrowding, and the many manifestations of worsening social breakdown. PEOPLE believes that these are only symptoms of a sick society, and that the real problems arise from the careless way in which we have let the obsessive quest for material things dominate the process of industrialisation.’⁷¹ The ‘three-day week’ was said to ‘foreshadow’ future scarcity in jobs.⁷² Teddy Goldsmith put forward similar ideas in his February 1974 election leaflet which stated that ‘Britain is poor, nearly bankrupt and its social fabric has been insidiously undermined by

⁶⁸ The Founders, Interview

⁶⁹ The Founders, Interview; This is not meant to be critical of the participants but simply to highlight that expecting a perfectly accurate account of the chronology of events that took place around forty-five years previously is not realistic.

⁷⁰ MBPA, PEOPLE ‘We’ve Never had it So Good’ Leaflet, Undated

⁷¹ MBPA, *PEOPLE: A Manifesto for Survival*, June 1974 p.1

⁷² MBPA, *PEOPLE: A Manifesto for Survival*, June 1974 p.2

150 years of industrialisation.’⁷³ The party’s 1979 general election broadcast described ‘the threat of complete social breakdown’ and the ‘loneliness, crime and vandalism’ in communities in Britain.⁷⁴

These sentiments are also present in less public-facing documents. The October 1974 internal PEOPLE newsletter includes an editorial considering a scenario in which ‘this coming winter produces industrial unrest, strikes, power failures, wage claims, widening disillusion, and ensuing bankruptcies.’⁷⁵ In a letter dated January 1975 Lesley Whittaker states that ‘Their numbers [the unemployed] will grow during the next few months at an alarming rate and purchasing power will diminish. What is to be done if they are not spending their time growing their own food and perhaps growing a small surplus for everyone else?’⁷⁶ In 1977, one local party group wrote into the party newsletters to argue that ‘the materialist ethos is showing some cracks, especially with unemployment much nearer the national average than has been customary in this prosperous area.’⁷⁷ Shortly before the 1979 general election one of the party’s election candidates, Geoff Garbett, wrote in a notebook, ‘The grim winter we have been through has brought it home to people just how vulnerable and uncertain our way of life is becoming. It saw us turning against ourselves in the winter of discontent’.⁷⁸ This paraphrased a passage in the 1979 election manifesto.⁷⁹ Contemporary problems like unemployment, inflation and strikes were being linked in the minds of early party members to the impending ecological crisis they believed was on the horizon. Because of this, these problems, while increasing the sense of despair felt by people in the party about the state of the world, also gave a degree of vindication to people who felt the need for radical political change.

⁷³ MBPA, Teddy Goldsmith General Election Address, February 1974

⁷⁴ The British Film Institute London Archive (Henceforth BFI), ‘Party Election Broadcast by the Ecology Party’, First Broadcast: BBC One London, 27 April 1979

⁷⁵ MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, October 1974

⁷⁶ MBPA, PEOPLE Subscription & Open Letter, 1 January 1975

⁷⁷ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, April 1977

⁷⁸ Geoff Garbett, Interview

⁷⁹ JIPA, *The Real Alternative: 1979 Election Manifesto*, 1979

4.3.3 Crisis and Collapse

The problems and challenges were seen by many people during the 1970s as amounting to a much more general, gloomy feeling and even fear of an imminent collapse - the 'social panic' of the period.⁸⁰ As has been noted, the links between this and an environmental movement which was discussing the potential 'destruction of humanity' due to phenomena like resource shortages, population growth and pollution are obvious.⁸¹ The founders suggested that 'politics domestically was dreadful' and there was a 'sense of social breakdown', highlighting the relationship between 'the whole ambience' of the time and the party.⁸² At a meeting in 1974, Michael Benfield is noted as having outlined his belief that 'a social and economic collapse would preclude another election' as 'the £ would collapse overnight' and lead to 'severe civil disorder'.⁸³ Lesley Whittaker wrote in a letter in January 1975 that 'I think there may well be never be another democratic election. The state of Britain is already bad, and it will rapidly grow worse.' This is not just a prediction of an environmental disaster, however, but that 'it is likely that the £ will collapse during 1975'.⁸⁴ Beckett recounts how Ronald McIntosh, Director General of the National Economic Development Council, recorded in his diary entry for August 1975 that he had run into a contemporary and, when he asked him how he was, he replied 'Like everyone else, waiting for the collapse.'⁸⁵ The widespread predictions of collapse and disaster were clearly irresistible for people already convinced of an impending environmental catastrophe. In the 'Chairman's Report for 1977-78', Jonathan Tyler declared almost triumphantly that 'more people are starting to talk about the crisis of values, the fragility of civilisation.'⁸⁶

The 1977 Conference passed a motion suggesting a series of policies needed for Britain to 'emerge from its present crisis'.⁸⁷ One member described in a summary of the 1978 party conference how 'today's civilization is in decline hence the need for increasingly heavy laws to restrict the individual from anti-social acts' and ecological politics.⁸⁸ Geoff

⁸⁰ Pemberton & Black 2013 p.12

⁸¹ Turner, 2008 p.51

⁸² The Founders, Interview

⁸³ MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Area Organizers' Open Meeting, Liverpool, 9 November 1974

⁸⁴ MBPA, PEOPLE Subscription & Open Letter, 1 January 1975

⁸⁵ Ronald McIntosh Diary Cited in Beckett, 2009 p.5

⁸⁶ PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report, 1977-78

⁸⁷ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, November 1977

⁸⁸ British Library Archive (Henceforth: BLA), Vole, October 1978

Garbett noted in his diary in the lead up to the 1979 general election that ‘Man must live in harmony with his environment. This generation must make a choice for the future of our country. Most people agree that our position in this time is uniquely crucial.’ He also reflected on the Winter of Discontent as evidence that ‘Something is very, very wrong.’⁸⁹ Similarly, in an address delivered in February 1979 Jonathon Porritt argued that ‘more and more [people] recognise that our present troubles amount to more than just another temporary hiccup in the progress of our industrial society’.⁹⁰

4.3.4 Middle Class Discontent

Forms of right-wing, middle class ‘anxiety, embattlement and resentment’ had surfaced during previous decades in the twentieth century but in the 1970s it ‘became fashionable to suggest this decade saw a middle class revolt’ (although it is important not to exaggerate how widespread this sentiment was).⁹¹ This amounted, in part, to a general concern among some middle class people about many of the issues already mentioned such as unions, the economy, social discord and a general pessimism about the state of the country, intertwined with the declinism discussed in Chapter 2. While they held somewhat ambiguous and complicated views which do not easily lend themselves to left-right ideological categories, the party’s founders did have some associations with the political right and as they were estate agents and solicitors they could be categorised as ‘old’ middle class. Michael Benfield was writing an editorial in the PEOPLE newsletters during the mid-1970s and the following extracts from 1974 illustrate how far his sentiments chimed with a wider strain of right-wing, middle class anxiety which has been noted in histories of 1970s Britain.

As chill rains sweep across a strike beleaguered slowed-down and severely troubled United Kingdom, PEOPLE explodes in the public’s imagination. More than ever before

⁸⁹ Geoff Garbett, Interview

⁹⁰ MSP, Summary of an Address by Jonathon Porritt, 19 February 1979

⁹¹ Moran, 2009 pp.176-77; Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Sandbrook, 2012 p.365; Roger King, ‘The Middle Class in Revolt?’ in R. King & N. Nugent (eds.) *Respectable Rebels: Middle Class Campaigns in the 1970s* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.1

people in the U.K. are looking for stability, sanity, a firm foundation on which to build a better life and a better country.⁹²

Is it indeed too late to prevent our society from plunging over the abyss?⁹³

There were some more specific aspects to this strain of thought. First, linked to declinism, concern over a 'brain drain' as professionals had been emigrating in previous decades and were moving out of cities during the 1970s.⁹⁴ Secondly, perceived (with some basis) rises in crime and, particularly, violent crime.⁹⁵ Thirdly, partly taking a lead from political science, the notion of political institutions coming under strain, the country becoming ungovernable and even sliding into authoritarianism.⁹⁶ It is striking, that the founders also expressed these ideas. In October 1974 Benfield wrote that 'Just what is the solution? Thousands of our own people have already been persuaded possibly by some 6th sense, that there is none and have emigrated.'⁹⁷ Lesley Whittaker suggested that part of the reason she and Tony moved away from the Midlands to Devon was rising crime.

If there was a murder in Coventry...it was on the front page. But within three or four years it had got to the stage where if there were three or four murders it would be at the bottom of the page with a short paragraph. It was just a feeling that everything was beginning to break down.⁹⁸

Finally, Benfield's editorials make repeated reference to the idea that Britain's political institutions are breaking down and coming under strain. This included the idea that groups such as unions were undermining democracy, and even the suggestion that people in Britain might start 'turning on their neighbours' and a 'military supremo' could take power.⁹⁹

⁹² MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, February 1974

⁹³ MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, July 1974

⁹⁴ Beckett, 2009 p.15

⁹⁵ Sandbrook, 2012 p.391

⁹⁶ Tomlinson, 2013 p.42

⁹⁷ MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, October 1974

⁹⁸ The Founders, Interview

⁹⁹ MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, November 1974; MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, October 1974

4.3.5 A Radical and Optimistic Party?

It has been argued that the events and atmosphere of the 1970s were important to the emergence of the party. This has thus far concentrated on the negative - on the problems and challenges and the widespread discussion of crises. As has already been shown, however, the 1970s were 'more varied' than this and a simple, benighted view of the 1970s provides a misleading picture, in part because it obscures both the excitement and optimism of many political movements of this time and the exchange of ideas which took place during the decade.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, depicting early party members as driven by pessimism or fatalism about either the state of the environment or the wider political situation is to only tell part of the story. Activists were motivated by a sense of the radical alternative the party was offering and the excitement that went with this. The leaflet for the first conference in 1973 stated that PEOPLE was 'a real alternative movement for anyone seeking a re-appraisal of fundamental attitudes and a re-direction of effort, to act positively in response to the doomwatchers' forecasts.'¹⁰¹ Activists who joined at different points during the 1970s described in interviews the excitement they felt about being part of the party:

I think there was much more of an idealism [when I first got involved with the party], I think there was a freshness about the party...So that had that sort of oomph of being something different really.¹⁰²

I felt that the whole thing was bigger than this, I was young and idealistic, and I felt that we could forge a new approach rather than just try to level with the old inevitably disastrous policies of economic growth. It was this idea that we needed to plot a completely new approach.¹⁰³

[I joined the party] because it felt young and vigorous and fresh and interesting and [was] going somewhere and very important.¹⁰⁴

These accounts are backed up by examples from documents such as a 1977 newsletter in which one individual talks of the 'fun' they have had getting involved in local campaigning

¹⁰⁰ Black, 2012 p.176

¹⁰¹ MBPA, Jigsaw Conference Leaflet, 1973

¹⁰² John Marjoram, Interviewed on 21 March 2017 by Mitya Pearson

¹⁰³ Geoff Garbett, Interview

¹⁰⁴ Julia Leyden, Interview

and the party 'Chairman's Report for 1977-78' talks about an 'optimistic image of post-industrial life' and 'the adventure' the party is on.¹⁰⁵ This area is discussed in much greater detail in the following chapter but, as is suggested in the above quotes, these individuals were attracted to a party which was a 'genuine departure' from pre-existing politics and questioned 'conventional wisdom'.¹⁰⁶ This is demonstrated by these oral testimonies from three further activists.

I was young and angry and I wanted to change the world.¹⁰⁷

I was very involved in the women's movement at the same time. So there was a lot of bubbling excitement going on both in green issues and in gender issues which meant that they were very, very hard working and thinking and excited about the fact that we might be able to do something.¹⁰⁸

There was a huge feeling in the country that we wanted to change everything... established law, politics, the military, religion, education, agriculture.¹⁰⁹

In this context Black and Pemberton's argument that in the 1970s 'policy failure served not just to discredit policy-makers but to encourage actors outside the policy elite to advance alternatives about how to conduct policy' is very helpful in explaining the emergence of the party.¹¹⁰ Additionally, Robinson et al.'s suggestion that a popular individualism was pervasive in Britain by this time, chimes with the evidence viewed for this thesis.¹¹¹ The emergence of the party can thus be seen in part as people asserting their right to individual choice. These two ideas are summarised by a party activist's explanation for why the party emerged when it did.

I think a lot of people must have been like me and been looking around and saying look we can do better than this...it was dawning on people more and more that we needed a complete rethink of how we organise our economy.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, June/July 1977; PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report, 1977-78

¹⁰⁶ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, April 1977; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, February 1977

¹⁰⁷ John Ingham, Interview

¹⁰⁸ Julia Leyden, Interview

¹⁰⁹ David Taylor, Interview

¹¹⁰ Pemberton & Black, 2013 p.14

¹¹¹ Robinson et al., 2017 p.272

¹¹² Geoff Garbett, Interview

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how both broad historical trends in post-war Britain leading up to the 1970s and the events and atmosphere of that decade help to explain the emergence of the party. It augments Veldman's thesis that the emergence of the environmental movement in the 1960s and 1970s was a reaction against affluence by providing further details related specifically to the party.¹¹³ Other trends such as the decline of deference and expanding university education were important in helping to create a constituency of people interested in the party. These aspects of post-war British history are standard ideas in the historiography, some may even be said to be 'cliches'.¹¹⁴ Whilst they may not be concepts from the cutting edge of academic understanding of British history they have been referred to for two reasons. First, they all have some basis and help to illuminate aspects of the post-war period. Secondly, and more importantly, the primary material examined clearly linked to these ideas meaning this thesis would have been deficient without referring to them.

It has also been argued that the events and atmosphere of 1970s Britain were important in influencing individuals to become interested in the environment and the party in addition to providing encouragement to activists who were already involved. As well as drawing upon the literature on 1970s Britain, this chapter has also contributed to it. As has been suggested, there are dual narratives of the 1970s. One emphasises the extent to which it was a gloomy and crisis-ridden period. The other argues that this view has been exaggerated or even constructed and emphasises a more positive narrative around radicalism and the ferment of ideas. To a certain extent this chapter has accepted, at least in part, the 'negative' narrative of the 1970s. This is for two reasons. First, it is not without grounds. Secondly, this chapter has been concerned with activists' perceptions of the wider political situation during the 1970s rather than examining whether particular events were exaggerated or constructed. Evidence has been presented that a perception of problems,

¹¹³ Veldman, 1994

¹¹⁴ David Edgerton, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth-Century History* (London: Penguin Books, 2018), p.xxvii

crisis and imminent disaster during the 1970s was real among party activists. Robinson et al. suggest that 'We need to ask how and why these overarching popular narratives of the 1970s were constructed, and if, when and why they came to resonate with individuals who might have experienced things quite differently.'¹¹⁵ Black asks 'So was the seventies' reputation seared onto popular memory such that its image was more singular and definite after the event?...Was the overwhelming image of crises the common popular experience and perception of the seventies or a triumph of political will of the New Right and media? Unless the answer is unequivocally one of these options, then how and when this image of the seventies became hardwired into popular memory becomes a vital question.'¹¹⁶

PEOPLE/the Ecology Party is a useful case study for helping to answer such questions. In some ways the story here has conformed to the orthodox, popular narrative of the 1970s. Many of the individuals involved with the party in its early years appear to have been aware of a general sense of crisis and pessimism in the country at large. This resonated with them then, it was not just something which entered their minds afterwards and it meshed with their concern about potential environmental crises and sense that Britain and the world were headed fundamentally in the wrong direction. However, for precisely the same reason, these individuals were not purely 'doom-mongers' predicting disaster. They also felt a strong sense of politics opening up for new radical approaches, and excitement at being a part of this. This chapter has been useful in highlighting some underlying and contributory factors in the emergence of the party and how the early activists' thinking was interacting with wider developments during the 1970s. There were clearly a lot more dynamics involved in this story, however, which the following chapters detail. This thesis focuses on the thinking and motivations of the party's early members. To better understand these aspects, there is a need to dig more deeply into what exactly these individuals were aiming to achieve through the party and how this was reflected in how they organised themselves. This is the topic of the following chapter.

¹¹⁵ Robinson et al., 2017 p.280

¹¹⁶ Black, 2012 p.178

Chapter 5 - Party Members' Aims and Party Organisation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the political aims of early party members and their approach to the party's organisation and structure. This helps to address the question of why the party emerged by examining why those who founded the party and first joined it were not discouraged by the challenges inherent in trying to achieve an impact with a new party.

Mark Williams raises the question of to what extent the non-proportional electoral system in the UK discouraged potential early activists from joining the party.¹ It is suggested here that there were differing perceptions among early members: some sought to use PEOPLE/the Ecology Party to pursue alternative ways of approaching politics which differentiated them from mainstream parties in terms of organisation, some were naïve about the extent of the structural obstacles the party faced and some were realistic about the scale of the challenges, but wanted to try a party-political route anyway.

Chapter 2 outlined the split which dominated much of the discussion within the party during the 1980s and peaked in the early 1990s before calming down. One wing argued that the party's policy objectives would be most likely to be 'accomplished by pursuing chiefly, but not exclusively, parliamentary strategies, which, in turn, necessitate[d] a degree of centralization of the party's structure'. The alternative wing doubted that such an approach had 'the capacity to bring about radical socioeconomic and political change' and streamlining the party's structure would compromise 'the party's ideological commitment to participatory democracy.'² These groups have several (largely interchangeable) labels but, as in Chapter 2, 'traditionalists' and 'decentralists' will be used here as well as occasional references to alternative forms of political organisation.

This chapter begins by tracing their origins. This is because these internal disputes were ultimately based on fundamentally different ideas about the nature of the party. The extent to which early activists were expressing views on either side of the debate is therefore important in understanding their motivations for getting involved with the party and why it emerged. The early sections of this chapter examine and reject the notions that

¹ Williams, 1999 p.166

² Holzhauer, 2004 p.2; Pearson, 2014

when PEOPLE was set up it was either so different from mainstream parties in its approach that it was not actually a party, or that it was entirely conventional in this regard and not at all differentiated from mainstream political parties in Britain. It is explained that several alternative or decentralist ways of organising the party were pursued from a very early point and that, from the start, there was disagreement within the party about this.³ Three reasons are then offered for why these ideas and dynamics were present, even though the party did not form out of new social movement activity: the links between such ideas and the party's ecological ideological approach, the anti-politics sentiment which informed early thinking within the party, and the alternative lifestyles and perspectives of some early members. Finally, having explained in detail that one reason early members were not put off by the obvious challenges for a new party was their desire to explore alternative approaches to politics, the final section of the chapter looks at more traditional territory for political parties. It considers what it was that early members had thought the party could realistically achieve in elections.

5.2 Party Organisation and Approach

5.2.1 Movement or Party?

As was outlined in detail in Chapter 2, one of the main topics discussed in the literature on the party is the disagreement between members with different approaches to political organisation.⁴ This chapter helps to trace the beginnings of these disputes and to do so it is necessary to start with the perspective of a longstanding activist who suggests that the party was not initially established as a political party but as a broader campaign movement:

In private some thought that aspects of PEOPLE (standing for elections on a common platform) meant they were a “party”, and some internal documentation referred to a “party”, but in public the label “movement” was preferred. None of the early leaflets, or the first manifesto, refer to PEOPLE as a “party”. This didn't, however, prevent commentators referring to them as a “party”.⁵

³ Pearson, 2014

⁴ McCulloch, 1993 p.30

⁵ David Taylor, 'Movement or Party?', Green History, <http://www.green-history.uk/articles/opinions/7-movement-or-party> accessed 28 July 2017

What type of organisation was set up? Was it a political party or a broader political movement? Pressure groups differ from political parties because parties 'run candidates at general elections and try to capture political office directly'.⁶ PEOPLE clearly fulfilled this criterion.⁷ PEOPLE's campaign strategy in the 1974 general elections appears to have largely been in line with the conventional means of campaigning which parties in Britain generally pursued through the second half of the twentieth century, as set out in Martin Rosenbaum's study in this area.⁸ The internal guidance produced for these elections included advice on how to canvass, leaflet, make speeches and heckle other candidates as well as attract media attention, for example through letters to local papers.⁹ Teddy Goldsmith's camel stunt, which was mentioned in Chapter 3, and Norma Russell's plastic bottle-covered van, which was highlighted in Chapter 4, reflect a longstanding tradition of 'publicity-seeking gimmicks' in British election campaigns.¹⁰ Geoff Garbett 'took over' Taunton High Street during the 1979 general election with a large 'gang of canvassers, a bicycle convoy, two sandwich boards and a cardboard "eco" megaphone encouraging faintly amused shoppers to vote for [the Ecology Party]'.¹¹

There were some obvious differences between PEOPLE's first foray into election campaigning and the operations of the more established parties that they were competing with. First, PEOPLE had almost no national presence during the two election campaigns in 1974, getting only a tiny amount of national press attention. Lesley Whittaker outlined to a meeting in November 1974 how hard it had been to get national journalists interested in the party.¹² This also meant that they were canvassing an electorate who generally had not heard of the party. Secondly, the party did not have any of the infrastructure which the more established parties had. There was some central guidance, principally provided by the four founding figures working around their jobs and augmented through the voluntary contributions of individuals from local groups. This is underlined by the suggestion in an

⁶ Dennis Kavanagh, David Richards, Martin Smith & Andrew Geddes, *British Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.421

⁷ Pearson, 2014

⁸ Martin Rosenbaum, *From Soapbox to Soundbite: Party Political Campaigning in Britain since 1945* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1997)

⁹ MBPA, 'Suggestions to Local PEOPLE Groups', February 1974

¹⁰ Rosenbaum, 1997 p.241

¹¹ LWPA, Dorset Ecology Party, June 1979

¹² MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Area Organizers' Open Meeting, Liverpool, 9 November 1974

internal party election guide that activists get time off work by either taking holiday, getting permission for leave, pretending to be sick or going absent without leave.¹³ Finally, the actual size of the campaign in terms of candidates was tiny and only a handful of candidates were put forward for the 1974 elections.

As the decade progressed there was some development in terms of the party's general infrastructure and election campaigning. Most obviously, they did actually achieve some representation. John Davenport was elected as a Parish Councillor in Kempsey in 1976, John Luck won a seat on Rother District Council in the same year and Jeremy Faull gained representation on Cornwall County Council in 1977 (though the latter was because his only opponent dropped out).¹⁴ The party which contested the 1979 general election was a much more substantial force than that which had contested the 1974 elections. This is demonstrated by the 53 candidates which it was able to put forward. These had to be funded with £150 deposits per seat in addition to the costs of producing promotional materials. Alongside fees from a membership base which had grown in the latter part of the 1970s, the costs of the campaign were met through conventional party fundraising activity on the local and national level. For example, one candidate recorded branch reports from across the South West in February 1979. These notes referred to finance coming from membership fees and events like jumble sales and discos.¹⁵ There was a central, general election fund to support constituency campaigns which had reached £5,750 three weeks before the election and they managed to spend an average of £257 per candidate.¹⁶ The election fund was part of a wider system of coordination which saw Jonathon Porritt as National Coordinator overseeing the Press Officer and Treasurer and a series of Regional Coordinators for groupings of constituencies.¹⁷ This included providing candidates with publicity material and detailed guidance on their campaigns.¹⁸

There were limits to how far the party had developed in terms of its campaigning, organisation and infrastructure though. It would not be until 2010 that the party would

¹³ MBPA, PEOPLE Candidate Guidance, February 1974

¹⁴ *The Ecologist*, Vol 6 No 9 November 1976 p.311; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, June/July 1977

¹⁵ Geoff Garbett, Interview

¹⁶ JIPA, Ecology Party Situation Report, 10 April 1979; David Butler & Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1979* (Basingstoke: Macmillan 1980), p.315

¹⁷ Geoff Garbett Personal Archive (Henceforth GGPA), Ecology Party General Election Organisation Document, Undated

¹⁸ JIPA, Ecology Party Candidate Guidance, April 1979

elect an MP and the following quote from an Ecology Party candidate in Bristol in 1979 underlines the extent to which the party was clearly not a streamlined election fighting machine by this point: 'the organisation in those days was shambolic, it really was. It was university students sitting around having coffee and saying what about this, what about this'.¹⁹ Generally candidates who stood in 1979 suggested in interviews that they had largely been left to their own devices during the campaign.²⁰ Additionally, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the work was all being done on a voluntary basis and it was only after the 1979 general election campaign that the party got its first office and paid member of staff.²¹

Nonetheless, in ensuring enough candidates stood to qualify for an election broadcast the party's organisation and coordination for the 1979 general election was successful. The broadcast, along with some national coverage in the press and on radio, meant that the party had made advances compared to the 1974 campaigns and achieved some level of national presence in the campaign. David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh's summary of the election notes that the party got 'a sparse but not unsympathetic press' and 'attracted some national attention'.²² The numerous mentions of the party in this text reflect the development from the 1974 elections when the party was not mentioned in the equivalent studies.²³ The 1979 general election campaign was not a paradigm shift from the 1974 general elections in terms of organisation and infrastructure. For example, the guides for candidates produced in 1979 were informed by the detailed instructions the four founding figures had compiled for the two earlier general elections.²⁴ However, by the time of the 1979 general election the party had developed an apparatus capable of delivering an election campaign with a significant spread of candidates. Having effectively formed out of nothing in 1973, by the latter part of the decade the beginnings of a viable national party had been established with some infrastructure and public presence. This provided the basis for the party to continue to develop into the 1980s and beyond.

¹⁹ John Ingham, Interview

²⁰ John Ingham, Interview; Keith & Christine Rushworth, Interview; Geoff Garbett, Interview; Participant 1, Interviewed on 6 November 2017 by Mitya Pearson

²¹ Wall, 1994 pp.38-42

²² Butler & Kavanagh, 1979 p.179 & p.309

²³ David Butler & Dennis Kavanagh, *British General Election of February 1974* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974); David Butler & Dennis Kavanagh *The British General Election of October 1974* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1975)

²⁴ MBPA, Jonathon Porritt Letters to Michael Benfield, September & October 1978

The idea PEOPLE was not initially a political party is also questionable because there are numerous publicity documents and leaflets which refer to PEOPLE as a 'party'.²⁵ There is some confusion about PEOPLE's identity and PEOPLE literature commonly uses the labels 'party' and 'movement'. The terms 'movement' and 'political party' were used in the promotion material for PEOPLE's abortive first attempt at a conference.²⁶ In 1974 members discussed whether PEOPLE was a 'pressure group' or not.²⁷ In interview, the three founding members called PEOPLE 'a movement for change', 'a political pressure group' and 'a political party'.²⁸ Such a blurred identity is, however, common among smaller political parties.²⁹ Lesley Whittaker suggested that the party was simply called PEOPLE because 'we didn't want to be considered as a conventional political party. That's why it didn't include the name party'. The three founding members interviewed for this project suggested that they had no interest in establishing 'a party that was organised in exactly the same way as the others but put in green policies'.³⁰ Michael Benfield is quoted as saying that although they tried to get the media to call it PEOPLE, it would often get referred to as 'the People Party' or 'the People's Party' against their will:

Almost as soon as we began fighting elections the media could not help themselves and tagged us the PEOPLE party (Lesley will be able to tell you how hard we tried to avoid this).³¹

This final point highlights the dangers of relying on oral accounts as a number of the press releases which Benfield produced in February 1974 contain the following note:

The MEDIA APPEAR CONFUSED in describing this movement. The correct title is simply 'PEOPLE' in exactly the same way as one refers to LABOUR, LIBERAL, CONSERVATIVE, etcetera. In the same way that these are extended to become the

²⁵ MBPA, Jigsaw Conference Leaflet, 1973; MBPA, 'Liverpool Conference Circular Letter', October 1974; MBPA, 'A New Political Party' Leaflet, 1974; Green History Online Archive (Henceforth GHOA), 'PEOPLE Leaflet', <http://www.green-history.uk/resources/on-here/docs/by-category/file/3-dt0046-peopleleaflet1974-2> accessed 28 July 2017; Pearson, 2014

²⁶ MBPA, Jigsaw Conference Leaflet, 1973

²⁷ MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Area Organizers' Open Meeting, Liverpool, 9 November 1974

²⁸ The Founders, Interview; Pearson, 2014

²⁹ For example, in Britain recently the Brexit Party faced questions over whether it was party or pressure group: Ben Sixsmith, 'Can the Brexit party survive Brexit?', *The Spectator*, 28 July 2019 <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/07/can-the-brexit-party-survive-brexit/> accessed 21 September 2019

³⁰ The Founders, Interview; Pearson, 2014

³¹ David Taylor, 'Movement or Party?', Green History, <https://green-history.uk/articles/opinions/movement-or-party> accessed 28 July 2017

LABOUR Party, the LIBERAL Party, etcetera so may this title be extended to the PEOPLE Party.³²

There is clearly therefore a contradiction between the founders' retrospective argument that they had rejected any reference to the term 'party' in the party's name and the archive evidence suggesting that they were willing to accept the title 'the PEOPLE Party'. Nonetheless, their testimony strongly suggests that, while they may have been willing to countenance the label 'party', they had intended PEOPLE to stand apart from established and conventional political parties. This is reflected in the tone of PEOPLE literature, for example one leaflet stated: 'PEOPLE is democratic. The party does not have a constitution and there are no rules.'³³ Some of the alternative practices which the founding members implemented, as noted by David Taylor, such as ruling out whipping for elected representatives and allowing dual membership of PEOPLE and other parties further substantiate this point.³⁴ Therefore, PEOPLE should be regarded as having been a political party from its inception. However, a conviction that it should be distinguished from other parties, not only in ideological terms but in its organisation and structure, is evident among members even in its fledgling years.³⁵

5.2.2 Party Organisation: Conventional Beginnings?

At the other end of the spectrum to the argument that, when it started, PEOPLE was organised in a way which tilted so far towards the alternative model it was not even a political party, is Wolfgang Rudig's account of the development of the party's structure. Rudig suggests that there has been 'much more continuity than change' in the basic structure of the party over the course of its history. The 'key elements of the party's structure' that were established during the 1970s had largely remained in place decades later.³⁶ In 1974 a National Executive Committee (NEC) with a National Chairman was voted for. In 1975 principles were established including three-year rotations for NEC members and

³² MBPA, PEOPLE Press Release, 27 February 1974

³³ GHOA, 'PEOPLE Leaflet 1974', <http://www.green-history.uk/resources/on-here/docs/by-category/file/3-dt0046-peopleleaflet1974-2> accessed 28 July 2017

³⁴ David Taylor, 'Movement or Party?', *Green History*, <http://www.green-history.uk/articles/opinions/7-movement-or-party> accessed 28 July 2017

³⁵ Pearson, 2014

³⁶ Rudig, 2008 p.199 & 220

annual elections for the NEC. In 1977 a constitution was developed formalising these decisions and creating a regional structure for the Party and the NEC.³⁷ For Rudig, ‘there was no sense that the creation of an ecological society (that was the party’s aim) had to be fought for with a new type of party that also differed radically in its organisation from established parties’.³⁸ Rudig argues that the membership influx following the 1979 general election led to ‘a new type of party member’ entering the party ‘committed to “left-libertarian”, “anarchist” ideas’. The membership bump was ‘the beginning’ of ‘the divide between “anarchists” and “electoralists”’ because the ‘new “anarchist” intake’ clashed with other members.³⁹

As was outlined in Chapter 2, in several European countries green parties were formed out of campaign groups.⁴⁰ These parties, for example in Germany, were marked out by a ‘low degree of formalisation, dominance of the grassroots over higher level functionaries or MPs and politics with a strong emphasis on close linkages with new social movements’.⁴¹ As these social movements developed into political parties, tensions often presented themselves as to whether they should ‘compromise’ their ‘pure principles by engaging in conventional politics’.⁴² As was set out in Chapter 1, the party in Britain formed out of almost nothing and did not start as a social movement which then mutated into a party. Rudig highlights this point of difference.⁴³ PEOPLE’s founders ‘had no background in “radical” or “social movement” politics’ as such ‘their political outlook reflected views that were closer to the Conservatives’ because ‘Tony Whittaker had been a Conservative local councillor’. PEOPLE ‘did not emerge out of a substantial phase of social movement development’ which meant ‘the radical democratic agenda of the “New Left” had no influence on questions of party organisation’.⁴⁴ Thus, it is asserted, the party’s initial ‘ideas

³⁷ Rudig, 2008 pp.204-5

³⁸ Rudig, 2008 p.215

³⁹ Rudig, 2008 pp.205-6; Pearson, 2014

⁴⁰ Chris Rootes, ‘Environmental Consciousness, Institutional Structures and Political Competition in the Formation and Development of Green Parties’ in D. Richardson & C. Rootes (eds.) *The Green Challenge* (London: Routledge, 1995b), pp.232-252

⁴¹ Thomas Poguntke, ‘Goodbye to Movement Politics? Organisational Adaptation of the German Green Party’, *Environmental Politics*, Vol 2 No 3 1993, p.388; Burchell, 2002 p.9; Kitschelt, 1989; Ferdinand Muller-Rommel & Thomas Poguntke, ‘The Unharmonious Family: Green Parties in Western Europe’ in E. Kolinsky (ed) *The Greens in West Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 1989), pp.11-29

⁴² O’Neill, 1997 p.22

⁴³ Pearson, 2014

⁴⁴ Rudig, 2008 p.204

about party organisation were rather traditional' and reflected the 'mainstream British tradition of political organisation'.⁴⁵

5.2.3 Alternative Approaches to Party Organisation

Alternative or decentralist ideas about party organisation, however, arguably had an earlier resonance within the party than is implied by Rudig and were actually naturally inserted within it by the founders. Most obviously, when PEOPLE was set up, there was an ambiguity about its identity and the founders believed that it should be organised in a different way than other parties. There are other ideas, however, that were subsequently pursued by what became known as the decentralist or alternative wing of the party, which had been tested by members in the period covered by this thesis: an eschewing of individual leadership, facilitating non-violent direct action (NVDA) and building a movement which went wider than electoral politics.⁴⁶

First, Rudig asserts that initially the party's structure 'was essentially hierarchical, focusing on a "chair" or "leader"'.⁴⁷ Tony Whittaker served as chairman from 1973-75 - followed by Jonathan Tyler who took over at the 1976 conference. However, equating this with the position of leader is inaccurate.⁴⁸ Whittaker's was referred to as 'chairman' or 'chair'. Rudig implies that this was simply a different term for the position of 'leader'. In interview, the three founding members interviewed for this thesis underlined the difference: 'we just all said well, no, we're not having a leader'. Michael Benfield argued that point was of 'fundamental' importance.⁴⁹ The main role of a leader is as a focal point for the party they belong to.⁵⁰ Lesley Whittaker asserted that his job as chairman 'didn't make Tony a spokesman for anything, any more than any of us'.⁵¹

Even in cases where a party has no realistic hope of any of its candidates being elected, its leader is expected to be 'the main candidate who leads the party in an election'.⁵² In the 1974 general elections, Tony Whittaker was not even one of PEOPLE's

⁴⁵ Rudig, 2008 p.215; Pearson, 2014

⁴⁶ Pearson, 2014

⁴⁷ Rudig, 2008 p.204

⁴⁸ Pearson, 2014

⁴⁹ The Founders, Interview

⁵⁰ Michael Foley, *Political Leadership* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013), p.342

⁵¹ The Founders, Interview; Pearson, 2014

⁵² Marina Costa Lobo, 'Party and Electoral Leadership' in R. Rhodes & P. Hart (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014), p.363

candidates.⁵³ This strengthens the case that Tony's position did not exceed the functions of a chair. This view is further supported by a PEOPLE leaflet which trumpeted the party's 'collective leadership', similarly one party activist suggested retrospectively that PEOPLE had been based on 'collective leadership'.⁵⁴ Another's view was that the 'original attitude of the founders' had been "'we will not appoint leaders'" although he suggested that they might have been open to having a leader at a later stage.⁵⁵ Rudig notes that the principle of a 'party leader' was rejected by the NEC in 1975. This was being 'reaffirmed', however, rather than breaking from the past.⁵⁶ It was noted in 1976 that there had been 'considerable discussion' in the NEC of 'the merits and demerits of having a party leader' and while a 'Chairman' was needed, 'the anarchist structure of the party precludes anything in the nature of a Party Leader'.⁵⁷

Secondly, Wolfgang Rudig and Philip Lowe argue 'It was not until 1981 that the party came out in favour of non-violent direct action, at least in principle'.⁵⁸ In fact, minutes from a 1974 party meeting, state that 'stunts were approved in principle, eg. if a particular group decided to trespass to dig up and plant vegetables on privately owned, but disused land'.⁵⁹ Additionally, as McCulloch has noted, a newsletter issued by the party in 1975 stated that:

Occasionally the only way to oppose the mindless march of beaurocracy [sic] is to physically get in its way. Examples of such non-violent resistance have been seen in recent years in Japan, Alsace, Normandy amongst other places. Whilst such movements must be essentially local, it may well be that the locals could do with some outside help in terms of publicity, organisation, paperwork etc. If you know of any area or a group who are at present being or are soon likely to be subjected to such pressures please advise the director of communications. Possible targets may be undesirable industrial development, Nukes, toxic dumping or plants, oil terminals, or even just the old faithful, a motorway or other road.⁶⁰

⁵³ As detailed in Chapter 1.

⁵⁴ GHOA, 'PEOPLE Leaflet 1974', <http://www.green-history.uk/resources/on-here/docs/by-category/file/3-dt0046-peopleleaflet1974-2> accessed 28 July 2018; Adrian Williams, E-mail Correspondence with Mitya Pearson, 11 August 2014

⁵⁵ Clive Lord, Interviewed on 12 June 2014 & 3 October 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁵⁶ MBPA, National Executive Committee Notes, *Alliance*, Issue 2, September 1975; Rudig, 2008 p.205; Pearson, 2014

⁵⁷ PFFA, Ecology Party Newsletter, October/November 1976

⁵⁸ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.275

⁵⁹ MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Area Organizers' Open Meeting, Liverpool, 9 November 1974; Pearson 2014

⁶⁰ MBPA, 'The Ecology Party Newsletter', *Alliance*, Issue 3 October 1975; McCulloch, 1992 p.428

Finally, David Taylor highlights that PEOPLE tried to organise a large “Jigsaw” conference’.⁶¹ The conference had sought to ‘bring together all aspects of the Survival and Ecological movement’ but it was cancelled before it took place.⁶² However, when he spoke at the 2013 GPEW conference, Michael Benfield raised the idea of re-introducing ‘the Jigsaw concept of 1973’.⁶³ Additionally, Benfield had edited *Alliance* magazine between 1975-76, which listed almost fifty environmental groups including Friends of the Earth and the Conservation Society as partners.⁶⁴ This demonstrates a clear desire to build coalitions with the wider movement.⁶⁵ Therefore, in sum, several alternative ideas about internal organisation are observable within the party during the period covered by this thesis.

5.2.4 A New Type of Member?

Central to Rudig’s account is the idea that the increase in membership after the 1979 general election caused ‘a new type of party member’ to enter the party and marked ‘the beginning’ of the ‘the divide between “anarchists” and “electoralists”’.⁶⁶ This contrasts with Alistair McCulloch’s view that new members with decentralist ideas did enter the party in 1979 but this was when disagreements along these lines had been ‘exacerbated’; becoming more ‘acute’ from this point onwards.⁶⁷ McCulloch cites a party newsletter from 1977 depicting ‘fliers’, who emphasised the importance of by-elections and national media, and ‘diggers’, who wanted the party to focus on local, grassroots campaigning.⁶⁸ The oral and archive material explored here contradicts Rudig’s argument that, the individuals supporting decentralist ideas who entered the party in 1979, were a ‘new type’. It therefore adds further evidence to McCulloch’s suggestion that traditionalist-decentralist division was present in PEOPLE/the Ecology Party during the period covered by this thesis.⁶⁹

It has already been demonstrated that a number of the ideas which were subsequently pursued by decentralists had been tested by the founders when they

⁶¹ David Taylor, ‘Movement or Party?’, Green History, <https://green-history.uk/articles/opinions/movement-or-party> accessed 28 July 2017

⁶² MBPA, Jigsaw Conference Leaflet, 1973

⁶³ MBPA, ‘Address to the Green Party Spring Conference’, Michael Benfield, 23 February 2013; Pearson, 2014

⁶⁴ MBPA, *Alliance*, Issue 1 July-August 1975

⁶⁵ Pearson, 2014

⁶⁶ Rudig, 2008 pp.205-6

⁶⁷ McCulloch, 1993 pp.20-30; Pearson, 2014

⁶⁸ McCulloch, 1993 p.32

⁶⁹ Rudig, 2008 p.205; McCulloch, 1993 p.30

established PEOPLE. The view that the decentralist members entering the party in the very latter part of the 1970s were a complete novelty is doubly disputable as many individuals who identified themselves on the decentralist wing of the party had been involved for years.⁷⁰ One example is Colin Fry who wrote to the September 1979 edition of *Econews* referring to himself as having an 'anarchist/decentralist point of view'.⁷¹ Fry had been at NEC meetings since 1976.⁷² There are numerous examples of individuals who had joined before 1979 general election, were interviewed for this project, and identified their support for alternative, decentralist ideas about party organisation.⁷³

Additionally, disagreements on party organisation, reflecting the traditionalist-decentralist binary, were evident earlier than Rudig suggests. Some of the founding members reduced their activity with PEOPLE in the latter part of the 1970s but Michael Benfield's correspondence with Jonathon Porritt and Jonathan Tyler in 1978 includes discord over the party's structure and organisation.⁷⁴ In 1978 Benfield argued for rotation on the NEC and raised his concern with Porritt 'that the Party is confusing leadership with chairmanship'.⁷⁵ Porritt replied by criticising the idea that 'the N.E.C's role...can be done, without someone taking on responsibility for one job'.⁷⁶ Benfield also argued in a letter to Tyler that different chairmen needed to be 'appointed for each session' at conferences.⁷⁷ Subsequently, Michael Benfield argued that the founders had sought to take an alternative approach to party organisation but 'it was Porritt and Tyler who changed all of that'.⁷⁸ Other early activists disagreed with Tyler, Porritt and Fleming on questions of party organisation.⁷⁹ Colin Fry stated in 1976 that at the core of the Ecology Party's 'approach to politics' was the idea that 'it not only preaches devolution, but practices it in its party organisation'.⁸⁰ In January 1979, Howard Hoptrough suggested that the NEC was a 'law unto itself' and that it

⁷⁰ Rudig, 2008 p.205; Pearson, 2014

⁷¹ European Green Archive, University of Teesside (Henceforth EGA), Colin Fry, 'The Need for Genuine Decentralisation', *Econews*, No.4 September 1979

⁷² Rudig, 2008 p.206; MBPA, Colin Fry letter to Michael Benfield, 28 May 1976; Pearson, 2014

⁷³ Alan Clarke, Interview; Dennis Nightingale-Smith, Interviewed on 23 November 2016 by Mitya Pearson; Peter Frings, Interview; Guy Woodford, Interview; David Taylor, Interview

⁷⁴ Pearson, 2014

⁷⁵ MBPA, Jonathon Porritt Letter to Michael Benfield, 13 September 1978; MBPA, Michael Benfield Letter to Porritt, 28 September 1978

⁷⁶ MBPA, Jonathon Porritt Letter to Michael Benfield, 10 October 1978

⁷⁷ MBPA, Jonathan Tyler Letter to Michael Benfield, 30 October 1978

⁷⁸ The Founders, Interview; Pearson, 2014

⁷⁹ Pearson, 2014

⁸⁰ MBPA, Colin Fry, 'Facts About the Ecology Party', 28 May 1976

was not cognisant of the fact that that party was 'based on its individual members and the branches they form'.⁸¹ For Porritt, traditionalist-decentralist division was 'pretty much embedded in the Party' when he first signed up as a member.⁸² Another activists suggests that after Porritt entered the NEC 'a split emerged within the National Executive.'⁸³

5.3 Sources of Alternative Ideas About Organisation in the Party

So far it has been shown that though when PEOPLE was set up it was a political party there was some ambiguity about its identity and early members were experimenting with alternative ways of organising the party. It has also been shown that a number of early members were keen for the party to organise itself in a way which stood out from other parties, desiring that the party would be differentiated by more than just policy, and that this was the source of internal disagreement from the earliest years in its history. The question these points lead on to is where did these alternative ideas come from? As has been mentioned in several other countries alternative ideas about political organisation, such as decentralisation and a commitment to internal democracy, were part of the approach of new social movement groups. When some of these groups gradually morphed into green parties it followed that these principles were implemented in these parties and that they were the source of disagreement between members as they came up against the practicalities of party organisation - summed up by Robert Michels' classic iron law of oligarchy.⁸⁴ Despite not forming out of new social movements and having largely been aloof from the 'alternative milieu', the same dynamics were present in the British case.⁸⁵ There are three ways to explain this puzzle.

First, an explanation is actually provided by Rudig himself. Rudig suggests that, though in every other way the party was organised conventionally, the principle of decentralisation was implemented almost immediately within the party. For Rudig, 'it is remarkable that, very soon after its formation, the idea took hold that decentralization as a general principle of organizing society should also be applied to the organisation of the

⁸¹ MBPA, Howard Hoptrough, 'A Report on the NEC', 10 January 1979

⁸² Jonathon Porritt, E-mail Correspondence with Mitya Pearson 22 June 2014

⁸³ David Taylor, Interview; Pearson, 2014

⁸⁴ Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (New York: Free Press, 1962)

⁸⁵ Doherty, 1994 p.120

party.⁸⁶ This is seen as significant because the party initially had ‘no social basis’ in ‘new social movements or the New Left’ and this principle entered the party as an aspect of its ‘general ecological philosophy’. As has been outlined, there is a scholarly debate between those who see green parties as a distinct phenomenon and those who see them as one facet of a wider growth in ‘new politics’ parties.⁸⁷ Rudig argues that if an essential element of green politics, such as decentralisation, can be ‘derived from ecological rather than New Left/Libertarian principles’, then this undermines the general interpretation of green parties as ‘new politics’ parties.⁸⁸ Put differently, where green parties emerged out of new social movements their early pursuit of principles like decentralisation was seen as a reflection of the fact they were a part of the wider new left phenomenon. The fact principles like decentralisation were also pursued almost immediately by a green party with very different origins suggests green parties represent a distinct political tradition and should be treated as such. Having identified a number of alternative ideas explored by the party in its early years, in addition to decentralisation, this strengthens Rudig’s overall argument.

Secondly, in her account of the party’s ideology Gayil Talshir suggests that there are strains of ‘anti-bureaucracy, anti-industrialism and anti-politics’ in the party’s first manifesto, *Manifesto for Survival*.⁸⁹ Anti-politics can be defined as ‘citizens’ negative sentiment towards the activities and institutions of formal politics (politicians, parties, elections, councils, parliaments, governments)’.⁹⁰ Jennings et al.’s systematic study in 2018 of anti-politics found that though this sentiment had increased in the five decades preceding the study it was present in public opinion at least as far back as the 1940s and that ‘no golden age of political support’ existed in Britain.⁹¹ Another historical study has highlighted the prevalence of anti-politics in British political culture in the immediate post-war period.⁹² The aforementioned *Manifesto for Survival* contains various criticism of the party system and politics more generally as well as a raft of suggestions for reform in areas like MPs’

⁸⁶ Rudig, 2008 p.215

⁸⁷ Rudig, 1990a p.16; Carter, 2007 pp.105-10; Muller-Rommel, 1985; Muller-Rommel, 1994

⁸⁸ Rudig, 2008 p.215

⁸⁹ Talshir, 2002 p.193

⁹⁰ Nick Clarke, Will Jennings, Jonathan Moss & Gerry Stoker, *The Good Politician: Folk Theories, Political Interaction and the Rise of Anti-Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p.3

⁹¹ Clarke, Jennings, Moss & Stoker, 2018 p.8

⁹² Steven Fielding, ‘A Mirror to England? Cinematic Representations of Politicians and Party Politics, circa 1944-1964’, *Journal of British Studies*, Vol 47 No 1 2008, pp.107-28; Clarke, Jennings, Moss & Stoker, 2018 p.5

salaries and registered interests.⁹³ This chimes with the interview with the founders during which Michael Benfield was keen to emphasise the difference between their efforts to set up the party and ‘careerist politicians’.⁹⁴ The 1979 manifesto highlighted the ‘widespread cynicism and apathy about politics’, the ‘undignified behaviour of some MPs’ and suggested that in mainstream politics ‘as much time is spent making deals as taking decisions’.⁹⁵ In recent years, connections have been made between anti-politics sentiment and the development of right-wing populist parties, so it is perhaps unexpected to find this strain of thought in the party in its early years.⁹⁶

Thirdly, new social movement activity was in some ways more limited in Britain than in many other Western democracies and, as far as there was an ‘alternative milieu’, it was, at least initially, mostly disconnected from the emerging party.⁹⁷ Despite this, as was outlined in Chapter 3, a number of the early members interviewed for this project could reasonably be described as culturally connected to this type of politics as they were involved in other types of political campaigning and followed crudely ‘hippy’ lifestyles. So despite the lack of real connections between the party and new social movements, some early members were still inspired by similar alternative strands of thinking to those that were in their international sister parties. It is clear therefore that for different reasons many early members, including the founders, were attracted by the idea of the party not just for its new policies but because it offered an opportunity to explore different ways to approach politics itself.

5.4 Contesting Elections and Members’ Aims

This chapter has so far provided an examination of the party’s early approach to organisation which has highlighted that the founders and many early members wanted the party to offer an alternative to the other parties through more than just its policies. This suggests that one of the reasons they were attracted to the party is because it offered them a chance to explore such approaches. This was by no means the only approach among early members, however, and, as has been outlined in this chapter, the party was focusing a lot

⁹³ MBPA, *PEOPLE: A Manifesto for Survival*, June 1974

⁹⁴ The Founders, Interview

⁹⁵ JIPA, *The Real Alternative: 1979 Election Manifesto*, 1979, p.9

⁹⁶ Clarke, Jennings, Moss & Stoker, 2018 p.3

⁹⁷ Doherty, 1994 p.145 & p.120

on conventional election campaigning. The final section of this chapter therefore considers what early members' aims for the party were, not in terms of policy outcomes, but rather in terms of what they thought the party could realistically achieve in elections. This is important to the question of why the party emerged because the electoral system used in British general elections, as well as other structural factors, represents a considerable constraint to any new or smaller party and has subsequently been highlighted as impacting the party's development.⁹⁸

As set out above, in the 1973 announcement of PEOPLE's creation there is a clearly stated objective to get MPs elected at the next election.⁹⁹ Despite plans to stand around 600 candidates, only a handful of candidates were ultimately put forward for the 1974 elections.¹⁰⁰ The founders of the party were ambitious about the party's approach to elections though and even after the experience of the 1974 elections, Tony Whittaker argued that 'the way to effect changes is by influencing government - preferably by becoming the government...and this is what PEOPLE has tried to do.'¹⁰¹ However, they were also realistic about their prospects and the February 1974 election was viewed as an 'opportunity to learn as much as possible about election "mechanics" and future PEOPLE candidates' future opponents'.¹⁰² Lesley Whittaker is quoted during the campaign as saying 'we have no chance of winning a seat, but we will be offering an alternative to the two main parties.'¹⁰³ The three founders interviewed for this project expressed the idea that they were attempting to put the party's policies onto the agenda by threatening other parties, thereby also providing an additional element to the work existing campaign groups were doing. In Michael Benfield's words 'we would cause them to think about the issues that we were concerned about if we hurt them in their ballot box'.¹⁰⁴ This is an idea which was shared by others in the party. For example, one activist closed an editorial in a 1977 Newsletter with 'the only way to make a politician think is to hit him in his ballot box. Let's all do it together and make their eyes water.'¹⁰⁵ One party member who joined in the early

⁹⁸ Rootes, 1995a p.68

⁹⁹ MBPA, 'PEOPLE', Public Notices, *The Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 31 January 1973

¹⁰⁰ MBPA, Jigsaw Conference Leaflet, 1973

¹⁰¹ MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Meeting, Imperial College London, 11 January 1975

¹⁰² MBPA, Organisers Conference and Debriefing, 2 February 1974

¹⁰³ MBPA, "'Ecology" Party Fighting Two Seats in Coventry', *The Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 13 February 1974

¹⁰⁴ The Founders, Interview; Pearson, 2014

¹⁰⁵ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, December 1976/January 1977

1970s summed up this idea by later suggesting that some members had felt that the party was there to 'lean' on other parties and therefore constituted a type of 'super pressure group'.¹⁰⁶ When asked in interview to reflect on what they had hoped the party might achieve when they joined, people's responses varied from the incredibly ambitious to the much more realistic. The two quotes below demonstrate the contrast.

We wanted to form a government within ten years.¹⁰⁷

Realistically....to save deposits at 5%...beating the National Front was my objective in the 1979 general election...but winning power was not really realistic when you think in those days we were pretty pleased if we got two or three inches of press coverage in *the Guardian*.¹⁰⁸

When individuals suggested that they had been ambitious in their aims for the party there were generally two reasons for this. The first was a degree of political naivety, where activists had not fully appreciated the size of the obstacle created by the electoral system.¹⁰⁹ The second, as is discussed in Chapter 8, was that the party was warning of an impending crisis with potentially dire and revolutionary consequences. This logically implied the need for the party to either get into power or to get the other parties to adopt their ideas quickly. Geoff Garbett, a candidate in the 1979 general election, summed this idea up:

I remember a meeting in Exeter...and I remember asking a question which was a bit naïve I suppose. Which was how much longer have we got? Because we'd all got ourselves into the belief that everything was on the brink of collapse.¹¹⁰

Generally, though there seems to have been a high degree of realism among members and activists about the party's chances. It is illustrated by the fairly modest aims set out in the quotes below.

Personally, I thought by standing as an MP in Bristol West [in 1979] I wouldn't get elected, it was a foregone conclusion that the Conservatives would win but I thought

¹⁰⁶ SPPA, Amendments to Sara Parkin Book, Sally Willington Comments, Undated

¹⁰⁷ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

¹⁰⁸ Biff Vernon, Interview

¹⁰⁹ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

¹¹⁰ Geoff Garbett, Interview

I might save my deposit...I think I was trying to influence and by having 50 candidates we got onto the television and the media.¹¹¹

The aim was to put candidates in local elections and if possible the general elections and try build up support.¹¹²

I just gave up on the idea that any of the big parties would do the job properly, so I was quite happy to stay in a small party who did the job properly, contributing a bit of money, doing a bit of local activity, checking what was happening at a national level.¹¹³

I'm not sure I had aims as such except that I wanted it to get somewhere...my interest was more administrative, it was providing the atmosphere that would allow others to talk about the policies that would get us somewhere.¹¹⁴

In most instances, when interviewees suggested they had had ambitious aims of getting representation in Parliament, or into government, they generally caveated this in some way.

For influence in Parliament at least...the more green votes are counted up the more other parties will take on some of the green message.¹¹⁵

I was hoping to be an MP to enter the House of Commons and effect legislation. That was my aim and the time period, I think realistically, we knew we wouldn't get elected right away. I think in 1979 our aim was to save our deposits which we didn't...I think there was a reasonable degree of realism within the party.¹¹⁶

Even those with more ambitious aims had all remained part of the Party for years after the 1979 general election (and most were still members when interviewed) suggesting they had not viewed the party simply as a vehicle for attaining of these goals.¹¹⁷ The party had also entered the 1979 general election publicly stating that they expected to lose all 50 of their

¹¹¹ John Ingham, Interview

¹¹² Alan Clarke, Interview

¹¹³ Adrian Williams, Interview

¹¹⁴ Gundula Dorey, Interview

¹¹⁵ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

¹¹⁶ Tim Cooper, Interviewed on 5 May 2017 by Mitya Pearson

¹¹⁷ Tim Cooper, Interview; Ken Yates, Interviewed on 27 April 2017 by Mitya Pearson; Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

deposits, demonstrating the realism in the party at this point.¹¹⁸ In 2008 Rudig argued that the party had 'only survived in an extremely hostile political environment because members and activists were not primarily motivated by achieving electoral success.'¹¹⁹ This research has underlined this point, demonstrating that, from the very beginning, many party activists have exhibited this attitude. Though some were ambitious about the party's electoral performance, generally those individuals joined the party in its early years were aware of the realities of how difficult electoral gains were to make. As a party activist argued in 1974 'we must go into elections' but 'not expect votes yet'.¹²⁰

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an examination of the organisation and political aims of the party in its very early years, leading up to the 1979 general election. It began by tracing the origins of the traditionalist-decentralist debate within the party, including examining whether PEOPLE was set up as a party or had begun with an almost entirely conventional approach to organising itself. It then assessed potential reasons for why alternative ideas about party organisation were present from such an early point in its history and, finally, what early members thought the party could realistically achieve. In doing so, a number of points were established. First, PEOPLE was founded as a party with the intention of contesting elections but there was some ambiguity about its identity. It organised itself in ways which were unconventional, beyond simply having a decentralised structure, including through deciding not to have a leader, supporting NVDA and attempting to build alliances with various campaigning groups.¹²¹ Rudig's argument, which has been discussed here, is used as part of Frankland et al.'s wider comparative study; in their conclusion they suggest that when PEOPLE was set up it was 'a centrally led initiative, around one single leader, with little of the typical Green grass-roots democratic practices'.¹²² This view has been rejected.

Secondly, this early commitment to alternative forms of organisation can be explained by the synergies between aspects of this approach and the party's ideological

¹¹⁸ MBPA, Press Cuttings, Newspaper Title and Exact Date Not Included, 1979

¹¹⁹ Rudig, 2008 p.216

¹²⁰ MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Meeting, Imperial College London, 11 January 1975

¹²¹ Pearson, 2014

¹²² Eugene Frankland & Benoit Rihoux, 'Conclusion' in E. Frankland, P. Lucardie & B. Rihoux (eds.) *Green Parties in Transition: The End of Grass-roots Democracy?* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p.261

position, the anti-politics sentiments of early members and the alternative lifestyles of some. Therefore, the party was attractive in part because of early members' disillusionment not only with the policies of mainstream parties but how they organised themselves and approached politics. This meant many early members were not discouraged by the difficulties facing a new party. Other early members were either slightly naïve about the challenge the party faced to compete in elections, or they were aware of them but still considered it a worthwhile exercise to join the party. This helps to illuminate the motivations of early members and therefore to explain why the party emerged, but clearly it is only a part of the overall story. There were other reasons why early party activists were willing to face the challenges of campaigning for a new party and why they felt that they could not pursue their aims through other, more established parties or pressure group activity. These need to be explored directly in more detail to provide a more comprehensive account of the why the party emerged and this is the topic of the next chapter.

As a final note, it is interesting that the attempts to explore alternative modes of political organisation when the party was set up and the early disagreements around this are dynamics which the party has not been able to entirely escape throughout its history. In 1991, following the party's conference at which debate over party organisation became highly fractious, *the Guardian* observed that 'In one respect, and perhaps only one, the Greens are a real political party. They are good at internal disputes.'¹²³ This dispute is something which can be traced right back to the founders' early attempts to pursue alternative ways of running the party. When the Greens took control of Brighton council in 2011, it ran into significant problems which many suggested was partly caused by their refusal to have a whipping system.¹²⁴ This was a rule first implemented by those founding the party.¹²⁵ The South West regional branch of the Greens has consistently been known for its radical and decentralist approach. James Dennison's recent book on the Greens highlights that in the 2015 election, despite the fact that Bristol West was one of their target

¹²³ The Guardian, 28 August 1991, Cited in Gavin Evans, 'Hard Times for the British Green Party', *Environmental Politics*, Vol 2 No 2 1993, pp.327-33

¹²⁴ BBC News, 'Elections 2015: Green Party loses Brighton Council to Labour', 10 May 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2015-32680552> accessed 27 July 2017; The Guardian, 'Have the Greens blown it in Brighton?', 15 December 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/dec/15/greens-blown-it-in-brighton> accessed 28 July 2017

¹²⁵ David Taylor, 'Movement or Party?', Green History, <http://www.green-history.uk/articles/opinions/7-movement-or-party> accessed 28 July 2017

seats, by the end of the campaign the local party was refusing to share data with the central office and the national campaign manager was told not to enter the constituency.¹²⁶ This was reminiscent of 1979 when the party's newsletter reported that the South West regional party had threatened a unilateral declaration of independence and a proposal for administrative and financial autonomy had 'inspired a major debate on party organisation' at the February regional conference.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Dennison, 2016 p.46

¹²⁷ JIPA, *Econews*, No.1 March/April 1979

Chapter 6 - PEOPLE/the Ecology Party's Place in the Party System and its Relationship to Pressure Groups

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the emergence of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party in relation to the party system and the network of environmental campaign groups in Britain. It examines why the party founders and early party members judged a new political party to be necessary and did not pursue their political aims through the alternative routes of other parties or pressure groups. As Herbert Kitschelt has stated, forming new parties in order to press for change requires more effort than going through existing channels so this course of action requires motivation that in turn merits explanation.¹ The chapter is divided into two sections, one on the party's relationship with other parties and the other on the party's relationship with pressure groups. In both these two parts, there are different sections on the founders' and early party members' views. In the party system section there is also a detailed examination of the relationship between PEOPLE/the Ecology Party and each of the three main parties. It will be argued that early PEOPLE/the Ecology Party members were not willing to pursue their aims through an established, existing party because they felt that it would not be possible to integrate the radicalism of their demands within the existing parties' programmes. They saw the issue of economic growth as a particularly important source of division between them and established parties. Furthermore, they believed that their party was competing on a different plain to the left-right spectrum on which the other parties were positioned. It will also be argued that pressure group activity alone was not enough for early PEOPLE/the Ecology Party members because they felt a direct political approach was needed to effect real change and they perceived pressure groups as vehicles more suited to single issue campaigning than a holistic approach.

This chapter will be answering a very specific question: why did the party founders and early members judge the new party a necessary addition to established political organisations? It is important therefore to begin by considering the extent to which this

¹ Herbert Kitschelt, 'Left-Libertarian Parties: Explaining Innovation in Competitive Party Systems', *World Politics*, Vol 40 No 2 1988, p.209

question has been answered by others. Both Derek Wall and Sara Parkin's accounts of the party's history are principally concerned with detailing the sequence of events of the party's development and do not examine why it emerged, although Parkin suggests that 'what is certain is that the new party was founded by people who did not believe that pressure group activity on its own was sufficient to affect change'.² Wolfgang Rudig and Philip Lowe suggested that 'it was the ease with which party formation was possible, together with the aim of total social change, that provided the impetus to set up PEOPLE'. However, their focus was on providing an overview of the party's history and, in particular, explaining its lack of electoral success up to that point.³ In Mark Wilson's general study of the environmental movement, the section on PEOPLE is based on an interview with one of the founders, and an e-mail exchange with another, as well as documents from the former's personal archive. Wilson quotes from an Ecology Party leaflet which argues that 'All these [established] parties need economic growth to support their policies and it is too much to expect that any of them can adapt their philosophies to a steady state economy, which is needed to meet ecological constraints, without losing completely their present identity and most of their popular support'. Wilson therefore concludes that 'the mainstream political parties offered environmental ideas and stressed economic growth, whereas PEOPLE and its supporters argued that this was not possible and advocated zero growth strategies'.⁴ Therefore, taken together these two accounts put forward some interesting ideas that can be utilised in a more comprehensive assessment taking into account the views of party members as expressed at the time and retrospectively in interviews.

All 50 interviewees were asked directly why they felt it was necessary to be involved with a smaller, less established party to pursue their aims, rather than joining one of the existing parties. They were also asked why they wished to pursue party politics rather than simply engaging in pressure group activity. The potential limits of this source material are demonstrated by the answers of two individuals set out below.

² Parkin, 1989 p.215

³ Rudig & Lowe 1986a, p.278

⁴ Mark Wilson, 'The British environmental movement: The development of an environmental consciousness and environmental activism, 1945-1975' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Northumbria, 2014), p.261

I can't remember what my thinking at the time was. I mean I really can't.⁵

I can't remember. That's not very profound, I can't remember. I think I was interested that a political party might actually incorporate different ideas in a holistic way.⁶

The remainder of participants were able to provide information on their motivations and, taken together, their answers provide a rich source of material. To mitigate the potential that the participants who were able to answer the question were misremembering, their contributions have been compared with documentary sources drawn from various archives. This has included party newsletters, leaflets and meeting minutes. One source type proved particularly useful and has been used extensively in this chapter: magazines and journals focused in some way on environmental matters that were in circulation during the 1970s. This is because in these publications, in articles and letters, party members and other individuals were conducting debates on how best to achieve political action on the environment, including whether to work within existing parties or through pressure groups. They therefore provide a valuable record of activists' thinking at the time.

6.2 The Party System

6.2.1 The Founders

Rudig and Lowe's aforementioned argument on the 'ease with which party formation was possible' is backed up by a recollection from party co-founder Anthony Whittaker that the founders had examined the legal options for setting up a party and 'came up with the slightly surprising fact that to form a political party one merely had to perform and act like one'.⁷ The founders suggested in interview that they had also contacted Sir Richard Acland, who was a key figure in the short-lived Common Wealth Movement of the 1940s, to get advice on setting up a new party.⁸ However, despite the lack of institutional constraints

⁵ Nicholas Hildyard, Interviewed on 30 April 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁶ Stewart Biggar, Interviewed 23 January 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁷ Tony Whittaker, 'Now we are 10', *Econews*, April 1983, Cited in Rudig & Lowe 1986a p.227

⁸ The Founders, Interview; David Boothroyd, *The History of British Political Parties* (London: Politico's, 2001), p.33

there were nonetheless significant challenges and personal sacrifices for the four individuals who took the decision to form PEOPLE. Freda Sanders and Michael Benfield described the decision-making process:

Freda Sanders: We did have quite a few discussions about whether to be a political party. I seem to recall it wasn't something that we...

Michael Benfield: We had major rows in their offices.

Freda Sanders: Well discussions I'd call them.⁹

The quotes detailed below illustrate some of the reasons why it was potentially problematic for the founding members to establish this party, linked to their personal and professional backgrounds. They are reminiscent of some middle class CND supporters interviewed for Frank Parkin's 1968 study who were considered 'black sheep' and 'fanatics' among many of their peers.¹⁰

Lesley Whittaker: Well it was a very hard decision to take because you [Michael Benfield and Freda Sanders] were dependent on the public to come into your estate agency, we were dependent on the public and businesses to come into us for legal advice, and yes I did do a lot of legal aid work and I had a good solid base of clients in the Salvation Army hostel but we did need people who would come and be regular clients and would pay. And it just wasn't respectable, the only acceptable business politics was Conservatism, really.¹¹

Lesley Whittaker: We were regarded as very strange at the golf club which was one of the places that we used to socialise. There was a small number of people not least of course Bob Richlie [Thirteen Club member] who had been involved in the early days but said he couldn't get involved from his career point of view.¹²

⁹ The Founders, Interview

¹⁰ Parkin, 1968 p.48

¹¹ The Founders, Interview

¹² The Founders, Interview

Michael Benfield: It affected my relationship with my father and the business there, and my brother.¹³

Freda Sanders: I remember you [Michael Benfield] coming back and saying to me, you must have been and told him that you were going to do this. And he turned round and said no no no my boy you've got to stand as a Tory. You can't stand as anything else.¹⁴

Anthony Whittaker: I do think my involvement with PEOPLE did prove prejudicial to my professional reputation...It was in so many ways a weird period of my life, with of course very far-reaching consequences, by no means all for the good.¹⁵

Lesley Whittaker also suggested that when they started getting more concerned about environmental issues and reading about them in the early 1970s 'it was one of those things really you kept quiet about it unless you were confident about who you were talking to.'¹⁶ The founders emphasised in interview just how challenging it was to be setting up a new party almost from scratch with communication being done by telephone, letter and travelling around to try and set up local groups. All undertaken while trying to balance full-time professional jobs.¹⁷ As part of the Thirteen Club discussion group in the latter part of 1972 the founders contacted the main established parties to try and ascertain their position on, and awareness of, ecological issues. The decision to form the party was motivated in part by the responses they got.¹⁸ This highlights the extent to which the founders of the party felt compelled to enter party politics because they felt their concerns were not and would not be properly taken on by existing parties. In the words of Lesley Whittaker:

We were trying to persuade one of the parties to take it all up. We were saying look we've done the work, we've done the research, this is all you need to take up...So we couldn't get anywhere, it was like we had to do it. Be new.¹⁹

¹³ The Founders, Interview

¹⁴ The Founders, Interview

¹⁵ SPPA, 'Correct Chronology of the Founding of the Green Party', Undated

¹⁶ The Founders, Interview

¹⁷ The Founders, Interview

¹⁸ Parkin, 1989 p.218

¹⁹ The Founders, Interview

It is possible to gain an insight into why the party founders felt existing politicians were unlikely to be responsive to their views from the TV programme *A Chance to Meet* on which Anthony Whittaker appeared to question the first Secretary of State for the Environment, Peter Walker. The following exchange took place in November 1972, exactly at the time when Whittaker and his three co-founders were taking the decision to set up PEOPLE.

Anthony Whittaker: With its obsessive preoccupation with industrial materialism, would you not agree that our society or the civilization that we live in [was] and still is worshipping graven images?

Peter Walker: Yes but...if you ask me what one of the most pleasing things that have happened to me in this job I would say the fact that I have been able to have a start to have an impact on some of the worst areas of housing in this country...I think this is important because you can create a framework in which future generations in those towns and cities will live far better than they have in the past. This is out of...it is because of the economic expansion that you can take these resources and divert these resources for those sort of purposes.

Anthony Whittaker: But in clearing these slums that you've talked about you are redeeming the mortgage that you have from our forefathers...

Peter Walker: Sure.

Anthony Whittaker: It seems that government, I mean all governments, are still pre-occupied with the same objectives for our civilisation that we have had for 100 years or 200 years that got us into this mess. Are we not merely continuing to do as we have done in the past?²⁰

There are three main themes to the founders' belief that other parties would not be able to integrate the demands of PEOPLE. The first is a general sense that the level of emphasis on ecological issues and, consequently, the radical change it implied would be impossible for other parties to embrace, reflecting the idea put forward by Rudig and Lowe.²¹ As an early PEOPLE leaflet states 'PEOPLE is a radical party – far more radical than any other existing

²⁰ BFI, 'A Chance to Meet', First Broadcast: BBC One London, 5 November 1972

²¹ Rudig & Lowe 1986a, p.278

party'.²² Secondly, there was a particularly clear dividing line on the specific issue of economic growth, with all the other parties committed to it, in line with Wilson's aforementioned suggestion.²³ For example, PEOPLE are contrasted with the other parties 'whose policies take for granted the wisdom of the ultimate goal of economic growth'.²⁴ Finally, there was a view that PEOPLE was competing on a different plain to the other parties. The notion of transcendence of traditional party competition later came to be understood by Bonnie Meguid as a defining characteristic of the concept of niche parties in political science, a category which green parties are generally seen to fall under.²⁵ The idea is clear in PEOPLE leaflets which talk of wanting to start the 'stability vs growth debate' and of the 'petty bickerings' of left and right arguments.²⁶ These three themes are similarly evident in the testimony of the early members who joined the party in the years following its formation.

6.2.2 A Radical Party

In the early 1980s, Stephen Cotgrove and Andrew Duff distinguished between those in the environmental movement who were concerned about conservation and those who believed that 'the problem requires more than simply a shift in priorities, and that fundamental changes are essential if we are to survive the growing threats to the environment and the exhaustion of materials which result from a high-growth, energy-consuming, and environmentally-damaging way of life'.²⁷ Ferdinand Muller-Rommel has suggested that one of the major reasons for the growth and electoral success of green parties was the 'perceived inability of political parties and other political institutions to come up with a fundamentally different policy approach'.²⁸ This perception is very clearly apparent in the views of early party members examined for this thesis. Three typical examples of such ideas

²² BBPA, PEOPLE Radical Party Leaflet, Undated

²³ Wilson, 2014 p.261

²⁴ BBPA, PEOPLE Radical Party Leaflet, Undated

²⁵ Bonnie Meguid, 'Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol 99 No 3 2005, pp.347-59

²⁶ BBPA, PEOPLE Leaflet, Undated; LMPA, PEOPLE Battle of Britain Leaflet, February 1974 (Date added by archivist)

²⁷ Cotgrove & Duff, 1981 p.93

²⁸ Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, 'Introduction' in F. Muller-Rommel (ed.) *New Politics in Western Europe: The Rise and Success of Green Parties and Alternative Lists* (London: Westview Press, 1989), p.7

being reflected in interview responses from members who joined at different points during the 1970s are detailed below.

Why not try and make the Labour Party green? Or the Liberal?...I remember this conversation and somebody said 'why don't you join the Liberal Party? They're into green things' and somebody in the conversation said the Liberal Party's about as green as a dead elm. In other words: not radical enough.²⁹

I don't know what hope I'd have had of changing one of the existing parties. We needed a completely new party.³⁰

The existing parties weren't interested. Nobody was really interested, it was so radical that you had to start from scratch. I remember telling my chemistry lecturer at college that I was in the new party called the Ecology Party and he actually laughed out loud. He wasn't pretending to laugh out, he was actually laughing his head off.³¹

These sentiments were being expressed at the time as well. Elizabeth Davenport's election address during the October 1974 general election campaign suggested that the major parties were 'blinkerered to the fact that a totally new approach is needed.'³² Teddy Goldsmith argued to the 1978 conference that 'there was no moderate solution to a radical problem'.³³ Jonathan Tyler, then the party chairman, stated that 'what sustains us is the imperative of the gathering ecological catastrophe, and the conspicuously inadequate response of other parties.'³⁴ The 'trivial' approach of the other parties was explained by Jonathon Porritt who argued during the 1979 general election campaign that they 'derive all their inspiration, their priorities and the framework of their intellectual analysis from a bygone age of unrestrained industrial expansion' which limited their 'flexibility'.³⁵ During the same election campaign, leaflets were being distributed criticising the other parties for paying 'lip-service to energy saving and planning ahead'.³⁶

²⁹ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

³⁰ Dennis Nightingale-Smith, Interview

³¹ Keith & Christine Rushworth, Interview

³² LMPA, Elizabeth Davenport Leaflet General Election Leaflet, October 1974

³³ PFPA, 1978 Ecology Party Conference Supplement

³⁴ PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report, 1977/78

³⁵ EGA, Jonathon Porritt Press Conference Speech, April 1979

³⁶ EGA, Sara Parkin Ecology Party 1979 General Election Leaflet

A meeting took place in July 1977 between individuals from the ecological groups in the three main parties and the Ecology Party - what was perhaps the UK's first ever all-party environmental meeting.³⁷ This was reported in *Good Earth* magazine to have demonstrated 'the gulf' between the Ecology Party and the other parties. For the Ecology Party, in contrast to the other parties, 'all other considerations were subordinate' to that of the environment.³⁸ This was highlighted by the historian Robert Skidelsky in an article in *The Times* in 1978 in which he argued 'parties are not sponges which can absorb anything' and the ecology movement was a problem for existing political parties which could not fully take up the issues 'without destroying their coherence'.³⁹ Therefore although many of them accepted that the more established parties had not completely ignored environmental issues, early party activists regarded these parties as not sufficiently radical in their approach to the environment and also did not think it was realistic to influence them to become so from the inside.

6.2.3 No Growth

Economic growth was seen by many interviewees as representing a crucial division between PEOPLE/the Ecology Party and the other, more established parties. There were clearly other issues, such as support for nuclear power, but growth was particularly important.⁴⁰ This was in a political context where parties were not just committed to growth, but mainstream public debate was often dominated by discussions of how to increase it – not least related to the 1970-74 Heath government's 'dash for growth'.⁴¹ Indeed, as Paul Byrne suggests, it must have 'come as something of a surprise to the British voter' to be confronted by a party 'actually arguing for a reduction in material living standards'.⁴² Peter Merkl argues that from the 1960s the pre-eminent economic issue across Europe became which party was the most competent at delivering economic growth.⁴³ The distinction between a pro-growth set of

³⁷ DFPA, Richard Williams Correspondence with David Fleming, 23 May 1977

³⁸ BLA, *Good Earth*, Issue 19 1977; Mitya Pearson, 'The Liberal Party's Response to the Emergence of the Ecology Party', *The Journal of Liberal History*, No 104 (Autumn) 2019, pp.34-38

³⁹ British Newspaper Archive, Robert Skidelsky, 'Are these the political parties of the future?', *The Times*, 17 April 1978

⁴⁰ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, March 1978

⁴¹ Andy Beckett, 2010 p.127-8; Margaret Reid, *The Secondary Banking Crisis, 1973-75: its Causes and Course* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Martin Holmes, *The Failure of the Heath Government* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997)

⁴² Byrne, 1989 p.109

⁴³ John Thomas, 'Ideological Trends in Western European Political Parties' in P. Merkl (ed.) *Western European Party Systems: Trends and Prospects* (New York: Free Press, 1979), p.358

parties and the zero-growth party they had joined was brought out very clearly in interviews with early members:

Labour Party had SERA [the Socialist Environment and Resources Association], the Liberals had the Liberal Ecology Group and I looked into both of those. They were very much green add-ons to an economic-growthist organisation. Both Liberal and Labour parties, as they still do now seemed to think that economic growth on a finite planet is a cool thing...they didn't have that sort of ecology philosophy which says that the whole system has to change.⁴⁴

[The other political parties] see growth as the thing to achieve despite us living on a finite planet.⁴⁵

That's the biggest thing, economic growth in a finite world, you can't get through to anybody about that. Certainly none of the parties. It was similar then, always has been.⁴⁶

The degree to which the main political parties were prevented from fully engaging with the demands of the environmental movement because of their commitment to increased economic growth had been debated before the party was formed at an event discussing *A Blueprint for Survival*.⁴⁷ This was something picked up by early members and an early party leaflet stated that 'the important difference between the Ecology Party and ALL other parties is in its attitude towards economic growth' and that the Ecology Party is the only party that 'needs a steady state economy to sustain its policies'.⁴⁸ Another typical example of the sentiments being expressed by early members at the time came from Stewart Biggar (cited above as an interviewee unable to remember why he had felt it was necessary to join the party rather than one of the more established parties). Biggar used his election address for the 1979 general election to criticise the Liberals and the SNP for their inconsistency in showing concern about the environment but supporting economic growth.⁴⁹ Early party members did not feel that their aims could credibly be integrated into

⁴⁴ Biff Vernon, Interview

⁴⁵ John Marjoram Interview

⁴⁶ Norma Russell, Interview

⁴⁷ Schwab, 1972 p.101

⁴⁸ LMPA, Ecology Party 'When? What? Why? Where? How?' Leaflet, 1975 (Date added by archivist)

⁴⁹ LMPA, Stewart Biggar Ecology Party General Election Leaflet, 1979

the programmes of other parties. It has already been shown that there was an overall sense that the level of emphasis on the environment was not possible for the other parties to achieve. However, the simple distinction of being against economic growth weighed heavily on early party members minds, both in itself and as symbol of commitment to environmental issues. Jae-Jae Spoon has highlighted how, in his classical work, the political scientist Otto Kirchheimer suggested during the 1960s that as larger parties transformed into catch-all parties it would lead to the disappearance of small parties.⁵⁰ Spoon argues that this false prediction can be explained in part by Kirchheimer not anticipating the development of the new politics agenda or green parties and through the latter's desire to pursue electoral goals and maintain their distinctiveness.⁵¹ Muller-Rommel has also argued that the electoral support for green parties can be accounted for by the 'failure of the established "catch-all parties" to come to grips with fundamental environmental issues in their policy-making'.⁵² The 'catch-all' approach was never going to apply in this case, however, as no matter how accommodating a party is it cannot be both for and against economic growth.

6.2.4 Competing on a Different Plain

The ideology of the party is explored in more detail in a Chapter 8. However, the final key area to highlight in relation to early members' attraction to this new party over the other more established parties was the sense of transcendence of the traditional left-right divide. There was a strongly held belief among early party members that all the other parties were operating on an old and traditional ideological spectrum and that PEOPLE/the Ecology Party was looking to compete on a different plain to this. This idea was expressed by participants in interviews, as the following examples demonstrate.

⁵⁰ Otto Kirchheimer, 'The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems', in J. Palombara & M. Weiner (eds.) *Political Parties and Political Development*, pp.177–200 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Jae-Jae Spoon, 'Holding their Own', *Party Politics*, Vol 15 No 5 2009, pp.615–34

⁵¹ Spoon, 2009

⁵² Ferdinand Muller-Rommel, 'Ecology parties in Western Europe', *West European Politics*, Vol 5 No 1 1982, pp.68–74

I think I was attracted to the idea that the left-right spectrum was not a good way of looking at the planet and it was distracting attention by always focusing on social and economic issues rather than environmental issues.⁵³

Did we think of the party as left-wing?...We weren't thinking in left-right terms. We were not impressed with, in those days probably perhaps more so than today, you get all these militant lefty types who used to get involved in big debates...It just seemed like resources should be shared evenly. I don't think that was a left-wing thing, it just seemed like common sense.⁵⁴

No and I think ideology in terms of 'were we associated with the left or the right or particular lines of thinking in the past?' I'd say no. Virtually everybody in the Ecology Party at the time would argue that, did argue that we transcended left or right. And that was the whole point about it...Because it was somehow thought to be above party politics.⁵⁵

These views, expressed retrospectively, are very much in line with discussions taking place at the time. An early PEOPLE document produced by Anthony Whittaker and Clive Lord described how PEOPLE 'stands apart from left/right dissensions'.⁵⁶ Similarly, a member wrote to the party's newsletter in 1977 to argue that 'the Ecology Party is a genuine departure in a new direction politically', arguing that it should not 'cling to the dogma that all policies must fit somewhere on the archaic political scale'.⁵⁷ Steve Lambert's election leaflet for 1978 local elections in London listed a series of environmental issues and raised the question 'Aren't the other parties aware of these problems and trying to do something about them?'. It was argued that they 'may be aware of the problems, but they are too concerned with out-of-date Left wing-Right wing arguments to do what today's world needs'.⁵⁸ Finally, these ideas were forthrightly expressed by candidates standing for election in the 1979 general election who were interviewed by BBC Radio Solent:

⁵³ Alan Clarke, Interview

⁵⁴ Keith & Christine Rushworth, Interview

⁵⁵ Peter Frings, Interview

⁵⁶ LMPA, 'PEOPLE Explanatory Letter', No date but from sometime between February 1974 and May 1975

⁵⁷ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, April 1977

⁵⁸ Steve Lambert Personal Archive, 'Ecology Party: Your Candidate', 4 May 1978

We feel that the left-wing and right-wing alignment that's been existent in the country for years is now out of date and we need to change this alignment in politics to one between green and grey.⁵⁹

We're people that feel that we're fed up with the old arguments of right and left and the old two-party systems. We feel that we're the only party that are facing up to the realities of life and the problems that we have in our world today.⁶⁰

A clear set of three principal ideas has therefore been established as to why both the founders and the early members felt that PEOPLE/the Ecology Party was a necessary addition to British party politics and generally stood apart from other parties. The final part of this section (focusing on the party's place in the party system) examines PEOPLE/the Ecology Party's relationship to each of the three largest parties in more detail. It focuses on attempts by these parties to engage with environmental issues and why early PEOPLE/Ecology Party members found them unconvincing.

6.2.5 The Labour Party

In addition to much earlier action in areas like amenities and air pollution, the Labour Party did respond to the awakening of environmental concern in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s. The Wilson government had carried out preparatory work for the creation of the Department of the Environment (DoE) which Heath's Conservative government set up after the 1970 general election. Along with the Conservatives and the Liberals, Labour had deployed the term 'environment' in their manifesto to refer to a specific area of policy for the first time at this election.⁶¹ Additionally, the Socialist Environmentalist and Resources Association (SERA) was founded in 1973 as the Labour Party's environmental group, originally advertised as being for people who are 'worried that the [environmental] message

⁵⁹ Hampshire Record Office, Nick Bagnol 1979 Ecology Party General Candidate (Chichester), Radio Solent Broadcast, 24 April 1979, Ref AV74/CSN3/S1

⁶⁰ Hampshire Record Office, Jacqueline Dempsey 1979 Ecology Party General Candidate (Bournemouth East), Radio Solent Broadcast, 26 April 1979, Ref AV74/CSN5/S1

⁶¹ Robinson, 1992 p.7

isn't getting across to the Labour movement'.⁶² The Labour Party's 1973 *The Politics of the Environment* was also 'a seminal document in post-war environmental politics' in Britain.⁶³

There are examples of people in the 1970s who accepted that environmental problems were severe but believed that for either ideological or pragmatic reasons they could only be dealt with by a party on the left or the Labour Party itself. An early issue of *Towards Survival* magazine features a long article arguing why environmental problems were a result of capitalism and suggests that 'a large proportion of workers' would soon realise their interests lay in the environmental agenda.⁶⁴ Sir Richard Acland similarly argued before PEOPLE was established that a new environmental party would need to be socialist as it would be necessary to reduce the power of big business to achieve any results.⁶⁵ The pragmatic case was that the difficulties PEOPLE/the Ecology faced as a new party meant that there was much more likelihood of achieving change from inside Labour. For example, on hearing about PEOPLE in 1974, one individual wrote to *the Ecologist* to argue that its 'lack of infrastructure' compared to a party like the Labour Party, which drew on unions and other support when it was founded, would be a huge impediment. They pointed to the importance of wider information campaigns and the influence of SERA as more likely routes to effecting change than PEOPLE.⁶⁶

Timothy Cooper has argued that the 'role of the Left in the early genesis of British environmentalism' has been undervalued because of 'the close connections between the anti-affluence ideals of both environmentalists and socialists, particularly those on the left of the Labour Party' have been neglected.⁶⁷ It is true that there are obvious linkages between the criticisms of affluence made by figures like Nye Bevan and those made by environmental campaigners. However, there are some important differences too. Most fundamentally, the Labour left's critique of affluence was not focused on its environmental impact. Additionally, while the Labour left were deeply critical of how the British and global economy worked during the 1960s and 1970s, they were not generally arguing for a move

⁶² McCormick, 1991 p.41; BLA, *Towards Survival*, October 1973

⁶³ O'Hara, 2017 p.27

⁶⁴ BLA, *Towards Survival*, April 1973

⁶⁵ BLA, *Towards Survival*, January 1973

⁶⁶ *The Ecologist*, Vol 4 No 5 June 1974, p.198

⁶⁷ Timothy Cooper, 'War on Waste?: The Politics of Waste and Recycling in Post-War Britain, 1950–1975', *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, Vol 20 No 4 2009a, p.63

to a no growth society.⁶⁸ Even among Labour Party supporters who were reconciled to the importance of environmental problems, the issue of economic growth was obviously a difficult area. For example, Bob Edwards, then Labour MP for Bilston, attended a conference on *A Blueprint for Survival* in 1972 and spoke positively about the text but he also admitted 'we want to increase growth'.⁶⁹ There were also other strains of thought within Labour which were actively hostile to the environmental movement. In 1971, prominent Labour politician, Anthony Crosland had argued that the 'anti-growth argument' reflected a 'set of middle- and upper-class value judgements' and amounted to an attempt by the affluent to 'kick the ladder down behind them'.⁷⁰ Jonathon Porritt later reflected that the perception of the environment as a middle class issue restricted Labour's engagement on it.⁷¹ As Mike Robinson argues, it is easy to see how many environmentalists would be in favour of 'socialism as advocated by William Morris', but 'the "state socialism" of Attlee and later Wilson, complete with nationalisation, centralisation and a commitment to industrial growth' was anathema to them.⁷²

For early PEOPLE/Ecology Party members there were very clear ideological differences between them and the Labour Party which have been outlined above. The important distinction was not capitalism and socialism but industrialism and growth. A good example of this is a letter from Clive Lord in *the Ecologist* which argued that Labour and the Liberals were 'not the natural vehicle for the ecological movement' because they were not able 'to adopt such a radically different philosophical basis' and politicians like Denis Healey had revealed themselves as 'unshakably growthist'.⁷³ Goldsmith had summarised the sentiments in an earlier edition of *the Ecologist* by suggesting that 'Socialism and Communism and, of course, Fascism too, are as committed to the industrialisation process as is Western Liberal Capitalism'.⁷⁴ Additionally, on a pragmatic level, PEOPLE/Ecology activists also did not think it was realistic to shift the thinking and focus of the Labour Party from within it. This view was expressed, in *the Ecologist* in 1978, by Colin Fry who

⁶⁸ See for example: John Campbell, *Nye Bevan and The Mirage of British Socialism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p.372

⁶⁹ Schwab, 1972 p.102

⁷⁰ Crosland, 1971 p.5

⁷¹ Jonathon Porritt Cited in McCormick, 1991 p.41

⁷² Robinson, 1992 p.56

⁷³ *The Ecologist*, Vol 6 No 5 June 1976, p.196

⁷⁴ *The Ecologist*, Vol 5 No 10 December 1975, p.367

highlighted that SERA had listed Peter Shore MP among its supporters, but he had supported the idea of a nuclear reprocessing plant at Windscale. For Fry this was perfect proof that to imagine Labour and 'the established political parties are amenable even to reasoned argument from the ecological groups within their own ranks, is to fool oneself'.⁷⁵

There is one final aspect of Labour's relationship with PEOPLE/the Ecology Party which was expressed by participants in interviews, though not a sentiment found in the archival material examined for this project. This is a feeling that the party appealed to and fitted with the general sensibilities of some members in a way that the Labour Party (and other parties) did not.

I wouldn't have been happy in the Labour Party...the Labour Party at that time was totally dominated by all these men who smoked all the time. I mean I went to a couple of trade union meetings, it was just dire.⁷⁶

...they were often racist those unions, they were certainly sexist and they were just not remotely appealing to a young middle class educated woman.⁷⁷

I think in those days if you were a lesbian feminist you would have joined any other party. Because they were so inimical to anybody like us at the time. They were just completely off the wall really and so patriarchal.⁷⁸

I think it's also true to say that the Labour Party for me was a deeply unattractive party...At that point if you were a woman going into politics you wouldn't go in to the Labour party.⁷⁹

These perceptions stand apart from the other ideas explored in this chapter because they do not directly relate to the environment (although this was something that these participants did emphasise as important as well). They are particularly interesting, however, as they are in line with Kitschelt's idea of green parties as 'left-libertarian' parties which contrast with older, more traditional left-wing parties.⁸⁰ This is an idea which was also

⁷⁵ *The Ecologist*, Vol 8 No 5, September/October 1978 p.179

⁷⁶ Claire Nash, Interview

⁷⁷ Participant 2, Interview

⁷⁸ Terry King, Interview

⁷⁹ Jean Lambert, Interview

⁸⁰ Kitschelt, 1988

expressed much later by the party's first MP, Caroline Lucas, who suggested that Labour 'failed to come to terms with the new progressive thinking that emerged in the 1960s, inspired by feminism, social reform and environmentalism'.⁸¹

6.2.6 The Conservative Party

During the 1970s, Conservative Party supporters and individuals on the mainstream right of British politics were not entirely dismissive of the rising tide of environmentalism. Andy Beckett shows, through Goldsmith's environmental advocacy (including with PEOPLE) and the involvement of some of his acquaintances from the Clermont Club in such campaigning, that some right-wing, establishment figures were open to the ecological politics developing at the time.⁸² Shortly after *A Blueprint for Survival* was published, the then Prime Minister, Edward Heath, had made receptive comments about it in the House of Commons and the Conservative Ecology Group (CEG) was established in 1977.⁸³ The group's secretary, Richard Williams, wrote to *the Ecologist* in 1978 to explain its two main purposes. First, it existed to encourage the Conservative Party to think in more 'realistic terms', and more specifically, to 'promote a more enlightened attitude to the central issue of economic growth'.⁸⁴ This aspect of the CEG was elaborated upon in an early leaflet which suggested that the group was particularly concerned with 'investigation of the claim that exponential growth is no longer sustainable' and, if this was shown to be the case, helping the party with contingency planning 'for a transition to a "steady state" economy'.⁸⁵ Although clearly more equivocal than PEOPLE/the Ecology Party, it is significant that the group was willing to countenance the idea of zero growth. Furthermore, in expressing this outlook, they employed the type of language common at the time in publications such as *the Ecologist* and deployed by early members of PEOPLE/the Ecology party.

Secondly, it was argued that the Ecology Party was weak and real change could only be achieved by converting one of the larger parties. Williams suggested that 'a political

⁸¹ Caroline Lucas, *Honourable Friends?: Parliament and the Fight for Change* (London: Portobello Books, 2015), p.225

⁸² Beckett, 2010 pp.234-40

⁸³ Talshir, 2002 p.191; Andrew Flynn & Philip Lowe, 'The Greening of the Tories' in W. Rudig (ed.) *Green Politics Two* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), p.15

⁸⁴ *The Ecologist*, Vol 8 No 1 January/February 1978, p.36

⁸⁵ DFPA, The Conservative Ecology Group, Outline Document, Undated (Accompanying a Letter from 23 May 1977)

party can only win power if it has money, mass support, experience, and above all, credibility...I wish the Ecology Party well but there is no point pretending it has any of these essential prerequisites'.⁸⁶ The CEG was thus conceived of as a bridge between the environmental movement and more established Conservative politicians, crucially those not yet converted to the environmental cause, who often 'still regard ecologists as cranks'.⁸⁷ The group claimed to be 'greatly encouraged by the receptive attitude' of many in the party and the Department of the Environment's first Secretary of State, Peter Walker, demonstrated how far senior party figures were willing to go on the issue.⁸⁸

There is certainly a need for economic growth but I think it's the basis of economic growth. We have got to move from the sort of system where we consume fundamental raw materials which will become very short or run out completely in a very short time. I do have very real concerns that the nature of growth at the present time is of a type that can cause very real disasters in a few decades hence...we've got to see that future growth takes into consideration qualities of cleanliness and quietness and matters such as that.⁸⁹

Walker's words also highlight the point that there were limits on the sympathy that Conservatives were willing to display, stopping short of arguing against economic growth. Much like the Labour Party, early Ecology Party members did not believe serious change in the Conservative Party's approach was achievable, though understanding their commitment to growth and the industrial economy came from links to business rather than unions. Reflecting in an interview, Claire Nash suggested that 'I'd been in the Tories...the Tory Party was so big you couldn't have an influence'.⁹⁰ A similar view was expressed by Anthony Whittaker (who had been a Conservative councillor) in correspondence with Richard Williams in *the Ecologist* in 1978: 'If he can persuade the Conservative Party from within to

⁸⁶ *The Ecologist*, Vol 8 No 1 January/February 1978, p.36

⁸⁷ DFPA, The Conservative Ecology Group, Outline Document, Undated (Accompanying a Letter from 23 May 1977)

⁸⁸ *The Ecologist*, Vol 8 No 1 January/February 1978, p.36

⁸⁹ BFI, 'A Chance to Meet', First Broadcast: BBC One London, 5 November 1972; Peter Walker clearly did not completely lose interest once he moved on from the DoE and was involved with CEG in the late 1970s (writing a piece for their promotional material): DFPA, 'The Department of the Environment: A Wasted Chance', Undated

⁹⁰ Claire Nash, Interview

change from a growth-orientated party to a non-growth orientated party then good luck to him.’⁹¹

6.2.7 The Liberal Party

Brian Doherty suggests that in terms of ‘goals and ideas’ when green parties were emerging ‘the social democratic parties were closer than any others to the Greens’.⁹² There is a strong case that in fact when PEOPLE emerged in Britain (and since), among the larger, established parties in Britain it was the Liberals rather than Labour that had the strongest environmental credentials.⁹³ MJD Roberts has highlighted the attention paid to the protection of common lands by Liberal MPs during the first Gladstone administration.⁹⁴ They debated the environment at their 1971 assembly and voted for a resolution at their 1974 assembly highlighting the need to consider the link between economic growth and environmental constraints.⁹⁵ A study looking at British political parties’ manifestos from 1959 onwards showed that the Liberal Party manifesto for the 1979 general election devoted, proportionately, more attention to environmental issues than any of the three main parties had previously done.⁹⁶ The booklet *Your Future with the Liberals*, published in 1979, included assembly resolutions on the environment, transport and energy. In 1979 the assembly voted for a resolution stating that ‘economic growth, as measured by GDP, is neither desirable nor achievable’.⁹⁷ Both parties were also positioning themselves in a similar fashion during the 1970s, as an alternative to the binary, left-right choice between the two main parties.

During the 1970s there was discussion among PEOPLE/Ecology Party activists about the Liberals’ green credentials and some amicable moves made by Liberals.⁹⁸ Paddy Ashdown (leader of the Liberal Democrats, 1988-99) attended an Ecology Party meeting,

⁹¹ *The Ecologist*, Vol 8 No 2 March/April 1978, p.72

⁹² Doherty, 1994 p.66

⁹³ Lowe & Goyder, 1983 p.74

⁹⁴ M.J.D. Roberts, ‘Gladstonian Liberalism and Environment Protection, 1865–76’, *The English Historical Review*, Vol 128 No 531 2013, pp.292–322

⁹⁵ Robinson, 1992 p.25 & p.152

⁹⁶ Neil Carter, ‘Party Politicization of The Environment in Britain’, *Party Politics*, Vol 12 No 6 2006, pp.753-54

⁹⁷ Tony Beamish, ‘The Greening of the Liberals?’, *The Journal of Liberal History*, Vol 21 (Winter) 1992, p.17

⁹⁸ PFPA Archive, Ecology Party Newsletter, October 1978; Pearson, 2019

before standing for the Liberals in Yeovil at the 1979 general election and Lord Beaumont, a Liberal Peer who eventually defected to the Greens in 1999, is on the attendee list of the Ecology Party's 1978 conference.⁹⁹ Bizarrely, Jeremy Thorpe, leader of the Liberal Party between 1967 and 1976, even tried to join the Ecology Party during his 1979 general election campaign in Devon - however, his membership application was rejected.¹⁰⁰ There was also contact between national figures in the parties about collaboration in the months prior to the 1979 general election. The Ecology Party 1977-78 'Chairman's Report' noted that the Liberals had 'put out tentative feelers' concerning local electoral arrangements with the Ecology Party.¹⁰¹ The discussions led to few material results and there was an immediate reaction against the idea by some members of the Ecology Party National Executive Committee (NEC) and the wider membership.¹⁰² However, the Liberal Party provided a list of constituencies where 'green Liberals' were standing in 1979 and the Ecology Party alerted them on where they were standing candidates. There were at least two seats selected by the Ecology Party to consciously avoid competing with a Liberal candidate.¹⁰³ When interviewed for this thesis, the President of the Liberals from 1978-79 suggested that he had been interested in collaborating with the Ecology Party because he had noticed PEOPLE had polled well in February 1974 in two seats with no Liberal candidate.¹⁰⁴

Ultimately, however, PEOPLE/the Ecology Party activists were sceptical about the Liberal Party for the same reasons that they were about the Labour and Conservative parties. At a PEOPLE meeting in 1974 activists discussed the notion of disbanding PEOPLE and joining forces with the Liberals. This was decided against on the grounds that, while the Young Liberals were sympathetic to their ideas, the wider party was not ready to take on their radical policies.¹⁰⁵ The divide between Liberals who broadly accepted many of the arguments put forward by PEOPLE/the Ecology Party and PEOPLE/the Ecology Party members is demonstrated well by another letter exchange in *the Ecologist*. Ecology Party

⁹⁹ PFPA Archive, Ecology Party Newsletter, January 1979; 'The Rev Lord Beaumont of Whitley', *The Telegraph*, 11th April 2008, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1584656/The-Rev-Lord-Beaumont-of-Whitley.html> accessed 28 July 2017; MBPA, Ecology Party Conference Notes, September 1978

¹⁰⁰ LWPA, Jeremy Thorpe Letter to Anthony Whittaker, 23 April 1979; LWPA, Jeremy Thorpe Letter to Jonathan Tyler, 28 April 1979; Pearson, 2019

¹⁰¹ PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report, 1977-78

¹⁰² Pearson, 2019

¹⁰³ MSP, Jonathan Tyler Letter to Doreen Elton, 6 March 1979

¹⁰⁴ Michael Steed, Interviewed on 15 February 2019 by Mitya Pearson

¹⁰⁵ MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Area Organizers' Open Meeting, Liverpool, 9 November 1974; Pearson, 2019

activist Clive Lord argued that ‘the Liberal Party has been skillful [sic] in fostering the illusion that it is [the] natural vehicle for the ecological movement’ but ‘ultimately dodges the crucial issue of what the Liberals actually intend to do about zero growth’.¹⁰⁶ A Liberal councillor wrote a response explaining that he was also ‘dissatisfied with the Liberal Party stance’ but believed it could be ‘converted to a coherent no-growth philosophy’, and if he ‘did not believe that’ he ‘would join the Ecology Party’. The letter also makes a familiar argument about the greater capacity of a larger party to make progress but suggests the Liberals’ ‘tradition of radical and open thinking’ made it a much more appropriate vehicle for ecological politics than Labour or the Conservatives.¹⁰⁷

David Steel, Liberal Leader, between 1976-1988, appeared on the Radio Four Show *It’s Your Line* in 1976 and was challenged by the Ecology Party’s first councillor over whether he supported economic growth. At first, he was confused by the question but finally came down on the side of ‘the right kind of economic growth’.¹⁰⁸ It was noted in the newsletter that ‘Hopefully misguided ecologists in the Liberal Party will make careful note of this’.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, while acknowledging the Liberals were supportive on the environment those individuals in the newer, dedicated party were not willing to dilute their message within a larger party. They were attracted to a party that was united in its desire to put forward a radical programme. This view is observable in a retrospective account from Tim Cooper, who joined the Ecology Party in the late 1970s, and a recording of an interview with an Ecology Party candidate, Nick Bagnol, in the lead up to the 1979 general election.

Having been a member of Friends of the Earth for several years...I mean the Liberals they went through different cycles. At the time they weren’t very green.¹¹⁰

The Liberal Party often concern themselves with ecological matters but they are not fully committed to a sustainable society. They are trying to compete on the same

¹⁰⁶ *The Ecologist*, Vol 5 No 10, December 1975, p.395

¹⁰⁷ *The Ecologist*, Vol 6 No 3, March/April 1976, p.116

¹⁰⁸ BBC Written Archives, *It’s Your Line 22 December 1976 (Tape Transcript)*; Pearson, 2019

¹⁰⁹ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, December 1976/January 1977

¹¹⁰ Tim Cooper, Interview

terms as the other two parties. That is they are looking for a growth economy and a growth economy cannot continue indefinitely.¹¹¹

Arguably, those in PEOPLE/the Ecology Party were vindicated as a LEG manifesto observed in 1985 that 'the extent to which the Party's policy is based on ecological principles is still limited'.¹¹²

6.3 Pressure Groups

It is often highlighted that Britain has one of the oldest, largest (proportionate to the population) and most established environmental movements in the world.¹¹³ The expansion in the number of environmental campaign groups in the 1960s and 1970s included the creation of organisations like Friends of the Earth and the Conservation Society which were, in some ways, distinct from more traditional conservation groups in terms of their tactics and radical demands.¹¹⁴ Having examined why early party members were not content to pursue their aims through the more established political parties, this chapter now examines why they were not prepared to pursue them solely through pressure group activity. Many, though not all, of the individuals interviewed for this thesis had also been longstanding members of pressure groups. This section is again divided between, first, an examination of why the founders felt the need to add the party to the milieu of pressure group activity and then, second, why the early members wanted to join it in addition to, or instead of, pressure groups.

6.3.1 The Founders

A 1979 article in *Undercurrents* magazine argued that the impediments to setting up a small party, such as the electoral system, made it very difficult for a new party to achieve any impact and that an environmental party was premature because of the low level of environmental awareness in Britain. It suggested that it was therefore more important to

¹¹¹ Hampshire Record Office, Nick Bagnol 1979 Ecology Party General Candidate (Chichester), Radio Solent Broadcast, 24 April 1979, Ref: AV74/CSN3/S1

¹¹² LEG Manifesto 1985, Cited in Robinson, 1992 p.152

¹¹³ Rootes, 1995a p.66

¹¹⁴ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.270

engage in pressure group activity to raise the profile of environmental issues.¹¹⁵

Unsurprisingly, the founders of PEOPLE had a different perspective and there are two main reasons why they felt the need to add to pressure group activity on the environment. First, there was a tactical belief that through the direct, party political activity of contesting elections it would be possible to place greater pressure on existing politicians and parties to respond to environmental issues. The quotes below from Lesley Whittaker and Michael Benfield highlight this view.

Lesley Whittaker: The Conservation Society, I hesitate because it was known pejoratively as the conversation society, they didn't do anything they just talked about it. But they'd been going for about ten years by then.¹¹⁶

Michael Benfield: We looked at the whole issue of pressure groups and there were so many pressure groups that weren't going anywhere and weren't doing anything. The only form of pressure group that was going to be effective was one that hit the politicians where it hurt.

Lesley Whittaker: In the ballot box.

Michael Benfield: Exactly that.¹¹⁷

Both were expressing similar ideas during the 1970s. Michael Benfield suggested in *Good Earth* magazine that PEOPLE had been formed because attempts at lobbying existing parties 'were merely being swept aside' and 'only lip service was being paid to the demands of pressure groups', meaning there was a need for 'direct confrontation on the political platform at election time'.¹¹⁸ Similarly, Lesley Whittaker suggested that many of the 'environmental lobby' groups might 'want little more than an opportunity to engage in the satisfying exercise of debating the problems' and were content to merely talk about 'how dreadful it all is that no political action is taken'.¹¹⁹ They clearly felt a sense that, through

¹¹⁵ UOA, *Undercurrents*, Issue 32 February-March 1979, https://issuu.com/undercurrents1972/docs/_uc33_mar10a accessed 6 September 2019

¹¹⁶ The Founders, Interview

¹¹⁷ The Founders, Interview

¹¹⁸ BLA, *Good Earth*, Issue 9, Undated but Likely to be 1975

¹¹⁹ MBPA, Lesley Whittaker Letter to Alan Pickard, 26 May 1973

their approach, they would be able to achieve action on the issues they were so concerned about it in a way that environmental pressure groups could not have. Secondly, aside from a purely tactical consideration, they saw PEOPLE as taking a different approach to the pressure groups, viewing the environment much more holistically. This is demonstrated in a series of short excerpts from interviews with the founders.

Lesley Whittaker:...everybody was doing something individual, nobody was sort of saying this all relates. It's a holistic issue...Nobody was linking it up.

Michael Benfield: People could not grasp the holistic nature of what we were talking about.¹²⁰

Lesley Whittaker:...we were aware then, that there was a huge upsurge of single issue pressure groups, if you look at the dates you'll find that about then Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, the Soil Association was old and well established...

Lesley Whittaker: Instead of fragmenting things like Save the Whale or whatever we were saying that you need to take decisions about this and the only way you can do it is by being in Parliament.

Lesley Whittaker: The idea of having a new political party was the only level at which you could take action about these issues, was government level, nothing else was relevant.¹²¹

Pressure groups are naturally more drawn to individual campaigning topics than parties, but the idea that all the environmental campaign groups which were operating at the time PEOPLE was set up were single issue in character is unfair. The Conservation Society, for example, had many very similar ideas as PEOPLE and had been formed 'in the belief that without an attack on the fundamental problems of economic and population growth, individual problems such as pollution, and the threat to the urban and rural environment, were insoluble and the efforts of the more specialist societies irrelevant'.¹²²

¹²⁰ The Founders, Interview

¹²¹ The Founders, Interview

¹²² Stuart Brookes & Jeremy Richardson, 'The Environmental Lobby in Britain', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 28 March 1974, p.313

However, what is important is the perception of the founders that the nature of pressure group campaigning would necessarily be piecemeal and focused on individual causes.

Michael Benfield described in *Good Earth* magazine how environmental pressure groups were operating in 'something of a vacuum' and 'narrowly based' and so did not have 'full consideration of the interaction' of environmental problems.¹²³ Similarly, Lesley Whittaker argued that 'if you cannot influence a Government to take the course you advocate, you must form one', suggesting that 'all the [environmental] problems relate to each other', which therefore requires 'planning at Government level, not random pressures'.¹²⁴

Achieving the fundamental changes to the economy and society which the founders desired therefore appeared to require them to take power directly. Additionally, the founders felt that the party could be a coordinating force for the whole environmental movement and an early leaflet stated that 'PEOPLE aims to be the glue for the many concerned environmental and sociological factions within our Society'.¹²⁵

6.3.2 Early Members

Some of the early members' motivations appear slightly random. For example, one person joined PEOPLE rather than a pressure group simply because it was the first environmental organisation with which they came into contact.¹²⁶ However, generally it is possible to discern patterns of thought among early members similar to those of the founders, divided between tactical considerations and differences in approaches. In terms of tactical considerations, there was a view expressed by interviewees that the party was attractive because it provided a complementary, additional source of pressure on environmental issues, both in terms of just being another supportive voice but also being something clearly distinct from the existing pressure groups.

[I joined the party because it was] Just another platform, it was just another way of bringing people's attention to a certain set of issues.¹²⁷

¹²³ BLA, *Good Earth*, Issue 9, Undated but Likely to be 1975

¹²⁴ MBPA, Lesley Whittaker Letter to Alan Pickard, 26 May 1973

¹²⁵ BBPA, A Precis of PEOPLE's Policies Leaflet, Undated

¹²⁶ Bill Badger, Interview

¹²⁷ Biff Vernon, Interview

I just thought we needed the extra voice in the election at various levels.¹²⁸

I think it's a multi-pronged thing.¹²⁹

This was a sentiment echoed by Jonathan Tyler, then chair of the party's NEC, in an article for *Good Earth* where he highlighted that the party was 'not just another pressure group' and would 'not duplicate' the work of such organisations.¹³⁰ In the same article, Tyler suggested that while pressure groups like the Conservation Society and Friends of the Earth might achieve 'isolated victories' real change would 'only come from the election of a wholly new-style of politician'.¹³¹ Similar ideas were expressed by early members throughout the 1970s. For example, in *Towards Survival* Clive Lord contrasted the political action of PEOPLE with the 'talking shop' of a campaign group and Steve Lambert argued in *Vole* that 'the only effective course is to get involved in the formal political machinery'.¹³² Stewart Biggar, who was noted in the early part of this chapter as being unable to recall why he joined the party, rather than just pursuing pressure group activity, reflected on the 1979 general election in *Undercurrents*, by stating that party political activity was needed because the other parties merely paid 'lip service' to pressure groups.¹³³ The idea that in order to have real impact there was a need to either take power directly or at least threaten the other parties at elections was expressed retrospectively by interviewees too.

It was true then and it's true now. If you're going to get anything done, you've got to get into Parliament and change the rules.¹³⁴

Well the obvious argument is that it takes votes away whereas the others [pressure groups] don't.¹³⁵

I was involved in pressure group activity as well...From working in pressure groups I'd had experience of writing to MPs and things and being fobbed off.¹³⁶

¹²⁸ Adrian Williams, Interview

¹²⁹ David & Linda Whitebread, Interview

¹³⁰ BLA, *Good Earth*, Issue 17 1977

¹³¹ BLA, *Good Earth*, Issue 17 1977

¹³² BLA, *Vole*, January 1978

¹³³ Undercurrents Online Archive (Henceforth: UOA), *Undercurrents*, Issue 34 June-July 1979, https://issuu.com/undercurrents1972/docs/_uc33_mar10a accessed 6 September 2019

¹³⁴ Terry King, Interview

¹³⁵ David Kembell-Cook, Interview

¹³⁶ Cherry Durrant, Interviewed on 29 January 2018 by Mitya Pearson

Much like the party founders, early members were not just making a tactical calculation about how best to further their environmental aims. There was also a belief that the party represented a different approach which was more holistic and radical than that of the environmental pressure groups.

...why did I think a political party was the way forward? I think it was still this idea of economic growth, Greenpeace were sort of looking at different issues here and there, you know, whales and marine pollution, these kind of things. While we were saying we've got to rethink the way we structure things it seemed to me a political party was the way to achieve that.¹³⁷

Because a party was more national and it was regarded slightly differently, a pressure group is a one issue group whereas a party covers more than one issue.¹³⁸

It's just that suddenly when I realised there was actually a political party that was, in a focused way, trying to bring several different strands together...I found that quite exciting.¹³⁹

These ideas were echoed in Ecology Party leaflets during the 1970s, where it was suggested that 'a sustainable society' was only likely to be achieved through 'a carefully coordinated programme of change' but 'because power in our society is mostly held by politicians it is likely that it will only be carried out when these politicians in power are also ecologically minded.'¹⁴⁰ In another leaflet it is argued that the Conservation Society, Friends of the Earth and others had 'similar objectives to the Ecology Party', but they would be making 'piecemeal adjustments through other parties.'¹⁴¹ Much like ideas expressed by the founders and other early members in interview, at the 1978 launch of the Norwich party branch, one of the speeches is reported in the newsletter as having focused on the potential for the Ecology Party to 'draw the strings together' of the many environmental pressure groups.¹⁴² Britain's large and active environmental movement has often been compared to its, by international standards, weak green party. Jonathon Porritt argued in 1979 that 'no

¹³⁷ Geoff Garbett, Interview

¹³⁸ Participant 5, Interviewed on 6 April 2017 by Mitya Pearson

¹³⁹ Richard Oldfield, Interview

¹⁴⁰ LMPA, Ecology Party 'When? What? Why? Where? How?' Leaflet, 1975 (Date added by archivist)

¹⁴¹ LWPA, The Ecology Party Leaflet, July 1977

¹⁴² PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, May 1978

country in the world has a higher percentage of its population pursuing hobbies or supporting pressure groups which in one way or another...demonstrate some degree of environmental awareness' but 'the majority of voters uncomplainingly endorse candidates of the three major parties'. He also criticised the 'intellectual inconsistency' of signing 'a petition against nuclear power one day' and voting 'for the Tory/Labour candidate the next'.¹⁴³ Rudig and Lowe suggested in 1986 that in the UK 'approximately one person in ten belongs to an environmental group', a combined support of around three million, but suggested few of these people 'identify with the Ecology Party'.¹⁴⁴ In the 1990s, Chris Rootes described the paradox of the large environmental lobby in Britain with only a very weak green party.¹⁴⁵

Generally, scholars have discussed the separateness of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party and the broader environmental movement in terms of the reluctance of pressure groups to be publicly associated with it. Explanations offered include the need for campaign groups to remain politically neutral and the party's lack of electoral success. What is perhaps most interesting is the simple point raised by Porritt: why did the rank and file membership of environmental pressure groups not automatically join the party? Philip Lowe and Jane Goyder suggested that the party could be distinguished from pressure groups by its 'distinct ecological ideology linked to a broad social programme' and it has also been suggested that the perceived radicalism of the party has discouraged environmental pressure groups from embracing it.¹⁴⁶ This thesis has added to this idea. While it is not necessarily true that all pressure groups were entirely distinct in terms of ideology (the aforementioned Conservation Society for example), party members clearly felt that the comprehensive, radical and holistic nature of the changes they were seeking meant their aims were best served by a party rather than a pressure group. This helps explain why environmental pressure group members would not necessarily join or vote for the party. A high level of commitment was required to wish to see an ecological party enact a programme of fundamental change. Many people were merely concerned about the environment but

¹⁴³ *The Ecologist*, Vol 9 No 1 January/February 1979, p.20

¹⁴⁴ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.270

¹⁴⁵ Rootes, 1995a p.66

¹⁴⁶ Lowe and Goyder, 1983 p.73; Rudig & Lowe 1986a p.270

ultimately wished to maintain a broadly similar social and economic system. They would therefore vote for one of the main political parties.

6.4 Democracy and Political Activity

This chapter has focused on why early PEOPLE/Ecology Party members felt the party was a necessary addition to the existing political parties and pressure groups. There are two more basic questions, however, which relate to this and these will be dealt with briefly at this point. The first is why early members decided to engage in democratic politics at all and the second is why they were willing to partake in conventional political activity. The question of democratic politics is pertinent because there have long been arguments made about the incompatibility between environmental politics and democracy and, as was brought up by numerous interviewees, there was a strong sense of urgency to early party members' concerns.¹⁴⁷ This research has not explored directly why the early members were committed to democratic means but, throughout the interviews conducted and archive material examined, there was either explicit commitment to, or implicit endorsement of, democratic means and no examples of support for anti-democratic or revolutionary means. Indeed, as is discussed in Chapter 5, the environmental focus of the party immediately meshed with a deep commitment to democracy, including in the party's internal organisation. A 1977 party newsletter is worth noting here, a party member wrote an article suggesting that there were 'two specific tests' for every party policy: 'is it ecological?' and 'is it democratic/popular?'.¹⁴⁸ The 'Chairman's Report for 1977-78' argued that 'a revolution of the traditionally championed kind' was not the way forward and the party's aims of political transformation would have to be implemented 'through the political process, however, imperfect'.¹⁴⁹

Political activity is worth considering because there has been a longstanding perception among many individuals that engaging in conventional political activity is inimical to green politics. This idea has had an impact on the party in the sense that it has always maintained some level of commitment to organising itself and approaching politics in a

¹⁴⁷ Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil* (Bourne End: Kensal, 1985); Geoff Garbett, Interview; Dennis Nightingale-Smith, Interview; Terry King, Interview; David Taylor, Interview

¹⁴⁸ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, June/July 1977

¹⁴⁹ PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report 1977-78

different way to other parties and not simply having distinct policies. The debate is illustrated well by entries in *Vole* magazine. Martin Stott, who was involved in the Oxford Ecology Movement in the late 1970s, argued that an ecological party would have to 'accept the mores of the present dominant political parties' to get anywhere and would need to fit in with 'the political system as it stands'.¹⁵⁰ The counter-view was offered by Steve Lambert who argued that the only way to avoid being 'dictated to' was to take part in party politics 'however distasteful this may seem'.¹⁵¹ Many interview participants accepted the idea that political activity and the political system were in some way unpleasant, but they ultimately had made a calculation which came down on Lambert's side of the argument.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to help answer the question of why the party in the UK emerged by focusing on the issue of why the founders and early members felt a new party was a necessary addition to the existing political parties and pressure groups. Brian Doherty suggested that 'it seems likely that the Greens had to regard existing parties as ideologically unable to represent green politics before they recognised the need to form new parties.'¹⁵² This idea has been confirmed through exploration of the primary material related to the British case. The perceptions and views of the individuals involved at the time have been delineated and detailed as well as the specifics of the early relationships between PEOPLE/the Ecology Party and the three main parties in Britain. It has been argued that early party members felt that the radicalism of their demands, particularly their rejection of economic growth, meant that they did not believe they could realistically influence these parties from within and that they were attracted to a party which was seeking to transcend the left-right divide upon which the other parties competed. Early party members also felt pressure group activity was not sufficient, and that they needed to try to gain power directly and threaten the other parties; in their judgement, the party provided a more holistic approach to environmental issues.

¹⁵⁰ BLA, *Vole*, October 1978

¹⁵¹ BLA, *Vole*, January 1978

¹⁵² Doherty, 1994 p.66

There was some evidence for explanations not necessarily linked to the environment, specifically a sense that the party represented a more progressive and libertarian politics not adequately supported by the Labour Party. Overwhelmingly, however the explanations in this chapter for why the party was seen as a necessary addition to British politics related to the environment. This is an important finding. As set out in Chapter 2, new politics theories on the emergence of green parties have been criticised for not taking the environmental nature of green parties sufficiently seriously and seeking more generalised explanations at the expense of the obvious one.¹⁵³ The need to place the environment at the heart of explanations for the emergence of green parties is not a novel point. However, at least in the case of the party in the UK, where scholars have (convincingly) advanced this idea this has been in general, theoretical studies rather than explored through primary, historical research.¹⁵⁴ Rather than just repeating this point, one of the contributions of this thesis has been to demonstrate it clearly through a detailed examination of primary evidence gathering. Establishing this point suggests that for a fuller understanding of why the party emerged in the UK it is important to develop a concept of why the individuals involved in the party's early years came to be concerned about the environment. This is the topic of the next chapter.

¹⁵³ Rudig, 1990a

¹⁵⁴ Rudig, 1990a; Rudig & Lowe, 1986b; Williams, 1999

Chapter 7 - Party Members' Environmental Concerns: A Life Story Approach

7.1 Introduction

It has been established that the early activists involved in the party were motivated to form and join it, rather than another party or a pressure group, overwhelmingly because of factors related to their concern about the environment. This may seem a rather unremarkable point to make. Nonetheless, it is in fact something which places this thesis closer to one side of a debate within the literature on green parties and environmental politics. It follows that in order to understand more deeply why this party emerged when it did this thesis needs to investigate why these activists came to be concerned about environmental issues - their 'political socialization'.¹ As has been described in Chapter 2, the concern about environmental issues experienced by the individuals interviewed for this thesis clearly did not occur in a vacuum. The emergence of the party was part of a much broader increase in concern about environmental problems. Accordingly, this chapter engages not only with literature on green parties but the wider scholarly work which has, directly or indirectly, sought to explain the growth in environmental consciousness during the 1960s and 1970s. The case study of material examined here also provides an original contribution to this literature.

As set out in Chapter 2, if the explanation for the party's emergence lies principally in the state of the environment and the development of an associated cleavage, rather than broader social trends, then the process by which the party founders and early activists responded to environmental problems and embraced this new thinking is likely to have been a subtle one, that requires detailed consideration. This is reinforced by the fact that the emergence and success of green parties in different countries has a complicated relationship to objective environmental problems and levels of environmental consciousness.² As was also detailed in Chapter 2, this thesis is in part a response to the suggestions that there 'is a clear need for basic research on the significance people attach to

¹ D.T. Denver & J.M. Bochel, 1973 p.53

² Carter, 2007 p.110

changes in their own environment and what makes some translate concern into action' and only 'when the stories of far more' environmental activists have been heard 'will we begin to be surer about why some people care about their environment'.³ As Christopher Smout suggests, 'environmental consciousness' can vary in depth, nature and form of expression.⁴ The particular form considered in this thesis is the political manifestation of it. This chapter tells the story of how and why individuals in Britain came to be motivated to take part in political action on the environment in the 1960s and 1970s. The 50 interview participants spoken to for this project were asked about this directly and their answers form the basis for this chapter, borrowing from Stephen Hussey and Paul Thompson's 'life story' approach.⁵ Unlike the other chapters in this thesis, almost no archive material has been used here. This is principally because there is so little in the way of relevant material - these individuals were not generally documenting in detail their personal stories of how they came to be influenced to be concerned about the environment. It has therefore been necessary to retrieve these insights through interviews.

This chapter begins by reviewing some relevant aspects of the literature on environmental politics. It establishes that not only have the reasons why early members became concerned about the environment not been investigated before, but academic understanding of this process for individuals involved in the wider environmental movement is far from authoritative. It then discusses the material taken from the interviews conducted to develop this thesis. The answers given by participants were inevitably individualised and idiosyncratic. They did however fall into a series of themes which dictate the structure of this chapter. The chapter is divided into two main sections: micro- and macro-level issues. The former are those aspects of participants' pathways to political environmentalism which are more localised and narrow, namely personal connections to the natural world (often stemming from childhood) and direct encounters with different types of environmental threats. The latter relates to influences which directly pushed individuals towards a broader understanding of the global environment and its fragility, such as them becoming aware of books and magazines on the topic, personal travel experiences, their formal education and jobs as well as the general discussion and media attention about the environment. It should

³ Rudig & Lowe, 1986b p.518; Hussey & Thompson, 2000 p.17

⁴ Christopher Smout, *Exploring Environmental History: Selected Essays* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p.218

⁵ Hussey & Thompson, 2000

be noted that participants generally had multiple influences on their approach and accordingly different parts of their testimonies are often used in more than one section.

7.2 Existing Understanding of the Emergence of Modern Environmentalism

7.2.1 Developments in the 1960s and 1970s

In Chapter 2 many of the concrete aspects of the environmental politics of the 1960s and 1970s were outlined. Rather than adding further details to this in this section, it is useful to highlight the ways in which scholars have interpreted the novelty of what happened in this period. A unifying theme in much of the literature on the environmentalism of the 1960s and 1970s is cautiousness about declaring it an entirely new phenomenon. Interest in, and concern about, the natural environment had been seen before and, as will be examined in greater detail in the following section, the ideas owed a debt to much earlier thinkers and movements. However, while there were continuities with previous eras, it is also possible to see this period as constituting an ‘ecological turn’.⁶ The story of the environmentalism of the 1960s and 1970s is therefore also one of changes which fall into several categories. First, a notion of ideas coming together. Anna Bramwell suggests that what gave force to the environmentalism of this period was the fusion of resource-scarcity economics with holistic biology.⁷ For Timothy Cooper, the energy crisis combined with the fears of future environmental catastrophe to ‘give brief popular resonance to predictions of the impending collapse’.⁸ Secondly, the sheer reach and popularity of environmental concern. Cooper argues that what ‘was novel about the 1970s’ was the filtration of concerns about resources and social and economic sustainability ‘into an emerging popular environmental politics’.⁹ Richard Kimber and JJ Richardson, writing in the 1970s, highlighted a quote from an *Observer* article in 1971 which complains that ‘You can’t put a shovel to the ground anywhere on this planet any more without a Society Against surrounding you and saying: “Fie”’. They suggested that there was also a new level of interest in the environment among

⁶ Jens Ivo Engels, ‘Modern Environmentalism’ in F. Uekoetter (ed.), *The Turning Points of Environmental History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), p.119

⁷ Bramwell, 1989 p.xi & p.211

⁸ Cooper, 2009a P.59

⁹ Timothy Cooper, ‘Modernity and the Politics of Waste in Britain’, in S. Sörlin & P. Warde (eds.) *Nature’s End* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009b), p. 264

the media. Significantly, the environment is suggested to have not only become newsworthy but permeated popular culture in programmes such as *The Archers* and *Softly Softly*.¹⁰

Thirdly, environmental problems and threats to nature began to be articulated in terms of a global and connected challenge. Phil Macnaghten argues that a dominant storyline emerged of the 'fragile earth' under stress from human action and in need of care and protection from an imagined global community.¹¹ Fourthly, this period saw the development of a much more holistic form of environmental activism and thinking than pre-existing conservationism, focusing on wider structural and political issues causing environmental problems.¹² As David Peterson del Mar puts it, growing numbers of people began to take issue with the road, not just the car beside it.¹³ Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that people were not only concerned about the road but who was building it and why. Finally, linked to this, new issues were brought into the fold of environmental campaigning and thinking. Kimber and Richardson suggested that longstanding issues of wildlife and plants, landscapes and buildings, and pollution, were joined by concerns about vehicles, aeroplanes, population and economic growth.¹⁴ Bjorn-Ola Linner highlights the American environmentalist David Bower's view that only in the mid-1960s had it become possible to question economic growth.¹⁵

7.2.2 Tracing the Origins of Modern Environmentalism

Much of the literature on environmental politics can be broadly grouped as attempts to identify and explore the historical roots of the environmental concern which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Discussion of nature and humanity's relationship to it has been a feature of Western political thought since the Ancient period and it is easy to wrongly attribute newness to environmental sentiment.¹⁶ For example, Gareth Jones suggests that before

¹⁰ John Crosby, *The Observer*, 28 February 1971 Cited in Richard Kimber & J.J. Richardson, 'Introduction' in R. Kimber & J.J. Richardson (eds.) *Campaigning for the Environment* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp.1-3

¹¹ Phil Macnaghten, 'Embodying the Environment in Everyday Life Practices', Vol 51 No 1 2003, *The Sociological Review*, p.65

¹² Veldman, 1994 pp.209-10

¹³ David Peterson del Mar, *Environmentalism* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2006), p. 124

¹⁴ Kimber & Richardson, 1974 p.4

¹⁵ Bjorn-Ola Linner, 2003 p.170

¹⁶ Glacken, 1992; Pepper, 1986 p.68

around 1970 the predominant attitude of old industrialised northern hemisphere countries was 'one of almost total indifference and ignorance of the environment' with 'no attention given to the impact a particular action might have upon the environment.'¹⁷ This clearly ignores the many prior examples of environmental interest. However, as outlined in Chapter 2, there is a degree of agreement in scholarly work in this area which suggests that many of the ideas of modern environmentalists can be traced back to developments around the time of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ Modern environmental politics is also commonly linked back to romanticism; the artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century. Romanticism can be defined simply as a worldview which believes that the methods of modern science cannot comprehend all of reality.¹⁹ This movement has been said to have provided what was missing from the renaissance: an appreciation of the beauty and detail of nature which was not based around the need to dominate and control it.²⁰ For Bramwell, the ecology movement is based on a shift from mechanistic to vitalist thought which took place in the late nineteenth century.²¹ The most developed examination of the modern British environmental movement's relationship to romanticism is Meredith Veldman's account of how post-war fantasy literature, anti-nuclear bomb protests and the emergence of a green movement all fit within the romantic tradition.²² The romantics are argued to share the following strands of thought with modern environmentalists and the other two movements: viewing the past as something to draw from and guide the present, an idea of Britain's uniqueness, anti-materialism, and the belief that ordinary people should shape their lives and community.²³ David Pepper draws similar parallels with the romantics, suggesting that William Morris had elaborated many of the themes which modern environmentalists 'discovered' many years later, but Pepper has also emphasised the duality of early environmental thought.²⁴ Modern

¹⁷ Gareth Jones, *People and Environment: A Global Approach* (New York: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), p. 38

¹⁸ Bramwell, 1989 p.23; Lowe & Goyder, 1983 p.1; McCormick, 1991 pp.1-16

¹⁹ Veldman, 1994

²⁰ Smout, 2011 p.227

²¹ Bramwell, 1989 p.xi

²² Veldman, 1994

²³ Veldman, 1994 p.310

²⁴ Pepper, 1996 p.214

environmental politics is seen as owing a debt not only to non-scientific, romantic ideas from the nineteenth century but also scientific ideas, such as Charles Darwin's.²⁵

Martin Wiener takes the links between the romantics and modern British environmentalism a stage further. Here, suspicion of technology, material advancement and industrialism in the nineteenth century and the desire to tame the dangerous engines of progress became enduring aspects of 'Englishness' whereby the 'idea' or 'heart' of England was very much a rural and pastoral one.²⁶ So, for Wiener, when EJ Misham published *The Costs of Economic Growth* in 1967 he was summing up a century of suspicion of industrialism and the organised environmental politics which emerged in this period was a longstanding cultural phenomenon which was coming of age.²⁷ Others have picked up the idea of pastoralism becoming central to ideas of Englishness during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries including through the emergence of the garden as a symbol of national identity, the 'folk revival' and development of the heritage industry.²⁸ Peter Mandler suggests that writing on pastoralism and Englishness has exaggerated the extent to which it became a dominant cultural mood as well as sometimes making misguided claims about the extent to which this was backward-looking. Nonetheless, he accepts that there was a substantial growth in popular interest in the countryside in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.²⁹ Another strand of thinking which is traced from the modern environmental movement back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is Malthus's ideas about scarcity and population. Linner views the global environmental concern which emerged in the 1960s as part of an international post-war development of neo-Malthusian thinking.³⁰ The similarities in thinking are undeniable and the influential *Limits to Growth* study published in 1972 has been called 'Malthus with a computer'.³¹

²⁵ Pepper, 1986 p.68

²⁶ Martin Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.5 & p.51

²⁷ Wiener, 2004 p.94 & p.165

²⁸ Anne Helmreich, *The English Garden and National Identity: the Competing Styles of Garden Design, 1870-19* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry* (London: Methuen, 1987); Heinz Wolfgang Arndt, *The Rise and Fall of Economic Growth: a Study in Contemporary Thought* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1978); Standish Meacham, *Regaining Paradise: Englishness and the Early Garden City Movement* (London: Yale University Press, 1998)

²⁹ Peter Mandler, 'Against 'Englishness': English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol 7 1997, pp.155-75

³⁰ Bjorn-Ola Linner, 2003 p.151

³¹ Christopher Freeman, 'Malthus with a Computer', in H. Cole, C. Freeman, M. Jahoda, and K. Pravitts (eds.), *Models of Doom: A Critique of the Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe, 1973) Cited in John Dryzek,

Martin Schoijet has grouped modern environmentalists together with original Malthusians as ‘catastrophists’ who shared a similar core message that if present trends were allowed to continue it would end in disaster.³²

While these perspectives, which are concerned with understanding the history of ideas, are useful in illuminating the nature of environmental thinking they are not directly explaining why there was an awakening of environmental thought during the 1960s and 1970s. As Pepper acknowledges, longstanding ideas can be compared to those of the modern environmental movement, but they do not necessarily have a direct causal link to their re-emergence.³³ For example, Jonathan Bate highlights the commonalities between William Wordsworth’s ideas and modern ecology, suggesting that Wordsworth should be seen as a pioneer of the ecological movement.³⁴ However, the commonalities do not have much explanatory power as to how or why decades later individuals started forming and joining environmental campaign groups. Put differently, while later campaigners expressed similar sentiments to Wordsworth they were not necessarily directly informed or influenced by his writing. So ‘efforts to explain a putative greening of Britain’ illuminate the ‘discursive structure of modern environmentalism’ but have less to say about ‘why such struggles have political purchase in the first place.’³⁵ This chapter responds to this challenge and the idea that less attention has been paid to the ‘individual experiences’ of environmental activists than subjects like group structures and ideologies.³⁶

7.2.3 Direct Explanations for the Emerging Environmentalism in the 1960s and 1970s

In addition to studies of the environmental activism of the 1960s and 1970s which have categorised it, debated its novelty and traced its intellectual roots, there have been more direct examinations of the process by which individuals came to be motivated for political action on the environment during this period. The experience of the party’s early members

The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.30

³² Martin Schoijet, ‘Limits to Growth and the Rise of Catastrophism’, *Environmental History*, Vol 4 No 4 1999, p.515

³³ Pepper, 1996 p.5

³⁴ Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991)

³⁵ Timothy Cooper, ‘Waste and “Everyday Environmentalism” in Modern Britain’, *Open Library of Humanities*, Vol 3 No 2 2017, p.23

³⁶ Andrea Zhouri, ‘Pathways to the Amazon’ in S. Hussey & P. Thompson (eds.) *The Roots of Environmental Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.174

has not been investigated though, and the discussion that exists of why people got involved in the broader environmental movement during this period has not come to a clear or authoritative understanding about this. For example, Philip Lowe's examination of local environmental groups in Britain published during the 1970s highlighted how the rapid rise in their number had coincided with the point that public participation in planning decisions had been encouraged.³⁷ Conversely, Stephen Cotgrove suggested a few years later that environmentalism could be explained by people protesting against their exclusion from decision-making processes.³⁸ Cotgrove also makes a broader argument, based on surveys conducted with different groups of people in Britain during the 1970s, including traditional conservationists, industrialists and new environmentalists (drawn from Friends of the Earth and the Conservation Society), that people's environmental concern was ultimately determined by their (post-material) values.³⁹ The weaknesses of such an approach have been discussed in Chapter 2.

Another area of contention has been the extent to which environmentalism is related to actual environmental problems or if it is bound up with broader concerns. Jones' explanation for the awakening of international environmental concern in this period is focused upon physical environmental concerns, namely the oil crisis, population growth, species extinction and increasing voices highlighting these problems.⁴⁰ However, in Allan Schnaiberg's account of the emergence of the environmental movement in America in the 1960s and 1970s, environmental problems and increased awareness of them can only be part of the story as he argues that the relevant technical information had been available for decades before this. Increased concern was thus not the result of a sudden crisis or new type of information.⁴¹ Patrick Kupper goes even further, arguing that the environmental consciousness in the 1970s was not necessarily linked to the actual state of the

³⁷ Philip Lowe, 'Amenity and Equity: A Review of Local Environmental Pressure Groups in Britain', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, Vol 9 No 1 1977, pp.35-58

³⁸ Cotgrove, 1982 p.95

³⁹ Cotgrove, 1982

⁴⁰ Jones, 2004 p.43

⁴¹ Allan Schnaiberg, 'Politics, Participation, and Pollution: The 'environmental movement'', in J. Walton and D.E. Carns (eds.), *Cities in Change: Studies on the Urban Condition* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1977), p.465

environment, but was a social and cultural phenomenon linked to women's rights and youth unrest.⁴²

Knowing more about the process by which early party members came to be concerned about the environment is crucial to answering the question of why the party emerged. This is particularly necessary because not only has this case study not been studied before but current academic understanding of individuals' reasons for getting involved in the environmental movement more broadly during the 1960s and 1970s, in Britain and abroad, is patchy. However, several useful ideas have been put forward by different researchers, which will be referred to in order to give context to the primary material examined here. To investigate early members' motivations, looking at how and why they came to be interested in the environment, this chapter employs the life story approach which has been used by Hussey and Thompson to explore environmental consciousness in other contexts. Their study examined the broad realisation that nature is not an inexhaustible resource which can be plundered indefinitely to satisfy humanity's immediate needs which was said to be 'one of the most profound changes in human consciousness over the last 50 years'. Hussey and Thompson explored this change in consciousness through a collection of global case studies from different time periods and places which aimed to illuminate what it is in people's lives that gives them an environmental consciousness and leads a minority to activism on the issue.⁴³ The following sections look in detail at aspects of the life stories of early party members, collected in interviews, beginning with the 'micro-level issues' of personal experiences of nature and participants directly encountering environmental threats.

7.3 Micro-Level Influences

7.3.1 Experiences of Nature

Niamh Moore conducted interviews with ecofeminists in north-east England during the 1990s. A common theme among the participants' accounts was their passion for gardening

⁴² Patrick Kupper, 'Die "1970er Diagnose": Grundsätzliche Überlegungen zu einem Wendepunkt der Umweltgeschichte', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, Vol 43 2003. pp.325-48 Cited in Engels, 2010 p.124

⁴³ Hussey & Thompson, 2000 pp.1-17

and one of the participants pinpointed their experience of tree-planting as a child as key to their becoming interested in the environment.⁴⁴ Individuals having a personal affinity and connection to the natural environment is clearly not a phenomenon which suddenly emerged shortly in advance of the political environmentalism of the 1960s and 1970s. Pepper suggests that in the eighteenth century attitudes to wilderness in Britain had begun to change so that value and beauty were now seen in it and it was no longer regarded as purely barren.⁴⁵ Paul Readman argues that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though groups like the Commons Preservation Society and National Trust had small memberships, their ideas reach across different levels of society because of the value people placed on certain natural landscapes.⁴⁶ However, many of the individuals interviewed for this project identified some kind of personal experience of nature as a key influence on their journey to becoming environmental activists, three of which are quoted at length below.

I did have an experience when I was 16. What I call a wilderness experience where I had a realisation that the single most important thing was life itself. And I was going to give myself to that. That was an experience in the Somerset countryside. There was always trouble at home with my father being an alcoholic so I used to spend a huge proportion of every day walking outside. I would escape to the fields and I would walk the woods and the fields and I became really interested in herbs and so developed a great interest and knowledge of herbs and just one occasion. I remember it was a spring morning and it was just like a kind of road to Damascus moment. I just felt an incredible feeling and had this absolute conviction that I would give my life to working for the environment one way or another.⁴⁷

But I think I'd just been brought up to being interested in green stuff. You know when you're a kid in those days your school used to do all this green stuff, you used to go out for walks.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Niamh Moore, 'Paths to Ecofeminist Activism' in S. Hussey & P. Thompson (eds.) *The Roots of Environmental Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.161

⁴⁵ Pepper, 1986 p.80

⁴⁶ Paul Readman, 'Preserving the English Landscape, c.1870–1914', *The Journal of the Social History Society*, Vol 5 No 2, 2008, p.198

⁴⁷ David Taylor, Interview

⁴⁸ Claire Nash Interview

[My parents] were still very much outside country people, my father had his own name for birds, old local midland names for birds which I learned and didn't know much more about that. But I just, we had picnics, we went out, we did things, we got in the car and went to the Cotswolds and things like that which I loved...So I was ripe for being attracted to the environmental movement but I didn't go out looking for it.⁴⁹

Other interviewees highlighted experiences like 'being a member of the Young Ornithologist Club' and early interest in and experience of farming.⁵⁰ One participant did not highlight memories of a specific experience of nature but brought up the fact that 'my father had always been keen on the natural world and watched all the nature programmes on TV...so I was brought up in that kind of respect for the environment atmosphere.'⁵¹ Another did not go back to childhood but simply said that when they got involved in environmental campaigning they were living in the countryside 'so it made a lot of sense'.⁵²

7.3.2 Local Environmental Threats

One theme of academic understanding of environmental consciousness is that of individuals encountering local environmental threats and this imbuing them with concern about that specific issue and, then, often the wider context of environment politics more generally. Starting with some international examples, Cody Ferguson's story of American grassroots environmentalism in the twentieth century was one of activists being drawn into campaigning activity by some form of direct experience of an environmental threat.⁵³ Holger Nehring's account of the emergence of the environment as a political phenomenon in West Germany highlights the importance of examples of local communities reacting to developments such as the building of a nuclear reactor in Wyhl in 1975.⁵⁴ Andrew Tompkins'

⁴⁹ Bill Badger, Interview

⁵⁰ Participant 4, Interview; Roger House, Interviewed on 17 March 2017 by Mitya Pearson; Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

⁵¹ John Luck, Interview

⁵² Terry King, Interview

⁵³ Cody Ferguson, *This Is Our Land: Grassroots Environmentalism in the Late Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), p.4

⁵⁴ Holger Nehring, 'Genealogies of the Ecological Moment: Planning, Complexity and the Emergence of the 'the Environment' as Politics in West Germany, 1949-1982', in S. Sörlin & P. Warde (eds.) *Nature's End* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.126

detailed exploration of the protests against nuclear power development in France and West Germany in the 1970s expands upon this narrative.⁵⁵ Finally, the Finnish Green Party developed in part from opposition to a lake drainage project.⁵⁶ In the UK context, Lowe's assessment of local environmental groups in the 1970s suggested that community environmental interest was generally borne of a dispute over issues like a new road or industrial development.⁵⁷ These examples run counter to Phil Macnaghten's argument that there may have been a recent shift in environmental politics so that in a more individualised society 'the experience of environmental risk may be becoming less about "saving the planet" and the plight of distant others such as the rainforest, the whale, the tiger'. Thus environmental concern is supposedly becoming important 'in terms of how it confronts the individual, when it meets "me", "head on", "in here"'.⁵⁸ Such a view is difficult to reconcile with the idea that a foundational element of environmental politics in the 1960s and 1970s was a highly localised and individual experience of environmental threats inspiring people to campaign. This is one of the clear themes of the life stories examined during this research.

It has already been discussed in detail in Chapter 4 how roadbuilding projects in a number of PEOPLE/Ecology Party activists' local areas were important in influencing them to become interested in the environment. There are further examples of this, with one activist tracing their personal interest in the environment 'back to a time before I became a member when I was very active in opposing a huge number of motorways'.⁵⁹ Another similarly highlighted how before joining the party 'they'd been involved in stopping roadbuilding'.⁶⁰ This was not the only type of environmental threat which was important in awakening party members' environmental concern. For instance, Claire Nash, recalled:

I used to cycle a lot and I can't remember the exact name but there was a public open space, when I was a child, there was this particular public open space I used to go to and it was threatened with being 'improved', they called it. They were going to fill in the pond and do various things and build round it and I was heartily upset

⁵⁵ Tompkins, 2016 p.13

⁵⁶ Jukka Paastela, 'The Finnish Greens' in E. Frankland, P. Lucardie & B. Rihoux (eds.) *Green Parties in Transition: The End of Grass-roots Democracy?* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), p.63

⁵⁷ Lowe, 1977 p.38

⁵⁸ Macnaghten, 2003 p.68

⁵⁹ Alistair Laurence, Interviewed on 23 March 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁶⁰ Roger House, Interview

about this because this was my little bit of wild space on outskirts of Horsham somewhere. So I got really incensed and started campaigning about that.⁶¹

Party co-founder Lesley Whittaker highlighted some similar childhood examples which she saw as important in influencing her concern about the environment. First, the wild area where she 'used to go and play in fields...and catch sticklebacks' was earmarked for development, signalled by the arrival of 'men with clipboards'. This left her 'fighting for the green bit age seven or thereabouts...[and] really bitter that they'd taken that away from the local children.' Secondly, on a childhood holiday in a Cornwall village reliant on its fishing industry, she was struck by witnessing the disruption caused by a shortage of pilchards.⁶² Other forms of environmental threats in the places they lived were important in pushing early party members towards environmental politics. Living in Edinburgh during the 1970s, Linda Hendry highlighted the importance of the nearby anti-nuclear demonstrations taking place in opposition to the proposed Torness Nuclear power station, which eventually began to be constructed in 1980.⁶³ John Marjoram recalled how 'I was living down in Lowestoft and there was fluoride going to be put in the water and I thought how dare they force the medication in the water and impose it on you.'⁶⁴ John Ingham first got interested in the environment 'because I was living in an inner city area of Bristol. Heavily polluted.'⁶⁵

These examples comprise experiences from both urban and rural contexts, the emergence of a new developments such as roadbuilding, as well as more ongoing issues like air pollution. The question is how to make sense of this evidence. Even among this group of examples the experiences are varied and idiosyncratic, giving credence to the idea that perception of the environment is 'probably as unique to each person as are our fingerprints patterns.'⁶⁶ It is useful to go into further detail on the example of Torness nuclear power development. Wolfgang Rudig and Philip Lowe highlighted how anti-nuclear protest had not been an important factor in the party's emergence in the way it had in countries like France, Germany and Sweden. They suggested that the fact Britain did not embark on a crash

⁶¹ Claire Nash, Interview

⁶² The Founders, Interview

⁶³ Linda Hendry, Interviewed on 21 July 2017 by Mitya Pearson

⁶⁴ John Marjoram, Interview

⁶⁵ John Ingham, Interview

⁶⁶ Jones, 2004 p.34

nuclear programme in reaction to the 1970s oil crisis meant it had a comparatively weak anti-nuclear power campaign movement, which in turn helped to explain the relative weakness of the party in Britain.⁶⁷ However, in Scotland nuclear power was significant in the development of an Ecology Party group. There had been members from Scotland before, but it appears that it was only in the late 1970s that an organised and sustainable group emerged there, beginning in Edinburgh. A number of early Scottish members interviewed for this project highlighted how Torness helped encourage them into political activity on the environment and led to them meeting other like-minded people who they worked with in the party.⁶⁸

Many of the local examples provided here might appear little more than NIMBYism which can be defined as ‘the protectionist attitudes of and oppositional tactics adopted by community groups facing an unwelcome development in their neighbourhood’.⁶⁹ Jon Cope suggests that the term started being used widely among developers and then the media in the 1980s.⁷⁰ Scholars have tried to move beyond the idea of a NIMBY in understanding local environmental opposition. Cooper’s work on waste disposal in twentieth century Britain explores the idea of ‘everyday environmentalism’ with people and communities often pitted against bureaucrats and experts imposing developments which disrupt their everyday lives. Lurking behind this for Cooper are the ‘capitalist forces of production’.⁷¹ A feeling of losing control and having things imposed upon them is clearly an additional element of the process of the individuals discussed here becoming conscious of environmental issues, most clearly highlighted in the quotes about fluoride.⁷²

The evidence detailed in this chapter shows that for many early party members the experience of some form of environmental threat in their local area was a key influence on their path to political activism. Affluence has already been discussed in Chapter 4. Increased economic development and concurrent population increases in the post-war period clearly

⁶⁷ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.273

⁶⁸ Stewart Biggar, Interview; Participant 5, Interview; Linda Hendry, Interview; Bennie, 2004 p.19; Wolfgang Rudig, *Anti-Nuclear Movements: A World Survey of Opposition to Nuclear Energy* (Harlow: Longman, 1990a), p.182

⁶⁹ Michael Dear, ‘Understanding and Overcoming the NIMBY Syndrome’, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol 58 No 3 1992, p.288

⁷⁰ Jon Cope, ‘When is a NIMBY not a NIMBY?: The case of the St Dennis Anti-Incinerator Group’, *Cornish Studies*, Vol 18 No 1 2010, p.58

⁷¹ Cooper, 2017 pp.11-24

⁷² Organised campaigning against the introduction of fluoride had developed by the 1960s in Britain (O’Hara, 2017 p.221).

increased the incidence of people facing such threats. Something Veldman describes as a process by 'which the detritus of industrial affluence threatened to engulf the values and structures by which individuals made sense of their lives.'⁷³ There are some important caveats to citing this alone as explaining the party's emergence. First, these conditions in the years leading up to the 1960s and 1970s were not necessarily novel. There are definite parallels between the situations and ideas expressed by the participants in this research and past examples of opposition to railway expansion and reservoir development in the Lake District in the late nineteenth century and anxiety over the expansion of suburbia, roads and advertising hoardings in England in the inter-war years. Similarly, the individuals who highlighted some kind of personal experience of the natural world as key to their becoming environmental activists are far from unique; everyone who has ever lived has had some kind of encounter with the natural world. Secondly, how people react to local environmental threats is not predictable either. There was significant opposition to the development of a reservoir at Thirlmere in the Lake District in the 1870s and the Cow Green reservoir in the Pennines in the 1960s. Schemes in Yorkshire in the Washburn Valley in the 1860s and 1870s and in Thuscross in the 1960s aroused comparatively little protest.⁷⁴ Additionally, one of the challenging aspects for public officials looking to site waste disposal sites in twentieth century Britain was being able to predict where opposition would spring up.⁷⁵

This would then seem to support Bramwell's view that the strength of environmental concern is not directly linked with actual environmental problems.⁷⁶ However, despite the life story experiences of the activists interviewed for this research being far from unique historically speaking and their opposition to environmental problems not being a universally shared reaction at the time, their testimonies are important. Cooper makes the argument that 'the history of environmental politics should focus far more on environmentalism as a concrete social phenomenon emerging from lived experience'.⁷⁷ The evidence examined here suggests that this is the case. The political environmentalism of the

⁷³ Veldman, 1994 p.245

⁷⁴ Harriet Ritvo, *The Dawn of Green: Manchester, Thirlmere, and Modern Environmentalism* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p.2; Wilson, 2014 p.170; Andrew McTominay, 'A Tale of Two Yorkshire Villages: The Local Environmental Impact of British Reservoir Development, 1866-1966' (Unpublished Paper, Forthcoming in *Environment and History*, accepted 19 June 2018)

⁷⁵ Timothy Cooper and Sarah Bulmer, 'Refuse and the 'Risk Society': The Political Ecology of Risk in Inter-war Britain', *Social History of Medicine*, Vol 26 No 2 2013, pp.246-66

⁷⁶ Bramwell, 1989 p.3

⁷⁷ Cooper, 2017 p.1

1960s and 1970s in Britain, which the formation of a party was a part of, cannot be explained without at least reference to individuals' personal experiences of the natural world or their direct encounters with environmental threats.

7.4 Macro-Level Influences

The final section of this chapter examines macro-level influences which pushed individuals towards a broader understanding of the global environment and its fragility. These are categorised as party members becoming aware of relevant books and magazines, travel experiences, formal education and jobs as well as the general discussion and media attention about the environment.

7.4.1 Intellectual Influences

Table 20 - Books cited by Early Party Members as Key Influences⁷⁸

<u>Book Title</u>	<u>Date Published</u>	<u>Author(s)</u>	<u>Outline of Text</u>	<u>Cited as An Influence By</u>
Brave New World	1932	Aldous Huxley	A dystopian novel set in a World State of genetically modified citizens, the novel anticipates huge scientific developments in areas such as reproductive technology, sleep-learning and psychological manipulation. Originally published in Britain.	Participant 1
Ends and Means	1937	Aldous Huxley	A book of essays including entries on war, religion, nationalism and ethics. Originally published in Britain.	Participant 1
The Limits of the Earth	1953	Henry Fairfield Osbor Jr.	An analysis of the earth's capacity to cope with population growth. Originally published in America.	Julia Leyden
I Planted Trees	1955	Richard St. Barbe Baker	An autobiographical account of the author's life focusing on his experiences planting trees and with woodland.	Linda Hendry
Brave New World Revisited	1958	Aldous Huxley	This book compares the modern-day world (at the time of writing) with the fantasy world in the original Brave New World. This includes scrutinizing threats to humanity such as overpopulation, propaganda, and chemical persuasion. Originally published in Britain.	Participant 1
The Affluent Society	1958	JK Galbraith	This book sought to outline how the post-World War Two United States was becoming wealthy in the private sphere but not in the public sphere. Originally published in America.	Steve Lambert
Silent Spring	1962	Rachel Carson	An environmental science book, it documented the adverse effects on the environment of the use of pesticides. Originally published in America.	Alistair Laurence; Biff Vernon; Bill Badger; Cherry Durrant; Claire Nash; Clive Lord; Jonathan Tyler; Participant 5; Sara Parkin; Lesley Whittaker
The Costs of Economic Growth	1967	EJ Mishan	The book was based on the thesis that the official figures for growth in real income were compatible with a decline in human welfare. Originally published in Britain.	Steve Lambert
The New Industrial State	1967	JK Galbraith	The book argues that within the industrial sectors of modern economies, the traditional mechanism of supply and demand is being replaced by the planning of large corporations,	Steve Lambert

⁷⁸ Two books were highlighted which it was not possible to trace: Jonathan Tyler cited *Changing Directions* by Steven Clout & Bishop Montefiore and Claire Nash cited a book called *The World in Your Hands*. Claire Nash also highlighted one book which was published much later than the period of research: *Blueprint for a Green Economy* (1989) by David Pearce. Cherry Durrant referred to 'texts published by CND' as influential.

			using techniques such as advertising. Originally published in America.	
The Population Bomb	1968	Paul Ehrlich	The book warned of mass starvation of humans in the ensuing decades due to overpopulation, as well as other major societal changes, and argued for immediate action to limit population growth. Originally published in America.	Biff Vernon; David Corry; Ruth Corry; David Whitebread; Linda Whitebread; David Taylor; John Luck; Jonathon Porritt
Hell Upon Earth (The Conservation Society, Presidential address)	1968	Peter Ritchie Ritchie-Calder	The Conservation Society's president, Lord Ritchie-Calder, addressed the AGM in 1968 and this was printed as a short text.	David Corry; Ruth Corry
The Biological Time-Bomb	1968	Gordon Rattray Taylor	The book discussed developments such as artificial insemination and organ transplants. Originally published in Britain.	David Whitebread; Linda Whitebread
The Making of a Counter Culture	1969	Theodore Roszak	The thesis of this book was that technology and the pursuit of science had alienated the young in America. Originally published in America.	Peter Frings
Wilderness and Plenty	1970	Frank Fraser Darling	Published versions of Frank Fraser Darling's 1969 Reith Lectures on the theme of man's responsibility to the environment.	Bill Bagder
The Doomsday Book	1970	Gordon Rattray Taylor	A detailed exploration of impending environmental problems with chapters on topics including pollution, population and technology.	David Whitebread; Linda Whitebread
The Greening of America	1970	Charles Reich	A tribute to the counterculture of the 1960s and its values. Originally published in America.	David Taylor
Population, Resources, Environment: Issues in Human Ecology	1970	Anne H. Ehrlich and Paul R. Ehrlich	An outline of issues related to human ecology including population numbers, the limits of the earth, food production, environmental dangers to man, ecosystems and birth control. Originally published in America.	Val Stevens
The Environmental Handbook	1971	(Ed) Garrett De Bell	Based on the American Friends of the Earth's 'Environmental Handbook', this was produced by the British Friends of the Earth. It is a set of short essays on the nature of the environmental crisis and how to campaign to prevent it.	Bill Badger
The Eco-Activists	1971	Michael Allaby	A survey of late 1960s eco-activism. Originally published in Britain.	David Taylor
A Blueprint for Survival	1972	Edward Goldsmith, Robert Allen, Michael Allaby, John Davoll & Sam Lawrence.	An environmentalist text published through the Ecologist that drew attention to the urgency and magnitude of environmental problems. Originally published in Britain.	Alan Clarke; Biff Vernon; Bill Badger; Clive Lord; David Corry; Ruth Corry; Brenda Tyler; David Taylor; Dennis Nightingale-Smith; Geoff Garbett; Guy Woodford; John Ingham; John Luck; Jonathan Tyler; Ken Yates;

				Nicholas Hildyard; Peter Frings; Participant 1; Sara Parkin; Steve Lambert; Lesley Whittaker; Dean Wayland; Jonathon Porritt
Limits to Growth	1972	Dennis Meadows, Donella Meadows, Jørgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III (the Club of Rome)	A report warning of the potential for environmental disaster based on a computer simulation of economic and population growth. Commissioned by the Club of Rome, the study was conducted by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.	Biff Vernon; Claire Nash; David Corry; Ruth Corry; Brenda Tyler; David Whitebread; Linda Whitebread; David Taylor; Geoff Garbett; Gundula Dorey; Guy Woodford; John Luck; John Marjoram; Jonathan Tyler; Keith Rushworth; Kristine Rushworth; Peter Frings; Participant 3; Roger House; Sara Parkin; Steve Lambert; Terry King; Michael Benfield; Lesley Whittaker; Dean Wayland;
Only One Earth	1972	Barbara Ward and René Dubos	Funded by the World Bank and the Ford Foundation and commented on by experts from across the world, the volume was prepared as a background document for the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972.	Geoff Garbett
Small is Beautiful	1973	E.F. Schumacher	A collection of essays critiquing Western economics divided up into four sections: the Modern World, Resources, the Third World, and Organization and Ownership. Originally published in Britain.	Alan Clarke; Alistair Laurence; Biff Vernon; Bill Badger; David Corry; Ruth Corry; David Kembell-Cook; Dennis Nightingale-Smith; Geoff Garbett; Guy Woodford; Jean Lambert; Linda Hendry; Participant 5; Norma Russell; Participant 1; Steve Lambert; Stewart Biggar
Self-Sufficiency	1973	John Seymour	A guide to how to live self-sufficiently in different areas including land, animals and crops.	Bill Bagder; Cherry Durrant; Tim Cooper
Tools for Conviviality	1973	Ivan Illich	A social critique of modern industrial society which is described as breaking down - a utopian socialist perspective. Originally published in America.	Richard Oldfield
How the Other Half Dies	1976	Susan George	The book argues against the idea the source of world hunger is shortages of food. It suggests the problem is that food supply is controlled by a wealthy elite. Originally published in the United States.	Peter Frings
Steady-State Economics	1977	Herman Daly	A treatise on the economics of global sustainability, focusing on how to integrate ecological and economic concerns. Originally published in America.	Claire Nash;
Person/Planet	1978	Theodore Roszak	This book brings together the insights of deep ecology and humanistic psychology. Originally published in America.	Peter Frings

Table 21 - Thinkers and Writers cited by Early Party Members as Key Influences (without indicating specific texts)

Name	Born-Died	Brief Outline of Work and Approach	Cited By
James Lovelock	1919-Present	An English scientist, environmentalist and futurist who proposed the Gaia hypothesis suggesting that the Earth functions as a self-regulating system.	Julie Leyden
Thor Heyerdahl	1914-2002	A Norwegian adventurer with a background in sciences.	Linda Hendry
Arthur Ransome	1884-1967	An English author and journalist. He is best known for writing the Swallows and Amazons children's books about the holiday adventures of children in the Lake District and the Norfolk Broads.	Linda Hendry
Marshall McLuhan	1911-1980	A Canadian professor and intellectual who studied and developed media theory.	Participant 5
Herman Kahn	1922-1983	An American futurist who analysed the potential consequences of nuclear war and ways to improve survivability.	Participant 5
Henryk Skolimowski	1930-2018	A Polish philosopher whose work focused on the disconnection caused in part by modern technology.	Peter Frings
Murray Bookchin	1921-2006	An American social theorist, author, and political philosopher who developed early environmentalist and anarchist ideas.	Peter Frings; Participant 3
Ivan Illich	1926-2002	A Croatian-Austrian philosopher, priest, and critic of Western culture including in areas like education, work, energy use and economic development.	Richard Oldfield; Participant 3; David Taylor
Leopold Kohr	1909-1904	An Austrian economist, jurist and political scientist known for campaigning against the 'cult of bigness'.	Steve Lambert
John Papworth	1921-Present Day	An English clergyman and writer known for campaigning against big organizations and advocating for small communities.	Steve Lambert
Paul Ehrlich	1854-1915	An American biologist, known for his writing about the dangers of population growth and resource depletion.	Lesley Whittaker; Freda Benfield; Michael Benfield
Horace Dammers	1921-2004	An English Anglican dean and author who founded the Life-Style Movement with the slogan 'Live Simply so that others may Simply Live'.	Tim Cooper
John Seymour	1914-2004	An English author and advocate for the self-sufficiency movement.	David Taylor

Table 22 - Magazines, Newspapers and Journals cited by Early Party Members as Key Influences⁷⁹

<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates in Publication</u>	<u>Outline of Magazine</u>	<u>Cited as an Influence By</u>
The Guardian	1821-Present Day	National newspaper; left leaning.	Bill Badger; Participant 2
The Economist	1843-Present Day	Weekly magazine on economics.	Claire Nash
Peace News	1936-Present Day	A grassroots pacifist newspaper.	David Taylor
Playboy Magazine	1953-Present Day	An American men's lifestyle and entertainment magazine.	Lesley Whittaker; Freda Benfield; Michael Benfield
International Times	1966-Present Day	International Times is the name of various underground newspapers founded in London in covering English alternative music and thinking.	David Taylor
Gandalf's Garden	1968-1969	A mystical magazine linked to the London hippie-underground movement and advocating meditation and psychedelics.	Steve Lambert
The Ecologist	1970-Present Day	The Ecologist emerged as a radical environmental journal covering a broad range of issues including food, resources, economic growth and pollution. It also included anthropology and threats to global indigenous communities.	Biff Vernon; Bill Bagder; Claire Nash; David Taylor; Dennis Nightingale-Smith; Geoff Garbett; Guy Woodford; John Luck; John Marjoram; Linda Hendry; Nicholas Hildyard; Peter Frings; Participant 1; Stewart Biggar; Dean Wayland; Jonathon Porritt
Towards Survival	1972-1975	A small publication established to discuss issues related to resources, technology, population and economic growth and their threat to humanity's survival. It had a particular emphasis on ideas for new economic and social systems.	David Taylor
New Internationalist	1973-Present Day	A magazine set up by Oxfam and Christian Aid to help people understand international development.	David Taylor; Participant 2
Good Earth	1974-1981	Environmental newspaper linked to Birmingham Conservation Society with a particular focus on political action on the environment.	David Taylor
Alliance	1975-1976	Magazine established and run by PEOPLE co-founder Michael Benfield. A similar approach to PEOPLE in terms of ideology and issues, but with a focus on bringing together different strands of the environmental movement.	David Taylor; Michael Benfield
Practical Self-Sufficiency	1975-1982	A magazine providing guidance and advice for people wishing to develop a self-sufficient lifestyle.	Cherry Durrant
Vole	1977-1980	An environmentalist magazine which was intended to have a light-hearted tone, with a particular focus on the countryside.	Claire Nash

⁷⁹ Two magazines were not mentioned by participants in interviews but were discussed by early party members in archive material such as party newsletters: *New Scientist* and *Undercurrents* (the latter also published letters from early members during the 1970s). There were also other magazines published during the 1970s which were focused on the environment but not mentioned in interviews such as *Roots* in Scotland, *Conservation News* (linked to the Conservation Society), *Mother Earth* (linked to the Soil Association) and *Span* (linked to the Soil Association).

Table 20 outlines all the books which the interviewees highlighted as having influenced early members' thinking and inspired them to become interested in the environment. This information was generally provided in response to some permutation of the question 'What were the main influences on your political ideas?'. Books were also often brought up by participants in response to questions asking about why they joined the party or became interested in the environment as well as coming out in general conversation (reflecting the semi-structured format). Table 21 highlights the writers and thinkers that participants cited without specifying a text they wrote. Table 22 highlights the other aspect of this, the regular magazines and journals which were mentioned by interviewees as having influenced their thinking. Given the disparity in the number of people highlighting magazines compared to books, it may appear that the influence of books dramatically outweighed magazines. However, this may be explained partly by the phrasing of the question on influences for which the first example prompt provided was 'books'. Additionally, several of the magazines and journals in Table 22 were only cited by a small number of participants as influences. As is demonstrated by the material used in Chapter 6, an examination of the archived copies of these publications reveals a number of party members were writing articles and letters in them during the 1970s, as well as occasionally being actively involved in editing and producing them. Therefore there was definitely wide and deep engagement with such magazines as well as the books.

Many of the books, magazines and intellectual influences in the boxes have featured heavily in accounts of environmental politics in this period. For John McCormick, during the 1960s and 1970s a global language of the environment was formulated, breaking from previous concerns over nature and this began with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.⁸⁰ Mauricio Schoijet describes the development of an international neo-Malthusian movement during this period with the *Limits to Growth* study at the centre of it.⁸¹ In Bramwell's view 'the intellectual core of the British ecological movement during the 1960s and 1970s' came from *the Ecologist* and *A Blueprint for Survival* published in 1972.⁸² For Pepper, the 'principal ideas' of modern global environmentalism are set out in three landmark texts: *A Blueprint*

⁸⁰ John McCormick, *The Global Environmental Movement* (Chichester: Wiley, 1995), p.55

⁸¹ Schoijet, 1999 p.515

⁸² Bramwell, 1989 pp.218-19

for Survival, Limits to Growth and *Small is Beautiful* (the latter published in 1973).⁸³ It is clearly not a new point to raise the influence of these texts, indeed Cooper highlights a reaction to *A Blueprint for Survival* at the time which compared its significance to that of the *Communist Manifesto*.⁸⁴ As Ian Coates suggests, although it is clear such texts were 'read widely by members of the green movement', it is 'difficult to gauge' the precise impact of such influences.⁸⁵ This chapter advances understanding of this process among early members. The detailed, bottom-up assessment of the intellectual influences on early party members or environmental activists operating during this period that is set out in the boxes has not been attempted previously. Additionally, the discussion of such texts has also been predominantly concerned with categorising the ideological approaches of the environmental movement rather than assessing how the activists came to be influenced by them.

Accordingly, this section does not provide a detailed assessment of the texts themselves but draws from the interviews conducted for this thesis to examine early party activists' assessments of the importance of books and magazines to them becoming interested in the environment. It should be acknowledged that not all the party members interviewed for this project indicated that the texts listed here were direct influences upon them. For example, when asked about whether there were any key influences on her political thinking such as books or media, Jean Lambert suggested that 'I wouldn't necessarily have said so. If anything, it would have been strands of literature...I don't know. I can't say that *Silent Spring* was it because I've never read it.'⁸⁶ Another suggested that 'I don't think I've been a huge reader of political books to be honest. It's not really something I do. I think it's more talking to people, listening to the news. I think I was a *Guardian* reader but that's about as far as it went.'⁸⁷

For many though the publications set out in Tables 20 and 22 provided direct inspiration to become concerned about the environment. Val Stevens recalled how:

⁸³ Pepper, 1986 p.22

⁸⁴ Patrick Edmunds, 'Growth or Survival', *Contemporary Review*, Vol 220 1972, p. 184 Cited in Cooper, 2009a p.64

⁸⁵ Coates, 1997 p.17

⁸⁶ Jean Lambert, Interview

⁸⁷ Participant 2, Interview

[Her husband] was sent a book by the American ecologist Paul Ehrlich called *Population, Resources, Environment*...I read it and it was like scales falling from my eyes. I understood everything it was talking about and I thought right this is what I've got to do with my life. So that was when...I joined the Conservation Society.⁸⁸

Other early party members suggested that books had a similarly revelatory impact on their thinking. Geoff Garbett listed a number of texts that influenced his environmental concern but suggested that 'I think the big one was *A Blueprint for Survival*, that one really affected me.'⁸⁹ Keith and Christine Rushworth remembered that they 'read *Limits to Growth* very early on' and 'that was quite a seminal book', another activist simply described it as a 'fucking great book'.⁹⁰ Ken Yates responded to the question of how he came to be interested in the environment by explaining that 'I read *A Blueprint for Survival*, somebody gave me a copy.'⁹¹ Jonathon Porritt suggested that 'I do think that *the Ecologist* magazine, it wasn't a book per se, but of all the inputs into my party political knowledge that was the book that most impressed me because it used to be every month and it was always so ideologically charged.'⁹² The books often formed part of a fairly concerted and active process of self-education in the area of environmental issues. Peter Frings traced his concern about the environment to 'reading *A Blueprint for Survival*. I must have been only about sixteen at the time...I was quite a voracious reader and it sort of sparked something in me.' From there he 'started reading *the Ecologist* magazine as it was then edited by him and that probably was sort of my in to the Ecology Party.'⁹³ Steve Lambert described having read JK Galbraith's books and EJ Mishan's *The Costs of Economic Growth* before encountering *Gandalf's Garden* and *Resurgence Magazine* which 'was particularly exciting because it was political.'⁹⁴ Richard Oldfield suggested his environmental concern emerged from having 'embarked on a programme of self-directed study' in the early 1970s and Stewart Biggar recalled how reading books like *Limits to Growth* was part of a process whereby 'once you started seeing things in a particular way of course you just see everything from that

⁸⁸ Val Stevens, Interview

⁸⁹ Geoff Garbett, Interview

⁹⁰ Keith & Christine Rushworth, Interview; Dean Wayland, Interview

⁹¹ Ken Yates, Interview

⁹² Jonathon Porritt, Interview

⁹³ Peter Frings, Interview

⁹⁴ Steve Lambert, Interview

perspective.⁹⁵ Although Derek Wall rightly highlights the unlikely influence of *Playboy* magazine on the party's founders, because of an interview they read in it with Paul Ehrlich, they were 'ferreting around looking for information' at this point and this was part of an 'ongoing research programme'.⁹⁶

For a number of participants these intellectual influences were important in shaping their concern about the environment even if they had very limited engagement with actual texts themselves. Alan Clarke suggested that 'the texts we looked at were things like the *Limits to Growth* and Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* but I couldn't say that I read them attentively. But I was happy to take it on.'⁹⁷ David and Ruth Corry were similarly aware of and influenced by the key messages of pieces of literature without having poured over every page of them. As Ruth described 'we don't read all that much...never have...if we thought it was good propaganda, we would probably buy it and try to read it but we were always growing vegetables or collecting firewood or doing life instead of reading about it.'⁹⁸ When asked about key influences on his thinking, Guy Woodford stated that '*A Blueprint for Survival* which I have to say I never really read to the end. *Small is Beautiful* by Schumacher again I actually found it quite difficult to read...*Limits to Growth*...had a dramatic effect on me.'⁹⁹ Lesley Whittaker described in an essay she wrote in March 1975 how the publication of *A Blueprint for Survival* meant that 'the nameless unease' was 'crystallised in this book into the foundation of a purposeful crusade'.¹⁰⁰

It has already been suggested in this chapter that experiences of either local environmental threats or personal connections to nature in some form were pinpointed by many activists as being a key reason for them having become concerned about environmental issues. A number of participants described how these types of experiences combined with them reading a text such as *A Blueprint for Survival*, which critiqued the wider political, economic and social system to influence their concern about environmental issues and help motivated them to become politically active on the environment. For Alistair

⁹⁵ Richard Oldfield, Interview; Stewart Biggar, Interview

⁹⁶ Wall, 1994 p.14; The Founders, Interview

⁹⁷ Alan Clarke, Interview

⁹⁸ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

⁹⁹ Guy Woodford, Interview

¹⁰⁰ LWPA, Lesley Whittaker Essay, March 1975

Laurence, 'it was reading [books like *Silent Spring*] and that the fact that there was a growing concern about the environment. And I was active in opposing motorway development in West Yorkshire. From then that lead into the Ecology Party.'¹⁰¹ Roger House explained that 'I was always interested [in the environment] through being a farmer's son...I think *Limits to Growth* raised the fact it could be a political movement.'¹⁰² Similarly, as described above, Sara Parkin described how her childhood holidays in rural Scotland and experiences as a nurse meant that 'she was receptive...when the whole *Limits to Growth* movement started.'¹⁰³ Bill Badger suggested that he had 'always been a sympathetic person to the environment and to the birds around us I'd never thought about it politically'. It was from encountering Teddy Goldsmith during his February 1974 election campaign that this changed.¹⁰⁴

Table 20 sets out how there were a number of texts which influenced the journey of the individuals interviewed for this thesis to become concerned about the environment with a few (*A Blueprint for Survival*, *Small is Beautiful*, *Silent Spring*, *Limits to Growth* and *The Population Bomb*) appearing particularly influential. Overwhelmingly, these texts were published between the 1950s and 1970s, almost all originating from Britain or America, and they had a fairly immediate impact upon the subjects of this research.¹⁰⁵ Rather than saying identical things, they complemented one another by placing emphasis on different areas. For example, *The Population Bomb* clearly focused on population, *Limits to Growth* on economic growth, and *Small is Beautiful* on issues of decentralisation and scale. Similarly, Table 22 demonstrates that there was a spate of small, environmentally-focused magazines and journals most of which came into existence during the 1960s and 1970s. Again, these provided varied approaches, for example *Undercurrents* focused on alternative technology, *Resurgence* on the spiritual aspects of environmentalism and *Practical Self-Sufficiency* took a more lifestyle-politics approach. The interviews reveal that though early party activists engaged with different literature and in different ways, this varied, active and extensive

¹⁰¹ Alistair Laurence, Interview

¹⁰² Roger House, Interview

¹⁰³ Sara Parkin, Interview

¹⁰⁴ Bill Badger, Interview

¹⁰⁵ In the January 1979 Ecology Party Newsletter the earliest published text in a long, 'Eco Booklist' of relevant fiction was from 1953 (Source: PFPA).

intellectual background was a key factor in the environmental awakening of individuals in Britain at this time.

7.4.2 Education and Professional Work

Andrea Zhouri's interviews with British environmentalists working in the Amazon for environmental NGOs in the 1990s revealed, unsurprisingly, that many of them had studied for degrees in ecology and this had been an important factor in the line of work they had ended up in.¹⁰⁶ Peterson del Mar suggests that the Western environmentalism which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s was supported by universities.¹⁰⁷ Chapter 4 has already explored the expansion of higher education participation in post-war Britain as a factor in the emergence of the party and political environmentalism. It was noted that many individuals interviewed for this project highlighted how being at university led to their first involvement in political activity, both on the environment and more widely. Many also studied life science subjects or economics and identified this as important in making them aware of environmental issues and leading them to becoming politically active on the environment.¹⁰⁸ It was not just experience of university that was an important influence on their environmental awareness as some traced it back earlier to school. For example, Julia Leyden highlighted the importance of her having studied biology at school and having come across *The Limits of the Earth* by Henry Fairfield Osborn Jr.¹⁰⁹

Aside from formal education, some of the participants described a process whereby they had come to be aware of the broad social, economic and political implications of environmental issues through their professional work. Ruth Corry, who worked as a district nurse and health visitor, described her early experience of working in an orphanage 'which was hell...this was before the pill and before abortion and we had so many babies spare that when somebody wanted to adopt them they would come round and look over our cots for the spare babies...I didn't enjoy it at all. I felt so sad. But it was the beginning of my

¹⁰⁶ Zhouri, 2000 p. 179

¹⁰⁷ Peterson del Mar, 2006 p.84

¹⁰⁸ Biff Vernon, Interview; Claire Nash, Interview; Gundula Dorey, Interview; Linda Hendry, Interview; Participant 3, Interview; Steve Lambert, Interview; Tim Cooper, Interview

¹⁰⁹ Julie Leyden, Interview

keenness to do with family planning.’ Ruth later became involved with the pressure groups Population Matters and the Conservation Society as well as the party.¹¹⁰ Sara Parkin similarly described how working as a nurse and being involved in a doctor-led campaign on population meant that ‘she understood the impact that growing numbers of people would have’.¹¹¹ Jonathan Tyler was in a very different profession, working in the railway industry but from that ‘very quickly became interested in wider transport issues’, concerned about the proliferation of car use and then involved in campaigning against roads.¹¹² The relationship between occupation, values and environmental interest has been discussed at length in Chapter 3 and there is a broader debate about whether those with post-material values and high levels of environmental concern had either selected particular occupations to reflect them or were in some way influenced by their occupational position to develop those concerns and values.¹¹³ The interviews show the importance of early members’ occupations in influencing their environmental interest but in a much simpler way. For some, their jobs made them aware of concrete environmental challenges.

7.4.3 International Trips

Jones asserts that the rise in adventure travel may explain increased interest in environmental problems during the course of the twentieth century.¹¹⁴ One of the participants in Zhouri’s study of British environmental activists working in Brazil highlighted a trip to Cameroon as having politicised them on environmental issues and Hussey and Thompson conclude that this shows the important role which travel can play in the path to environmental consciousness.¹¹⁵ For a number of participants in this study, travel was also central to their story. Geoff Garbett described how his personal philosophy when he joined the party was:

Heavily informed by this round the world trip I did at the age of 20...I was travelling for four years with a rucksack and not much else. And that had a massive impact on

¹¹⁰ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

¹¹¹ Sara Parkin, Interview

¹¹² Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

¹¹³ Rudig & Lowe, 1986b p.522

¹¹⁴ Jones, 2004 p.43

¹¹⁵ Zhouri, 2000 p.184; Hussey & Thompson, 2000 p.16

me as you would imagine. I could see that the direction we were going was unsustainable. That we couldn't all live like the Western world...I could just see that the current world economic model was a disaster. And there was something that had to be done.¹¹⁶

Before joining the Ecology Party Keith and Christine Rushworth, a married couple, took a trip to India where they 'got involved in a slum resettlement colony outside Delhi. It was just a close-up look at the issues of population and poverty and things. We thought the population issue was absolutely major.'¹¹⁷ Nicholas Hildyard suggested that working with street children in Ethiopia in the early 1970s 'heavily politicised' him and 'shifted' his thinking dramatically as he witnessed the impacts of a famine and worked with social movements there.¹¹⁸ Jonathon Porritt described how 'when I left school I went to Australia and New Zealand and did a lot of work there, working on farms, planting trees that sort of stuff. So I began getting interested in the workings of nature at that sort of age.'¹¹⁹

7.4.4 The Environment in Popular Discourse

There is not a complete consensus about the nature of popular discussion of the environment during this period. For example, John Dryzek is clear that the environment 'did not exist as a concept anywhere until the 1960s' whereas for Holger Nehring it was in the 1960s that it began to 'be used widely'.¹²⁰ As mentioned, however, there is widespread agreement that in Britain and elsewhere during the 1960s and 1970s there was a significant increase in public discussion of, concern about, and interest in, the environment. The manifestation of this interest in terms of news coverage and media attention has already been presented but, in summary, in this period the environment had become 'a subject of popular and political discourse'.¹²¹ It is therefore unsurprising that some of the early party activists traced their concern about the environment back to simply hearing about the issues from people they knew. Alan Clarke suggested that 'I would mark the arrival of David

¹¹⁶ Geoff Garbett, Interview

¹¹⁷ Keith & Christine Rushworth, Interview

¹¹⁸ Nicholas Hildyard, Interview

¹¹⁹ Jonathon Porritt, Interview

¹²⁰ Dryzek, 2013 p.5; Nehring, 2009 p.115

¹²¹ Cooper, 2009a p.59

Taylor [another early party activist] into our office as a key moment. All his fault.¹²² Jean Lambert suggested of her first involvement in the party that 'I basically got involved, and I think this sounds really naff, because Steve [her then boyfriend] was involved so I got involved.'¹²³

News stories and media coverage have also been raised by others as a driver for political environmentalism in this period. For example, the energy crisis in the early 1970s is often cited.¹²⁴ Chapter 4 has dealt extensively with this issue and it has been highlighted that early party activists cited it as an important factor in their environmental awakening as well as there being lots of evidence of discussion of it amongst activists at the time. Media coverage of environmental issues was also a significant factor beyond just the energy crises in Britain and abroad though. Geoff Garbett suggested he thought many people got interested in the environment at this time because 'it was the interviews that people heard on the media and saw in the papers'.¹²⁵ John Ingham highlighted coverage of 'Save the Whale' as an important issue which influenced him as 'we saw on the television about the whales being killed...and I just had a social conscience so that I thought I'd try and do something.'¹²⁶ Dryzek argues that it was no coincidence that global political environmentalism emerged around the time when the earth was first photographed from space and then promoted widely.¹²⁷ This was also highlighted by activists, with Sara Parkin stating that:

I'm one of the first generation that watched the first pictures of the earth from the moon. [That] bowled a lot of us over because you could actually see the limits and it was extraordinarily powerful.¹²⁸

¹²² Alan Clarke, Interview

¹²³ Jean Lambert, Interview

¹²⁴ David Nicholson-Lord, *The Greening of the Cities* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p.49

¹²⁵ Geoff Garbett, Interview

¹²⁶ John Ingham, Interview

¹²⁷ Dryzek, 2013 p.25

¹²⁸ Sara Parkin, Interview

7.5 Conclusion

The focus of the chapter has been to further understand the process of how and why early party members became concerned about and politically engaged on the environment. For reasons set out in Chapter 6, this is essential to providing a convincing answer to the question of why the party emerged. This chapter took a 'life story' approach borrowed from Hussey and Thompson.¹²⁹ 50 individuals involved in different ways with PEOPLE/the Ecology Party, between its formation and the 1979 general election, were asked to pinpoint how and why they came to be concerned about the environment and the key influences upon their thinking. A criticism of this approach would be that while it tells the story of individuals it perhaps does not engage with wider forces. For example, many participants cite experiencing local environmental threats as important factors in their becoming politically active on the environment. There were many people during the 1960s and 1970s, however, who had direct experience of environmental problems and did not become political active on environmental issues. So can this approach actually be used to explain the environmentalism in this period?

There are theories which attempt to both deal with broader structural forces and provide an account of a new and distinct factor, which explains the environmentalism that emerged in this period. Compelling critiques of these ideas have been put forward and discussed in Chapter 2 meaning that at best they can be said to have only some purchase on the phenomenon they purport to explain. This opens up the opportunity for an historical and life story approach to examine the subtle, idiosyncratic and contingent development that is the environmentalism of this period. Additionally, as mentioned the political environmentalism of the 1960s and 1970s was in many ways new, but some of its ideas also had roots in much earlier movements and, fundamentally, many people had already expressed environmental concern at different historical moments. So, in explaining what happened in the 1960s and 1970s it seems logical that there would be some commonalities with such earlier expressions and movements on the environment.

A detailed exploration of the life stories examined here has significantly illuminated understanding of how and why early party members became politicised on the

¹²⁹ Hussey & Thompson, 2000

environment. This case study is also of use in informing understanding of the broader awakening of environmental sentiment which went on during this period, that the party's emergence was part of. Several participants suggested that they had formed important emotional connections to the natural world, often during childhood. Many traced their concern about environmental issues to encountering some form of environmental threat in their local area such as a road construction project, with the economic development in post-war Britain clearly lying behind this. There were other factors, which for the purposes of categorising the information in this chapter have been put into a separate category, such as those which directly influenced participants to have a more macro-level understanding of the global environment and its fragility. They were: the mass of mostly new books and magazines on the topic, personal experiences of international travel, formal education and employment as well as the general noise and media attention on the idea of the environment. Generally, the stories told by individuals here reflect a process by which they initially became aware of a broad ecological or environmental crisis through the 'concrete issues and political conflicts' associated with it.¹³⁰

One of these topics seems particularly important to understanding the emergence of the party - intellectual influences of books and other publications. This is firstly because of the degree to which the texts discussed here and cited by interviewees were overwhelmingly published shortly before the party emerged. Unlike, for example, party members having childhood experiences of nature this influence was simply not there twenty years earlier. Secondly, remembering the topic of this thesis, those interviewed did not just become concerned about the environment, but set up or joined a new party to campaign on it. The importance of such intellectual influences on party members' environmental concern suggests that the emergence of an ecological or green ideology - Rudig's 'cleavage' set out in Chapter 2 - may have been central to the reason the party emerged. This is investigated in further detail in the following chapter of this thesis which examines if the party had a coherent and comprehensive ideology when it emerged and whether this helps explain why it emerged.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Rudig, 1990a p.18

¹³¹ Rudig, 1990a

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the policy, ideology and identity of the party in its early years. Though it does occasionally examine the content of policy and attempt to provide some summaries of the ideological approach of the party in its fledgling years, this is not the main purpose of this chapter. Not least because the ideological approach of green parties, including the British Greens, is relatively well-trodden ground in academic work. Rather, the attempt here is principally to consider the extent to which there was a clear ideology underpinning the party's emergence and the role ideology plays in explaining the question which this thesis focuses on: why a green party emerged in Britain.

Chapter 2 described some key aspects in the literature on green political theory and the ideology of the party. It set out how Gayil Talshir and Brian Doherty have provided the most developed assessments of the party's ideology in its early years. Accordingly, this chapter engages with several of their arguments. It begins by highlighting the idea that the party began with an ideology focused on the environment which, over time, became more clearly left-wing and concerned with a broader range of social issues. The chapter then considers how far the party had a comprehensive ideology in its early years, allowing it to develop a wide-ranging policy agenda. This includes detailed sections considering the party's first policy documents and manifestos, internal debates over policy formation recorded in archive material and the recollections from interviews conducted with early party members for this project. The chapter finishes with an examination of whether debates about values were taking place within the party during the 1970s and if early members were conscious of an explicit ideological identity. The initial development of the party's identity as part of the green party family is considered as part of this in the penultimate section of the chapter.

While concurring with many of the pre-existing ideas about the party's philosophy and ideological development this chapter also counters some of these. In particular, it argues that at points Talshir goes too far in ascribing a narrowness and ideological immaturity to the early party, which had more to say about society and the economy than

she suggests. It then develops this into an argument about why the party emerged. It has been seen in previous chapters that thinking and writing about the environment advanced in the 1960s and 1970s in Britain and internationally. Significantly, notions about conservation developed into a much broader, political critique of the existing system and wider ideas about an alternative society. It is argued that this was the development of an ideological project, which is key to understanding the emergence of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party, as it drew its meaning as an organisation from it. This idea is in line with Wolfgang Rudig's argument, which will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 9, that the emergence of green parties needs to be understood in terms of the emergence of a separate 'ecological cleavage' between those 'forces' which cause 'environmental damage' and those who seek to avoid this by 'opposing particular projects or trying to create an "alternative" ecological society based on ecological principles'. This is a general argument about green parties, however, and Rudig acknowledged that the link between a cleavage and political action is 'tenuous' and not necessarily predictable so this chapter is an attempt to look in detail at the primary evidence related to how far the emergence of the British party was driven and underlined by a particular ideological approach.¹³²

8.2 Academic Understanding of the Party's Ideology

8.2.1 Party Ideology: Turning Left and Coming of Age

There are some notable similarities between Talshir and Doherty's assessments of the party's ideological development. Both accounts suggest that the party began with a message predominantly focused on the environment which over time became more clearly associated with the left and concerned with a broader range of social issues.¹³³ Additionally, the British Greens, in contrast to other examples in Europe, are said to have had no significant links with new social movements or the 'alternative milieu' when they emerged but, according to Talshir, started to develop these later on.¹³⁴ Talshir suggests that the British Greens only developed a comprehensive ideology, which allowed them to fully engage with economic and social issues, in more recent years when they embraced left-

¹³² Rudig, 1990a p.18

¹³³ Talshir, 2002 p.250-51; p.9, pp.151-55, p.162 & pp.170-72

¹³⁴ Doherty, 1994 p.160-161; Talshir, 2002 p.xxiv

wing politics. For Talshir, by the 1990s the party was advocating on environmental issues alongside others such as anti-racism, gay rights and women's issues. This meant that the party was attempting to provide a voice for the voiceless and had fully integrated social and environmental justice.¹³⁵

Doherty suggests that green parties have generally been seen as either advocating a new ideology which cuts across the left-right divide or as left-libertarian and growing out of the traditions of the western left. The only threat to the idea of green parties as left-wing is said to be an attempt to reduce green ideology to one based solely on ecological imperatives, what Talshir described as an 'exclusionist' ecological approach.¹³⁶ Doherty argued that, at the time he was writing (1994), a comparison between the French, German and British green parties revealed that they had a common ideology based equally around three problems: the ecological crisis, the politicisation of new forms of equality and the limits of statist emancipatory policies.¹³⁷ In a similar fashion to Talshir, Doherty emphasises the importance of notions of equality beyond just class to greens; meaning that they can be seen as part of a wide alternative left.¹³⁸ Doherty acknowledges that even other, more consistently and clearly left-wing green parties also had conservative elements in their early years.¹³⁹

In Talshir's account there is an explicit idea that the party in the UK essentially came of age by undergoing this transition from an exclusionary, ecological focus to a left-wing party, filling out into a genuinely comprehensive ideology and completing their philosophical development - 'a green caterpillar turns into a colourful butterfly?'.¹⁴⁰ This idea of ideological maturing is implicitly present in Doherty's account too as the British party's development into an alternative left ideology is compared with that of other parties who had more longstanding associations with the left. Rudig's argument that green parties are based around an 'ecological cleavage' rather than necessarily being left-wing is rejected and the examples Rudig cites of right-wing green parties are dismissed as 'very few and

¹³⁵ Talshir, 2002 p.251 & 263

¹³⁶ Talshir, 2002 p.251; Doherty, 1994 p.9

¹³⁷ Doherty, 1994 p.9

¹³⁸ Doherty, 1994 p.38 & p.46

¹³⁹ Doherty, 1994 p.132

¹⁴⁰ Talshir, 2002 p.242

marginal’.¹⁴¹ Both accounts therefore demote the environment to one part of a multi-faceted ideological approach. This is in some ways similar to the approaches discussed earlier in this thesis which sees the emergence of green parties as only partially explained by the environment.

8.2.2 Early Party Ideology: Comprehensive or Not?

The main argument of this chapter is that early members either implicitly or explicitly understood there to be an environmental ideological project developing around the time of the party’s creation and that this is central to understanding why the party emerged in the UK. In order to examine this argument further, there are aspects of Talshir’s study, related to the comprehensiveness of the party’s early ideology, which need to be examined. Talshir highlights the theoretical deficiencies of an ‘environmental philosophy’ which uses ideas about ‘man-nature relationships’ to establish ‘the principles of the good society’ or ‘man-to-man values’. For example, while resource depletion has significant social and economic implications there are limits to how far this supports a wider political worldview. There is an additional aspect to this, which is the notion in green thought that the natural world can be taken as a model for the human world with principles such as diversity or interdependence supposedly derivable from nature. Three problems are highlighted with this. First, other principles could easily be logically derived from nature such as survival of the fittest (with dire moral consequences for human society). Secondly, even if an objective set of principles can be gleaned from nature it does not mean that humans should follow these. Thirdly, deciding which principles of nature are selected and how they are implemented is ultimately a product of decisions by individuals based on their particular historical context and (alternative) ideological preferences.¹⁴²

The argument moves from theory to practice as in its early years the British party is said to have ‘concentrated on an exclusionary Green message, comprehensive in its environmental nature, but devoid of explicit connections to other social problems, and which diagnosed other socio-political problems as rooted in environmental matters.’¹⁴³ This

¹⁴¹ Doherty, 1994 p.9, p.162 & pp.170-72

¹⁴² Talshir, 2002 pp.21-3

¹⁴³ Talshir, 2002 p.174

is undoubtedly in some ways a perceptive assessment of the party's early approach and Chapter 4 discussed in the detail how social problems in 1970s Britain, such as drug use and violent crime, were linked somewhat tenuously by early party members to industrialisation. Talshir, like others, places a strong emphasis upon the influence that the texts *Limits to Growth* and, in particular, *A Blueprint for Survival* had on the early philosophy of the party - something which was endorsed in Chapter 7 of this thesis. A detailed assessment is provided of the latter, picking out the extent to which it applies principles from nature and ecosystems to prescribe how human societies ought to be run.¹⁴⁴ Talshir then highlights the extent to which 'Goldsmith's logic' is reproduced in the first PEOPLE manifesto, for example the principle of stability being taken from nature and applied to human societies.¹⁴⁵

However, as Talshir acknowledges, the first manifesto reproduced the passage from *A Blueprint for Survival* which included the stated aim for a society in which 'an individual can enjoy rather than feel restricted' by the adjustments required to prevent environmental disaster.¹⁴⁶ As Doherty argues, not only have green parties propounded the limits to growth thesis as a constraint on all pre-existing ideological approaches but they have been keen to explore 'the opportunities' that it offers for a new orientation towards 'production for social needs' and to counter 'alienation' in economies. In contrast to traditional socialists' focus on issues like control of property, greens have been concerned with the 'control of the nature of production', seeking outcomes such as reduced working time rather than necessarily changing the ownership of property.¹⁴⁷ To find examples of this in the British Greens' early thinking there is no need to look any further than the first manifesto which Talshir is drawing from. It is suggested that 'Decentralisation is the keynote of PEOPLE's policy. Its aim is to reduce buildings, communities, organisations and government to a scale comprehensible to the human being, and to which he can comfortably relate.' In the employment policy section, it is asserted that 'there must be a return to regarding work as part of a full life instead of a waste of time on five days a week which must be endured to pay for pleasures.'¹⁴⁸ These ideas clearly reflect the themes of Schumacher's 1973 *Small is*

¹⁴⁴ Talshir, 2002 p.184-192

¹⁴⁵ Talshir, 2002 p.193

¹⁴⁶ Talshir, 2002 p.193

¹⁴⁷ Doherty, 1994 p.45

¹⁴⁸ MBPA, *PEOPLE: A Manifesto for Survival*, June 1974

Beautiful which should be given more emphasis than it is in Talshir's account of the British Greens.

This is significant because it shows that the party was exploring ideas on economic, political and social organisation in its early years, intimately linked to its environmental focus but going beyond simply stating the need for a limit to economic growth or trying to extrapolate principles from nature to apply in human society. Mark Williams is right to dismiss the notion that the party's emergence should be seen primarily as a reaction against Alain Touraine's idea of 'technocracy', which is essentially a notion of a bureaucratic elite taking decisions for people. Williams is also correct in suggesting that any account of the early party which tries to significantly downplay the centrality of concern about the natural environment is misleading.¹⁴⁹ However, the view that many aspects of contemporary society had got too big, were out of control and were causing widespread damage to the natural world was intrinsic to the party's early ideological approach. Addressing this was therefore also a key part of the party's vision for what the future should look like. This strand of thinking was not just in line with EF Schumacher's book, but the ideas expressed in influences such as *Undercurrents* magazine, first published in 1972, pursued by the Centre for Alternative Technology from 1973 onwards and the 1976 book *Radical Technology*. One of the editors of this book and a key early figure in the alternative technology movement in Britain, Peter Harper, took part in the Witness Seminar organised to inform this thesis. He described how he had observed 'all these trends' related to environmental degradation, driven by 'endless technological innovation' which were 'very seriously going in the wrong direction' and 'seemed to be kind of autonomous, self-generating'. His conclusion had been that 'you had to try and find some kind of happy medium between the pre-industrial and the ultra-industrial and that led to the whole notion of alternative technology, or as it sometimes was later called radical technology'.¹⁵⁰

The party was therefore thinking how to reformulate relations between people as well as relations between people and nature. Crucially, these were also not necessarily left-wing ideas. This casts doubt on Talshir's overall argument that, for at least the first decade of its history, the party thought of itself as having 'nothing substantial to say about society

¹⁴⁹ Williams, 1999 pp.93-5

¹⁵⁰ Peter Harper, 'Witness Seminar: The Birth of the Modern Environmental Movement in Britain', held 3rd June 2019

or politics, beyond environmentally related policies'. In addition to questioning the idea that this only changed once supporters of the New Left and new social movements entered the party during the 1980s and the party shifted to adopt a left-wing, red-green position in the early 1990s.¹⁵¹ There are potential contradictions in the early party's approach. For examples if it were proven that living in urban, dense communities was more ecologically efficient then this would create a conundrum.¹⁵² Additionally, it is suggested in early manifestos that smaller farms use resources more efficiently but if this is shown to be incorrect then it would mean needing to choose between the principles of environmental balance and decentralisation.¹⁵³ Nonetheless, there is a strong case that the early party had more of a comprehensive ideology than Talshir implies, going beyond simply 'an ecological critique' to provide an 'alternative worldview'.¹⁵⁴ This idea is explored in further depth in the following section by considering early PEOPLE/Ecology Party policy documents and manifestos.

¹⁵¹ Talshir, 2002 p.xxiv & p.263

¹⁵² Doherty, 1994 p.292

¹⁵³ SPPA, *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*, 1976, p.33; EGA, *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*, 1978, p.33

¹⁵⁴ Talshir, 2002 p.23

Table 23 - Comparing PEOPLE/Ecology Party Policy Documents from the 1970s

	13 Club Manifesto (1972)	PEOPLE - Precis of Policies	Battle of Britain Leaflet (1974)	PEOPLE - Our Main Policies	PEOPLE and Places Matter	PEOPLE - Some of Our Main Policies	Ecology Party - When? What? Who? Why? Where? How? (1975)	Ecology Party - A Short Statement (1975)	The Ecology Party Pamphlet (1977)	Ecology Party - its Organisation and its Policies (1977)	Ecology Party - Summary of Policies (1978)	Introduction to the Ecology Party (1978)	The Reckoning (1979)
Population													
Economy													
Environment													
Employment													
Community Life													
Transport													
Agriculture													
Law and Order													
Prices and Incomes													
Welfare													
Housing													
Energy													
Foreign Policy													
Defence													
Capital Works													
Education													
Government													
Industry													
Health													
Racial Minorities													
Women in Society													

8.3 A Coherent and Comprehensive Ideology?

8.3.1 Policy Documents

Table 23 provides an assessment of a number of party documents from the 1970s. This helps to illuminate the extent to which the early party members producing these documents were able to base them on a comprehensive philosophy, ideology or set of values to develop a policy programme across different areas. The titles of the documents are listed across the top of Table 23: the manifestos produced during the 1970s have not been included in this table but are discussed in the next section. The 13 documents are a selection of those produced by the party during the 1970s which provided outlines of the party's policy programme. Some of the early documents were not dated but because they are badged as PEOPLE documents they were produced in either 1973, 1974 or early 1975. It is reasonable to assume that at least one document from each year in this thesis' period of study (1973-1979) is included. The first document was not dated or labelled clearly but it was found in Lesley Whittaker's (party co-founder) personal archive and has been dated and labelled retrospectively in pen. The date that was added was 1972 and it was labelled as a policy document produced by the Thirteen Club (a discussion group and forerunner to PEOPLE). It has been included as this is likely to be the case but this is difficult to completely verify. As not all the documents are dated, they are broadly in chronological order but there may be the occasional mistake in this regard. Table 23 is meant to measure consistency of message across the time period rather than sequential development though, so this is not a significant problem. Rather than simply listing every title or topic listed in the documents, they have been grouped wherever possible. For example, some documents list the 'environment' as a topic and discuss resources and pollution while others have specific sections on each of these issues. Where this is the case, they have all been listed as 'environment' in Table 23.

The boxes in Table 23 are colour coded. Green indicates similarity of message. So, for example, almost all the documents assessed here had sections on environmental policy with the main messages being policy designed to conserve resources and reduce pollution. Where both blue and green are used, this represents where the documents have a series of

sections on the same policy area but the content of these can be grouped into two consistent approaches. For example, most of the documents had a population policy, which generally focused on non-coercive ways to reduce the birth-rate in the UK such as contraceptive provision but in three of the documents there were also policies to restrict immigration to aid this. The red marks idiosyncratic policy approaches which are not consistent with those in other documents. For example, where law and order is included the policy measures listed are quite different in each case, including having as few laws as possible, increasing police numbers and promoting individuals' rights to help run communities.

The white spaces mark where a policy area has not been addressed. For example, there was a 'Women in Society' section in the final policy document listed in Table 23 but nothing similar was included in the previous documents. This is perhaps where this mapping exercise is most valuable. The manifestos in many ways mirror those produced by other parties in terms of the thematic sections and policy areas they focus on. However, many of these smaller summary documents largely ignore staple policy areas for mainstream parties such as health, education and law and order. They are therefore potentially more useful in portraying an 'accurate representation of the "core" values and policies of a party' compared to manifestos, which are by definition designed 'with electoral considerations at heart'.¹⁵⁵ These documents, and what they focus on, are therefore useful in distinguishing between the genuine priority areas and basic principles of the party as opposed to more day-to-day policies - what Martin Seliger termed the fundamental and operative levels of party ideology.¹⁵⁶

The policy areas in Table 23 can be grouped into some different categories. First, those policy areas that are nearly always referred to in the different documents and also approached in a consistent manner: population, economy, environment, employment, transport, agriculture and energy. These are in many ways unsurprising core areas of concern for the early party. Population and environmental policy have already been discussed. The economy is generally addressed with the need to end economic growth, often communicated via the idea of 'stock over flow'. Employment tends to focus on the

¹⁵⁵ Burchell, 2002 p. 133

¹⁵⁶ Martin Seliger, *Ideology and Politics* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1976), p.109

need to have labour (rather than machine) intensive industries to provide employment, as well as ideas about how this employment could be reorganised to support people to lead satisfying lives. Transport policy focuses on encouraging public transport and cycling and reducing the need to travel, particularly car use. Agriculture focuses mainly on promoting forms of land use which do not harm the environment and promote self-sufficiency in food, but documents vary between some that advocate land being placed into public ownership to do this and some that do not. Finally, energy policy focuses on reducing demand, switching from fossil fuels to renewable sources and opposition to nuclear power.

Secondly, there are some other areas which are addressed less often but approached in a similar way when they are: welfare, government, industry and community life. The latter three areas are all viewed primarily in terms of decentralisation: devolving government power, preferencing smaller businesses over large industry and seeking smaller units of organisation by reducing the size of cities and encouraging rural over urban living. Welfare policy comprises either an explicit commitment to a universal basic income or just to maintain the basic material security of the population. Although one document contains the honest admission that 'several welfare schemes have been put forward' but that there is 'no clear agreement' on what the policy should be.¹⁵⁷ Thirdly, defence and foreign policy are generally considered but with slightly less consistent messaging. There is consistent opposition to nuclear weapons. However, while early documents make a clearer commitment to unilateral disarmament, later ones have a softer aim of phasing out nuclear weapons globally as well as ideas about reducing the UK's armed forces and cooperating in defence with other countries. Foreign policy is either split between, or combines the pursuit of, national self-sufficiency, particularly in food, and the need for foreign aid.

Finally, a number of policy areas are addressed less in these documents and approached somewhat inconsistently. The lack of pronouncements on capital works and, to a lesser extent, racial minorities and women in society is less unusual for a political party than the limited engagement with health, education, law and order, housing, and prices and incomes. Housing policy amounts to attempts to reduce urban growth and protect ancient buildings, though occasionally insulation is mentioned in relation to energy and in the

¹⁵⁷ University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre, The Ecology Party - Its Organisation and Its Policies, October 1977

manifestos (discussed in detail below) a more detailed set of proposals approaching housing in a way which conserves resources and energy are included. In different documents education policy includes disparate ideas such as more focus on arts and crafts, allowing teachers overtime, reducing the school leaving age, making schools smaller, ensuring local authority control of schools and linking education to the needs of local communities. In general, it becomes clear that these areas of policy are ones which are less core to the party's philosophy and that they struggle to articulate clear messages on them. This is either because the philosophy they are basing their ideas on equips them less well to deal with this area of policy or because it was more difficult for early members to work out how to translate their ideological approach into policies. This is reflected in the fact there was early debate within the party over whether or not it should simply focus on a 'long-term' programme with an ecological message and 'not try to catch votes on subsidiary issues e.g. imports/exports'.¹⁵⁸

8.3.2 Manifestos

Before discussing the content of the party's manifestos from the 1970s it is worth setting out what these documents were and their publication dates, particularly because several accounts have made contradictory claims about when these were produced. There was no PEOPLE manifesto produced by the time of the February 1974 general election and it was suggested in some party campaign literature that PEOPLE had been formed to implement *A Blueprint for Survival*.¹⁵⁹ The party's first national conference was held in June 1974 and Lesley Whittaker had prepared a draft manifesto which she had circulated and received amendments to prior to this conference.¹⁶⁰ This was adopted as *A Manifesto for Survival*.¹⁶¹ Drafts of a new manifesto were then produced by the Liverpool-based activist Peter Allen, who had criticised aspects of Whittaker's original draft for being right-wing, and this text

¹⁵⁸ MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Meeting, Imperial College London, 11 January 1975

¹⁵⁹ MBPA, 'PEOPLE - David Pascoe for West Derby', February 1974

¹⁶⁰ The Founders, Interview; Wall, 1994; LWPA, Amendments to 1974 Manifesto Draft; LWPA, 1974 Manifesto Drafts

¹⁶¹ MBPA, *PEOPLE: A Manifesto for Survival*, June 1974

was adopted as the *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society (MfSS)*, at the next conference in June 1975.¹⁶²

Slightly amended versions of the *MfSS* were adopted at the September 1976 conference and the September 1978 conference.¹⁶³ Confusingly, the printed copy of the manifesto dated as being adopted at the 1976 conference has the abbreviated 'eco' logo which the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) notes suggest was only introduced in early 1978.¹⁶⁴ It is most likely that the content of the manifesto is what was agreed in 1976 but that it was printed later. The minutes from the 1976 conference confirm that '68 amendments were considered' to the 1975 manifesto.¹⁶⁵ It may be that an amended version was produced in 1977 but it was not possible to locate a copy of this document during the course of this research if this did happen. The conference minutes from 1977 suggest that an individual was asked to redraft the manifesto but there is no mention of any amendments to the *MfSS* having been agreed at that conference.¹⁶⁶ The *MfSS* became a running policy document, which complemented manifestos produced specifically for general elections. *The Real Alternative* was produced for the 1979 general election.¹⁶⁷ This section is therefore based on an assessment of five manifestos produced in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1978 and 1979.

There has not been an attempt to complete a similar mapping exercise with manifestos as with the policy documents in Table 23. This is because the greater detail and length of the manifestos makes this less worthwhile and the aforementioned likelihood that the PEOPLE/Ecology Party manifestos would mirror other parties' manifestos in terms of policy areas and topics. The only manifesto produced by PEOPLE/the Ecology Party specifically for an election in the period covered in this thesis was *The Real Alternative* in 1979. The sections and headings in this document are fairly similar to those in the 1979 manifestos of the Labour, Liberal and Conservative parties.¹⁶⁸ Interestingly, unlike all the other PEOPLE/Ecology Party manifestos from the 1970s, this manifesto has no dedicated

¹⁶² LWPA, Peter Allen Draft Manifesto, April 1975; LWPA, *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*, 1975; Wall, 1994 p.22

¹⁶³ SPPA, *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*, 1976; EGA, *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*, 1978

¹⁶⁴ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, January 1978

¹⁶⁵ PFPA, Minutes of the 1976 Ecology Party Conference

¹⁶⁶ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, November 1977

¹⁶⁷ JIPA, *The Real Alternative: 1979 Election Manifesto*, 1979

¹⁶⁸ Politics Resources, 'Party Manifesto Archives' <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man.html> accessed 12 June 2019

section on population though the potential need for a long-term reduction is referred to within the text.

Attempting to accurately and succinctly summarise full details of the manifestos assessed here would be a very burdensome. *MfSS* alone is over 120 pages long. Talshir has also already provided a detailed assessment of the party's ideology based on the development of its manifestos over time. Reviewing the party's manifestos has, however, highlighted two key points. First, much like the policy documents already assessed, there were clearly some areas of policy which were more core to the party's approach than others. Unlike the policy documents, this is less a case of certain areas being neglected, rather they are addressed with a mixture of quite reductive proposals, based on the party's broad principles, and idiosyncratic ones, which do not necessarily fit coherently in the party's broader philosophy. Returning to the example of education policy, the ideas of reducing environmental harm and decentralisation are applied. This leads to suggestions such as including environmental studies in the curriculum and no new schools 'being built to accommodate more than 800 pupils' as well as seemingly more random suggestions like all university lectures being public and pupils helping to clean schools.¹⁶⁹

The process of developing policy in the party's early years is described in two useful pieces of archive material. One is an article authored by 'the Ecology Party' in *the Ecologist* which describes how they are often asked the question of 'How do you make an ecological policy on (for example) education?'. It is argued that 'all you need to do' is take the party's basic principles, suggested here to be ecology and democracy, and 'an appropriate policy will very often suggest itself quite quickly'.¹⁷⁰ The fundamental and operative ideology dynamic is clearly observable in another source: a summary of a 1978 policy conference suggested that 'virtually everyone in the Party would agree, in broad outline at least, about the case for a stable society, about agricultural policy, reduced consumption, less materialist values and devolution' but that left 'considerable scope for debate about education, foreign affairs, defence and unilateral and multilateral disarmament'. It was added that 'on a subject more or less unconnected with the principle of the stable society – such as the

¹⁶⁹ EGA, *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society*, 1978, pp.51-6

¹⁷⁰ *The Ecologist*, Vol 7 No 6 July 1977, p.223

closed shop, for instance – there is no reason why Eco-members should show more consensus than a group of people drawn at random’. A distinction was drawn between subjects ‘which we can agree on straight away, and those on which we can’t’.¹⁷¹

Secondly, reviewing the policy documents and the manifestos together suggests that there were some clear underlying principles informing the approach to policy throughout the 1970s with linkages to the texts discussed in Chapter 7. Most obviously, the need to rebalance humanity’s relationship to nature based on ecological limits leading to the pursuit of aims such as a no-growth economy, population management, resource conservation and pollution prevention. Additionally, belief in decentralisation, reduction in scale and giving people greater control over aspects of society and the economy leading to aims such as promoting smaller businesses over large companies, providing fulfilling work for people, encouraging urban to rural migration and devolving power to lower levels. Linked to the first principle, is the pursuit of national self-sufficiency, principally in food but goods, resources and energy are often discussed too. Finally, the need to deliver such a transformation democratically and with some regard for social equity questions, including guaranteeing a basic level of material security in Britain and delivering aid to the developing world. For example, a 1975 policy document listed aims including ‘the conditions for a sustainable society’ and an ‘ecologically sound way of life’, ‘decentralisation’, ‘self-sufficiency in temperate foods, manufactured goods and energy’, and ‘basic material security...guaranteed by society’.¹⁷²

It is clear that the party was not just an organisation fighting elections to campaign against isolated environmental threats, nor was it rudderless philosophically. PEOPLE/the Ecology Party had some clear principles guiding its approach from the beginning which gave it meaning as a political party. Even if early members were still trying to fully work out what these were and how they translated into policy, these principles more easily informed their approach in some areas than others. While not entirely contradicting the notion set out above, most explicitly expressed by Talshir, that the party began without a comprehensive philosophy and only matured ideologically once it embraced left-wing ideas, this does provide a counter-narrative to it. This point is strengthened with a comparison to the Labour

¹⁷¹ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, July/August/September 1978

¹⁷² LMPA, Ecology Party ‘When? What? Why? Where? How?’ Leaflet, 1975 (Date added by archivist)

Party, where it has been argued that socialism, at its core, equates to common ownership of the means of production, but to develop policy proposals in areas like social and foreign policy it has had to draw from other traditions such as liberalism.¹⁷³ Providing coherent policy programmes across all areas is a challenge for all political parties. Extending the comparison with Labour, the early PEOPLE/Ecology Party approach to something like education is not that different to the modern Labour Party where policy in this area is a mix of applications of ideological principles (such as public ownership) and less principled, technocratic or evidence-based ideas (such as reductions in class sizes). Overall, by the 1970s an environmental or ecological ideological project had developed which was sufficiently broad and comprehensive to inform a party-political programme. This gave logic and meaning to PEOPLE/the Ecology Party and so is central to understanding why it emerged at this point.

8.3.3 Interviews

Interview participants were asked about whether they thought the party they had joined during the 1970s had a comprehensive philosophy. Some of the respondents accepted that it 'took time' to work out their approach and that initially they did not have a 'fully formed' and totally 'comprehensive view of what the planet should be like'.¹⁷⁴ However, there was a very widespread rejection of the idea that the party had a narrow environmental focus in the sense that they were not talking about society and the economy more generally. This was expressed by arguing against the charge many encountered at the time that the party was a single-issue party. The most obvious counter to this was the factual point that the manifestos and policy documents discussed above addressed a whole range of policy areas. Biff Vernon recalled meeting Tony Benn, when he was Secretary of State for Energy (between 1975 and 1979), who dismissed the party as a single-issue group. Vernon rejected this, arguing:

It was never a single-issue party, it was others who would conveniently portray it as such. I'm just reading down the policy list in the front page of the Reckoning from

¹⁷³ Peter Ackers & Alastair Reid, 'Other Worlds of Labour' in P. Ackers & A. Ried (eds.) *Alternatives to State Socialism in Britain* (Gower/Stroud: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

¹⁷⁴ John Marjoram, Interview; Peter Frings, Interview

number 1 down is: employment, import/export, resources, inflation, industry, energy, pollution, farming, food transport, social structure, education, women in society, racial minorities, health, foreign affairs, defence, population, devolution, politics.¹⁷⁵

The other argument put forward by early activists was that the perception of the party as narrow and limited in its focus is absurd because of the total change which it was demanding and the all-encompassing nature of the environment.

What we were saying is the whole basis of western civilisation is unsustainable, so we have to change the whole way in which we organise our economy and we need to create a society which can achieve that.¹⁷⁶

Our whole life depends on the environment. We can't have an economy unless we take account of the environment. We can't breathe or drink or survive without the environment, so the environment is all-encompassing.¹⁷⁷

...we were involved in everything. If you went back to the fundamentals, not of the Ecology Party itself, but the environmental issue: environment, pollution, population, resources, it impacted on everything and therefore we had to devise policies which involved everything.¹⁷⁸

This argument often emphasised the degree to which the party's early approach was as much about economics as it was about environmental issues (narrowly understood). One activist suggested that the party's ideology was about 'the realisation that the environment underlies the economic system' and another asserted that 'we were confident we were not a single-issue party because we had this strong economic base of not believing in economic growth'.¹⁷⁹ This can be summarised as the idea that it 'was never only about woods and forests' but 'how the economic system affected the earth'.¹⁸⁰ There were several interview participants who had either remained continuously active up to when they were interviewed, who had left and re-joined the party or who had left but remained aware of

¹⁷⁵ Biff Vernon, Interview

¹⁷⁶ David Taylor, Interview

¹⁷⁷ Claire Nash, Interview

¹⁷⁸ Gundula Dorey, Interview

¹⁷⁹ Dean Wayland, Interview; Geoff Garbett, Interview

¹⁸⁰ Jean Lambert, Interview

the party's activities. Among these, many shared the view that the party had moved away from a pure focus on the ecological crisis to become a left-wing party and embrace a series of social justice issues which, for some, crowded out the environment, reduced the party's distinctiveness and departed from the original purpose of the party.

[W]e did get a lot of refugees from the Labour Party, some of whom are now going back under Corbyn...I think there's been a bit of a swing away from the concerns for the planet as a whole towards the social justice side of things. There's a lot of discussion in the party at the moment about equal rights for lesbian and gay people and all that kind of thing, people with disabilities. That's all fine but for me that is slightly pushing to one side what I regard as a more important question which is the health of the planet that we depend on. I think if there's no life on the planet, it doesn't matter that everybody's equal if we're all dead.¹⁸¹

They go overboard now to almost forget the environment which was one of my major critiques of the last [2015 general] election campaign when Natalie Bennett put all this stuff about austerity. She could have been a clone of Jeremy Corbyn.¹⁸²

I'm very much out of favour with the ideological drift to the left...When I was a member the environment was a core thing...throughout the 80s we were talking about a sustainable economy and we were trying to build everything from the idea of sustainability...Now it seems it's betrayed its core principles, on social justice its tried to outdo Labour and the Liberals on the left so yeah I'm very much out of sympathy with it.¹⁸³

Clive Lord, almost certainly the party's longest continuous member having been at the inaugural meeting the founders held in Coventry in 1973 and still a party member when he was interviewed for this project in 2016, expressed a very similar sentiment in more strident terms.

I think it was about 2004, 2005 that the group Green Left was formed, who are a faction within the Green Party, to me they are a cancerous growth and you can

¹⁸¹ David & Linda Whitebread, Interview

¹⁸² Tim Cooper, Interview

¹⁸³ David Kemball-Cook, Interview

quote me on that...I still claim to be a socialist but at least desperately trying to combine this with *Limits to Growth*. These people are trying to get away from that.¹⁸⁴

Lord also referred to ex-Labour Party members who joined the Greens in the late 1990s and 2000s, as ‘pirates’ and stood in the party’s 2016 leadership election (then aged 81) in an attempt to get the party to ‘take the original purpose of the Green Party seriously’, though he only got 173 votes.¹⁸⁵ The comprehensiveness of the party’s early ideology has already been discussed but it is worth noting that the ideological shift to ‘adopting a broad set of left-libertarian policies within which the environment is just one priority area’ has created a challenge to maintain coherency of approach, which was not present when the party was first set up and had a narrower ecological focus.¹⁸⁶ This was perhaps demonstrated most clearly during the 2015 general election campaign. The Green Party of England and Wales not only focused on austerity and social issues, almost to the exclusion of environmental ones, but the alternative to austerity put forward in the manifesto was ‘a short-term economic stimulus’. While they tried to draw a distinction between ‘short-term growth’ or ‘regeneration’ and long-term economic growth, the awkwardness of this position for a party founded on the commitment to end economic growth is undeniable.¹⁸⁷

8.4 Ideological Discussion within the Party

Talshir suggests that in the party’s early years ‘ideological differences were not discussed’ and that this only changed in the late 1980s.¹⁸⁸ Until this point, members had ‘rarely debated issues of identity, philosophy or ideology, concentrating instead, ironically, on policy.’¹⁸⁹ There was considerable discussion of policy ideas but, particularly in the early years when the party was developing its first manifestos, it is very hard to convincingly

¹⁸⁴ Clive Lord, Interview

¹⁸⁵ Clive Lord, Interview; The Guardian, ‘Caroline Lucas and Jonathan Bartley Elected Green Party Co-Leaders – As It Happened’ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/live/2016/sep/02/green-party-conference-leader-lucas> accessed 30 August 2019

¹⁸⁶ Carter, 2008 p.238

¹⁸⁷ The Green Party, ‘2015 General Election Manifesto’ <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/we-stand-for/2015-manifesto.html> accessed 30 August 2019

¹⁸⁸ Talshir, 2002 p.xxiv

¹⁸⁹ Tashir, 2002 p.175

separate this from debate over underlying values. It is also true that after some early, heated debates within PEOPLE along left-right lines, this tension was not dominant within the party in the ensuing years.¹⁹⁰ Tony Whittaker is quoted as stating in 1976 that generally members who have differences along left-right lines have been willing to 'bury this particular hatchet'.¹⁹¹ The overwhelmingly impression which emerges from a survey of relevant archive material from the 1970s, however, is not how little members were debating issues of philosophy and beliefs but how much. They were just not necessarily arguments between left-wing and right-wing factions.

Evidence from three different forums provides a good indication of the ideological discussions taking place between members during this period. First, the debates at the 1974 conference have been mentioned, but it had been planned that the cancelled 1973 conference would include a session on 'different survivalist factions and their inter relationships'.¹⁹² The 1975 and 1976 conference programmes were mainly made up of discussion of *MfSS*, including the 'The Philosophical Basis', which was created to help define the party's approach rather than for a specific election.¹⁹³ Even among the small group in attendance, there was disagreement over defence policy and a session on whether a no-growth party had to be left or right-wing at the 1976 conference.¹⁹⁴ The 1977 conference was more procedural because it came after the lull in activity in 1976 and included the creation of a constitution. There were still sessions reviewing the manifesto and party policy.¹⁹⁵ At the 1978 conference the first day included sessions on 'energy and economy' and 'employment'. Almost the entire second day was taken up by a discussion of the party's 'philosophy and values'.¹⁹⁶ A detailed written summary of this debate closed by stating that 'we are part of a broader ecological movement, and as such we are obliged to think fast and furiously about the values and philosophy that determine the long term course of any such movement'.¹⁹⁷ Figures 4 and 5 show two documents prepared for this conference session

¹⁹⁰ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a, pp.266-68

¹⁹¹ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, October/November 1976

¹⁹² LWPA, PEOPLE - Survival: A National Conference Programme, June 1973

¹⁹³ LWPA, Ecology Party Pre-Conference Newsletter, 1 September 1976; LWPA, PEOPLE National Conference Agenda, June 1975

¹⁹⁴ PFPA, Minutes of the 1976 Ecology Party Conference; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, October/November, 1976

¹⁹⁵ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, June/July 1977

¹⁹⁶ LWPA, 1978 Ecology Party AGM and Conference Booking Form, Undated

¹⁹⁷ PFPA, 1978 Ecology Party Conference Supplement

and demonstrate the level of detail some early members were going into about the party's ideology.

Secondly, the party's newsletters, though slightly less so in the very early years, were forums for debate about ideological approach. Picking out some examples, in a 1975 edition there is an extended reproduction of a discussion on what an ecological government might look like.¹⁹⁸ In 1976 and 1977 there was protracted debate between members about what the right approach to defence policy should be.¹⁹⁹ In 1978, an activist wrote in to argue for the need to embrace values beyond just survival such as community and justice.²⁰⁰ Thirdly, Chapter 7 discussed the number of environmental-related magazines and journals published during the 1970s which early party activists were reading and contributing to. Within many of these publications there were articles discussing the ideology of ecology or environmentalism, such as how it relates to anarchism and socialism, which were no doubt informing the thinking of early members. Early members themselves were also taking part in such debates, for example in *the Ecologist* Colin Fry's article on 'Marxism versus Ecology' and Jonathon Porritt's explanation of how the party was seeking to 'debunk the primacy of the politics of Left and Right'.²⁰¹ Early members were by no means universally concerned with this type of discussion about values. For example, Steve Lambert described how at the first meetings of the local party in London in the 1970s some individuals 'used to go on at great length about different ideologies and how we fitted in' but, while this was 'interesting', he was never 'big on ideology' and was more concerned with the practicalities of 'organising lots of things'.²⁰² Nonetheless, the party's values and philosophy were clearly debated internally throughout the 1970s.

¹⁹⁸ MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, March/April 1975

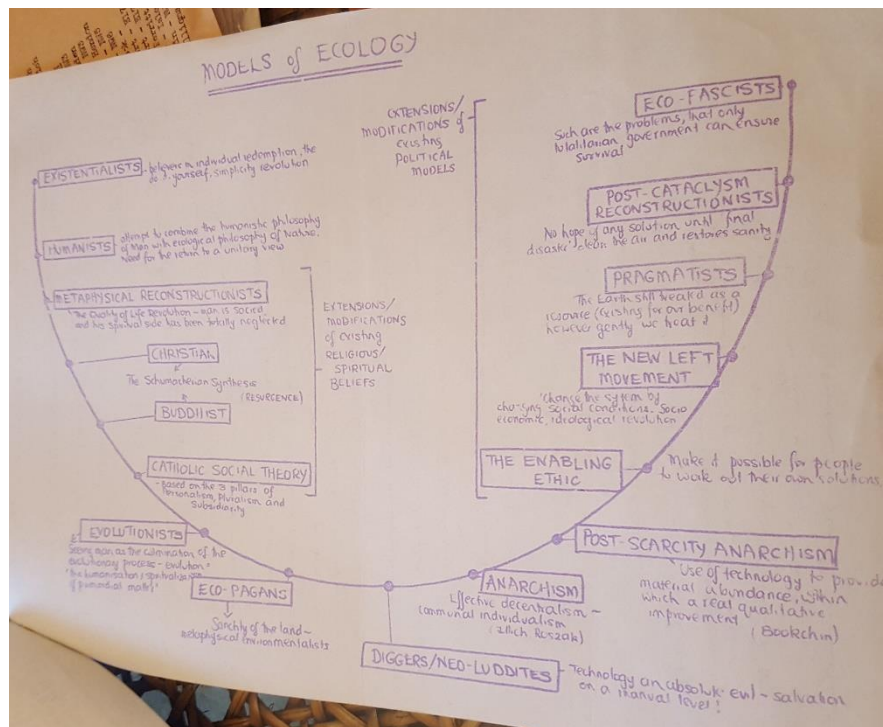
¹⁹⁹ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, December 1976/January 1977; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, February 1977

²⁰⁰ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, January 1978

²⁰¹ *The Ecologist*, Vol 6 No 9 November 1976, p.328; *The Ecologist*, Vol 9 No 1 January/February 1979, p.20

²⁰² Steve Lambert, Interview

Figure 4 - 'Models of Ecology', Prepared by Jonathan Porritt for 1978 Conference Session on Philosophy and Values



Source: LWPA.

Figure 5 - Ideological Comparison Document, Prepared by Jonathan Porritt for 1978 Conference Session on Philosophy and Values

[illegible]

Source: LWPA.

8.5 An Explicit Ideology

Having discussed the extent to which early party activists considered themselves to be campaigning on a comprehensive platform and the extent to which they were debating the party's ideology, this section considers whether they explicitly considered themselves to have an ideology - as 'ecologists' or any other label. In line with the arguments already examined, Talshir suggests that when they emerged green parties 'adamantly denied professing an "ideology"' and had 'a conceptual rejection of the concept of ideology itself'.²⁰³ In relation to the British case specifically, Porritt is quoted at length from his 1984 book *Seeing Green*:

There is no God-given requirement which says that a political party has to base its activities on a fixed ideology. Having written the last general election manifestos for the Ecology Party, I would be hard put even now to say what our ideology is. Our politics seems to be a fairly simple mixture of pragmatism and idealism, common sense and vision. If that's an ideology, it's a rather different sort from those that dominate our lives today.²⁰⁴

Talshir then suggests that in the early years the party attempted to portray its beliefs as a 'commonsensical, non-ideological worldview'.²⁰⁵ This idea strongly reflects the sentiments of many of the early activists but does not tell the whole story. The party's rejection of ideology during the 1970s, was generally a rhetorical device either bound up with positioning the party as transcending the left-right spectrum or the fairly common approach taken by campaigners and parties (often with clear ideologies) to pitch themselves as non-ideological, defenders of common sense. Despite Porritt's quote in the mid-1980s, the photos above indicate that when he was first involved with the party, even he was thinking in explicitly ideological terms about it. When the founders were asked in interview whether they had thought of themselves as having a specific ideology when they set the party up, Lesley Whittaker raised the notion that 'We didn't have the vocabulary to label ourselves, did we? We were having to invent it all the way along the line.'²⁰⁶ Party labels and identity are considered in more detail in a later section of this chapter, but many early

²⁰³ Talshir, 2002 pp.10-13

²⁰⁴ Jonathon Porritt, *Seeing Green* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984) Cited in Talshir, 2002 p.203

²⁰⁵ Talshir, 2002 p.203

²⁰⁶ The Founders, Interview

members were clearly working out how to define themselves and there are examples of explicit ideological identification among party activists, most commonly as ecologists or with the ideology of ecology.

In 1976 Colin Fry produced a promotional flyer on the 'Ecological International?'. He suggests that this is forming but that 'the worldwide ecological movement is at present in a condition comparable to that of the world socialist movement at the end of the nineteenth century.'²⁰⁷ Jonathan Tyler's 1977-78 chairman's report argued that 'ecological analysis is breaking the bounds of existing ideologies' which provides 'the rationale of the Ecology Party'. The name of the Ecology Party had been chosen because the 'meaning had already spilt over from the biological concept into the philosophy of human systems and our treatment of the ecosystem. Now it is coming to mean the set of values which infuse a lifestyle, and its distinctive political ideology.'²⁰⁸ One of the Ecology Party's 1979 general election candidates' campaign speeches traced the history of mankind from the first humans, highlighting the first turn of the development of agriculture and the second turn of the development of the industrial state leading to a crisis which demands the 'fresh approach' provided by ecology.²⁰⁹ Though not enough to persuade the voters of Taunton this demonstrates the ambitious and philosophical thinking of many early members.

This is not to suggest that every early member considered themselves to be an 'ecologist' or coming from an explicit ideological approach. The oral accounts collected attest to a varied picture in this regard and the two quotes below demonstrate the different perspectives of early members.

I don't think you would have a put a name to it...I hadn't been reading the works of political philosophers for years and decided that I belonged to this or whatever. I still don't.²¹⁰

I've always believed that green politics is a distinct, new current of thought. It doesn't sit easily on the left-right spectrum at all. It's a new tradition, new current, it

²⁰⁷ MBPA, 'Ecological International?' Flyer, May 1976

²⁰⁸ PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report 1977-78

²⁰⁹ GGPA, Geoff Garbett 1979 General Election Campaign Speech

²¹⁰ Jean Lambert, Interview

obviously has antecedents going back but what came out in the 1970s was a new philosophy and a new political tradition.²¹¹

This variation is to be expected however within a political party. For example, in the Labour Party's early history there was a complicated relationship between many intellectual socialist groups and those who took a more practical approach, focused on working class representation, such as many trade union figures.²¹²

8.6 Turning Green - Party Identity

In the years subsequent to the period covered in this thesis the party developed a clear identity as part of the green party family. Peter Mair and Cas Mudde suggest that it is possible to determine whether parties fall within a family based on the criteria of their name and links to international federations, the nature of their origins and ideological congruence.²¹³ As Emily van Haute notes there are potential difficulties with trying to categorise green parties along these lines, but in most democracies a party has emerged which places particular emphasis on the environment and these parties usually have 'green' in their name and use the colour in their logos and branding.²¹⁴ These parties are also linked by international federations, in continents and globally, as well as in other settings such as a European Parliament group.²¹⁵ The Global Green group formed in 2001 has around 100 members.²¹⁶ How clearly defined was this identity when the British party was first set up? Did it take time to form?

The Greens in Britain started out as PEOPLE, a name which is suggested in early party literature to highlight the message that 'People and Places Matter'.²¹⁷ This is quite an ambiguous name and, aside from the need to insert the term 'party' into it, one reason for

²¹¹ David Taylor, Interview

²¹² J.H. Reid, *The Origins of the British Labour Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955); Henry Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party, 1880-1900* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1954); Henry Pelling, *A Short History of the Labour Party* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1991); Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party* (New York: Palgrave, 2015)

²¹³ Peter Mair & Cas Mudde, 'The Party Family and its Study', *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol 1 1998, pp.211-29

²¹⁴ van Haute, 2016 pp.18-20

²¹⁵ The Global Greens, 'Green Federations', <https://www.globalgreens.org/federations> accessed 28 June 2018; Elizabeth Bomberg, *Green Parties and Politics in the European Union* (London: Routledge, 1998)

²¹⁶ Global Greens, 'Global Greens Charter', <https://www.globalgreens.org/globalcharter> accessed 28 July 2017

²¹⁷ MBPA, 'A New Political Party' Leaflet, 1974

the change to the Ecology Party seems to have been the need to make it clearer what the party actually stood for. It was also necessary to remove any potential idea that PEOPLE (often referred to as the People Party or the People's Party) was a communist party.²¹⁸ At the 1975 conference around 25 names were considered. The eventual decision to go for the Ecology Party, as well as a subsequent abortive attempt by some members in 1977 to form a new, breakaway party called 'the Survival Party', demonstrates the degree to which those present felt the need to identify the party clearly with its environmental agenda.²¹⁹ The consideration of the name 'the New Values Party' to mirror the party in New Zealand also suggests a consciousness that the party's identity was linked to other similar parties emerging elsewhere.²²⁰ The actual label for this type of party was not set at this point, however, with early options including ecology, survival and values. As the 1970s progressed the 'green' label began to gain currency within the party and, particularly in 1978 and 1979, was used by members in newsletters, internal briefings and press quotes. This was often in reference to environmental groups in Germany and continental Europe as well as being a way to describe the British party's ideas.²²¹

Another aspect of green party identity is the colour being used in logos and branding to match the name. There are obvious reasons why parties (and pressure groups) which are principally concerned with the environment and the natural world have come to identify themselves with the colour green. However, when the founders of PEOPLE were first striking out green was not the colour used to depict the party. There is a first draft logo for PEOPLE which uses purple, gold and red. Purple is said to represent the 'blood of noble people', gold 'the future which can be' and red the 'burning fire of civic zeal and of the burnt-out world if things are not conserved and controlled'.²²² Lesley Whittaker has also

²¹⁸ The Founders, Interview

²¹⁹ MBPA, Newsletters, 1975, *Alliance*, Issue 1 July/August 1975; UOA, *Undercurrents*, Issue 33 April-May 1979, https://issuu.com/undercurrents1972/docs/_uc33_mar10a accessed 6 September 2018; Dean Wayland wrote to *Undercurrents* to clarify why, after the 1977 Ecology Party conference, he and a small group of members from Stevenage formed 'the Survival Party' as a 'more militant approach' was needed to reflect the urgency of the ecological crisis. It 'got off to a bad start' as having developed a logo based around an 'S' they realised it could have unfortunate and unintended Nazi connotations. A local newspaper reported on them, misleadingly suggesting that Wayland's propensity to wear double-pocketed shirts amounted to the group wearing military uniforms. They had also developed a fist-clenched 'Ecological salute'. Wayland reflected in interview that they had stopped and gone back to the Ecology Party quite quickly as they realised it 'was silly', adding 'Have you ever watched the Life of Brian? You know the bit with the People's Front of Judea?' (Dean Wayland, Interview).

²²⁰ MBPA, *Alliance*, Issue 1 July/August 1975

²²¹ JIPA, *Econews*, No.1 March/April 1979; PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report, 1977-78; PFPA, 1978 Ecology Party Conference Summary; MBPA, Press Cuttings, Newspaper Title and Exact Date Not Included, 1979

²²² MBPA, Early Draft PEOPLE Logo, Undated

suggested that turquoise represented ‘the sea’ and coral was ‘a gentle colour that would initiate action in people’.²²³ Once it was actually launched, PEOPLE used coral, turquoise and white, although other colours were used occasionally such as green and often the printing was monochrome.²²⁴ There was also a PEOPLE logo which featured the wave symbol of Aquarius. The colours (red and blue often replacing turquoise and coral) and the Aquarius symbol continued to be used for some materials after the transition to the Ecology Party. Andy Beckett suggests that the party had moved to using green by 1975 but in 1977 they were still only discussing the idea of moving to brown and green and some local parties independently started using these colours.²²⁵ This idea took hold within the party so that by 1978 material for public consumption generally used the colour green, with black or white text or backgrounds.

These superficial elements of the party’s identity were not in place from the party’s creation. It took time for the party to settle on the green label and colouring, but they had started to be adopted by the latter part of the 1970s. More significantly, their adoption as well as the early use of other labels like ecology and survival, point to an early implicit sense of the party as part of a developing ideological project. This point is demonstrated by the international connections with other environmental groups and parties that early PEOPLE/Ecology Party members worked hard to try and develop. At a PEOPLE meeting in November 1974 there was a talk from the nephew of a campaigner in Australia who is said to have started the ‘ecologically based’ Australia Party which contested elections in 1971 and 1972 (they had originally scheduled for the uncle to speak).²²⁶ The party’s 1976 newsletter provides a detailed profile of the Australia Party, including details of its ecological policies, an outline of its membership and lessons the British party might be able to draw.²²⁷ The Australia Party is generally considered a centrist or liberal party rather than a green one but some activists in Britain clearly considered it as an ecological party and were therefore keen to build links with it.²²⁸ The organisation that is often credited as being

²²³ Lesley Whittaker Cited in Wall, 1994 p.18

²²⁴ Coral, turquoise and white were used in the first PEOPLE manifesto (MBPA, *PEOPLE: A Manifesto for Survival*, June 1974).

²²⁵ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, December 1976/January 1977; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, February 1977; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, April 1977; Beckett, 2009 p.243

²²⁶ MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, October 1974; MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Area Organizers’ Open Meeting, Liverpool, 9 November 1974

²²⁷ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, October/November 1976

²²⁸ Thomas Mackie & Richard Rose, *The International Almanac of Electoral History* (London: Macmillan, 1974)

the first green party in the world is the United Tasmania Group and the British party were in contact with them at least as early as 1977.²²⁹

At the November 1974 meeting there was also discussion of the green party in New Zealand.²³⁰ The New Zealand Values Party was founded in 1972 and it was of considerable interest to those in the British party throughout the 1970s, evidenced by the regular updates on its progress in the party newsletter and discussions of it at meetings.²³¹ Activists were in contact with individuals in the New Zealand Values Party, including sharing manifestos and party newsletters with one another.²³² In 1974 the secretary of the Values Party wrote to PEOPLE to describe how they had 'brought forward a philosophy that was new to the field of politics' in New Zealand. Lesley Whittaker responded by citing different international examples of environmental groups and suggesting that 'we must all continue the fight'.²³³ Local Ecology Party branches were trying to 'twin' with their 'sister party in New Zealand' in 1978.²³⁴ Representatives from the New Zealand Values Party also attended NEC meetings in 1976 and 1978.²³⁵ In France a fully established green party was founded in 1984 in the form of Les Verts - Confederation Ecologiste, Parti Ecologiste. However, there had been a number of attempts by greens to run for office prior to this. A local group in Alsace called Écologie et Survie contested the 1973 legislative elections and this group and Les Amis de la Terre (Friends of the Earth) provided support to the presidential candidate Rene Dumont in 1974.²³⁶ Members of PEOPLE tracked these developments and discussed them at their meeting in 1974.²³⁷ In March 1976 one of Les Amis de la Terre's spokespeople, Brice Lalonde, stood under a 'Paris-Ecologie' banner in a National Assembly by-election.²³⁸ The following year Lalonde came to speak at the 1977 Ecology Party conference in

²²⁹ MBPA, Tony Joyce (International Secretary, United Tasmania Group) Letter to Michael Benfield, 8 August 1977

²³⁰ MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Area Organizers' Open Meeting, Liverpool, 9 November 1974

²³¹ A Report on the PEOPLE Area Organizers' Open Meeting, Liverpool, 9 November 1974; MBPA, *Alliance*, Issue 4 November 1975; MBPA, *Alliance*, Issue 5 December 1975/January 1976; PFPA, Minutes of the 1976 Ecology Party Conference; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, January 1978; PFPA, 1978 Ecology Party Conference Summary

²³² MBPA, *Alliance*, Journal 1 July/August 1975; MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, March/April 1975; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, April 1977; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, June/July 1977; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, July/August/September 1978

²³³ LWPA, Ray Blaxall (National Secretary, New Zealand Values Party) Letter to Lesley Whittaker, 23 December 1974; LWPA, Lesley Whittaker Letter to Ray Blaxall, 24 December 1974

²³⁴ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, October 1978

²³⁵ MBPA, *Alliance*, Journal 6 February 1976; PFPA, Ecology Party Secretary's Report, 1977-78; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, July/August/September 1978

²³⁶ Parkin, 1989 pp.95-100

²³⁷ MBPA, A Report on the PEOPLE Area Organizers' Open Meeting, Liverpool, 9 November 1974

²³⁸ Parkin, 1989 p.96

Birmingham.²³⁹ There is evidence that during the 1970s links of different kinds were made between the British party and sympathetic groups in additional countries including Kenya, America, Canada, Germany, Norway and Sweden.²⁴⁰

Members of the party in Britain were also involved in projects which coordinated action among environmental pressure groups in Europe, such as ECOROPA.²⁴¹ The party was actively supporting moves to more formalised international cooperation. As chairman of the Ecology Party between 1976 and 1979 Jonathan Tyler attended two international meetings. The first was a symposium in Strasbourg organised by the Council of Europe around new parties and social movements.²⁴² The second was a 'meeting of ecological and environmental movements in seven countries' in Paris. This saw an agreement among all of them to run under the banner 'Europe-Ecology' in the 1979 European Parliament election (although, as Elizabeth Bomberg suggests, a common election statement between European parties only emerged at the 1984 European election).²⁴³ Additionally, Michael Benfield's personal archive contains correspondence with environmental activists abroad in which he puts forward the idea of forming an 'International Federation'.²⁴⁴ During the 1970s, the NEC also endorsed Benfield's suggestion of an 'eco-international conference' subject to funds (almost certainly the reason it did not happen) as well as promoting the Kenyan-led World Environment Day.²⁴⁵ These would later develop into more extensive infrastructure linking green parties within continents and across the world.

The reasons the party was so outward looking from the beginning are probably manifold. First, simply because some of the individuals were interested in international links. Secondly, for a new, radical and very marginal political party in Britain it must have been reassuring to hear from similar groups in other countries. For example, Jonathan Tyler spoke of the 'encouragement' these links provided.²⁴⁶ Thirdly, there is an obvious global angle to environmental problems which is likely to have encouraged those setting up and getting involved with the party to look beyond Britain. These early international links also

²³⁹ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, June/July 1977

²⁴⁰ MBPA, Michael Benfield Letter to Tony Joyce (International Secretary, United Tasmania Group), 18 August 1977; MBPA, PEOPLE Newsletter, March/April 1975; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, July/August/September 1978; MBPA, 'Ecological International?' Flyer, May 1976; MBPA; Ecology Party Newsletter, January 1978

²⁴¹ JIPA, ECOROPA, Ecological Manifesto for a Different Europe, 1979

²⁴² PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report, 1977-78

²⁴³ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, January 1978

²⁴⁴ MBPA, 'Ecological International?' Flyer, May 1976; MBPA, Michael Benfield Letter to Tasmanian Values Party, Undated

²⁴⁵ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, December 1976/January 1977; PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, January 1978

²⁴⁶ Ruth Corry, David Corry, Brenda Tyler & Jonathan Tyler, Interview

speak to the sense early activists had, either explicitly or implicitly, of the party being part of a new, global movement and ideological project. Even if superficial elements like colours and labels were still being worked out during the 1970s and there were not actually that many other ecological parties fully formed by this point.

8.7 Conclusion

Whether a particular movement or party can be said to express a new or distinct ideology depends in part on how an ideology is defined and the meaning and use of the term has been one of the most contested areas of discussion of political concepts.²⁴⁷ Talshir suggests that an ideology can be defined by an historical analysis, a social vision and a political plan for its materialisation. It is acknowledged that the party could be described in these terms with a critique of industrialism, a social vision of decentralised, self-sufficient communities living a sustainable life in harmony with their environment and a strategy which was hampered by the difficulties of gaining national power but therefore concentrated on local campaigning and lifestyle changes.²⁴⁸ Doherty places green parties within Martin Seliger's framework for understanding ideology: as a coherent worldview, combining empirical description and analysis of the world with moral and technical prescriptions as well as being consistent enough to allow prediction of what their followers' beliefs will be in many areas.²⁴⁹

This chapter has examined a number of aspects of the party's ideology, policy and identity in its initial years of existence. It began by setting out the broader debate about environmental ideology, concurring with the view that others have argued that the party in Britain began with an approach much more focused on the environment not associated with socialism, but in the late 1980s and early 1990s this changed. The party became left-wing and more concerned with a broader range of social issues. The idea that this development represented a maturing in the party's ideological approach and that prior to it the party could not be said to have had a comprehensive ideology was assessed. While agreeing with these ideas to an extent, counter arguments were provided to this notion and particularly to

²⁴⁷ Doherty, 1994 p.20

²⁴⁸ Talshir, 2002 p.260

²⁴⁹ Seliger, 1976; Doherty, 1994

Talshir's suggestion that, for at least the first decade of its history, the party thought of itself as having 'nothing substantial to say about society or politics, beyond environmentally related policies'.²⁵⁰ The next section mapped out a series of policy documents produced by the party during the course of the 1970s and analysed its manifestos from the same period. It is clear that, as would be expected with any party, there were a number of areas where policy proposals flowed more naturally and were core to the party's philosophy. Others areas were less easy to work out policies for and more peripheral. The policy programmes outlined were linked to some clear underlying principles, related to many of the ideas in the texts and publications explored in Chapter 7.

This chapter then examined early party members' attitudes to the ideology of the party. This is the area most pertinent to the focus of this thesis, explaining why the party emerged. The following areas were examined specifically: the extent to which early party members believed that the party (and them personally) had a comprehensive ideology, whether discussion about the party's ideology was taking place in the early years of its existence and if early party members thought there was an explicit ideology informing the party's approach. It was suggested that interview participants had been keen to point out the extent to which the party had a programme which spanned across many policy areas, and the sheer comprehensiveness of the changes to society and the economy they were seeking to enact. It was also demonstrated that, for many early members, the party's subsequent move leftwards has diluted the ideological distinctiveness of the party and its aims for total change to society in line with environmental limits. This accusation would not have had much purchase during the 1970s.

It was argued that during the 1970s there was considerable discussion of what the party's ideology was and should be and that many early members explicitly endorsed the idea of there being an ecological ideology informing the party's thinking. It has also been made clear that there was a strong sense of the party's identity as part of a global movement and ideological project even if this was only understood implicitly by some members and superficial aspects like the specific labels or colours they used had not been settled upon. There is a debate within the literature on political parties over how central

²⁵⁰ Talshir, 2002 p.xxiv

ideology is to them. On one side it is suggested that a political party without an ideology would have no base for existence and could not perform any task in the political context since 'ideologies in this sense represent the core identities of parties and provide blueprints of alternative solutions for current problems of societies'.²⁵¹ On the other side, parties are seen as simply coalitions of individuals seeking to control government.²⁵² This idea will be expanded upon in the following, concluding chapter of this thesis but the explanation offered here for the emergence of the party places ideology at its centre. The party's emergence can only be seen as the product of many factors and this thesis has not suggested one thing alone explains it. However, the development around this time, both in Britain and internationally, of what can be seen as an ideological project based around re-orientating humanity's relationship to the natural world is a key part of the answer. Chapter 7 has already highlighted the extent to which early members' personal experiences of the environment fused with the new ecological or environmental ideas developing at this point and how this shifted thinking from conservation to holistic ideas about re-ordering the economy and society. The party was not the only political response in Britain to this developing ideological project. The party itself suggested in 1977 that their beliefs were 'the same as those of other conservationist groups, and the policies we would apply are just those which other groups are putting forward', though groups like Friends of the Earth were never going to develop a programme as wide-ranging as a political party. This new approach to the natural world was more than enough, however, to base a political party on and indeed in many ways, a party was the logical extension of it.

²⁵¹ Andrea Volkens & Hans-Dieter Klingemann, 'Parties, Ideologies, and Issues', in K.R. Luther & F. Müller-Rommel (eds.) *Political Parties in the New Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.144

²⁵² Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1957), p.113

Chapter 9 - Conclusion

9.1 Outline

This concluding chapter begins by briefly restating the aim of thesis and how it sits within the pre-existing literature. The following section returns to the subsidiary research questions which were outlined in Chapter 2 and then summarises the key topics, arguments and contributions to knowledge made by each of the chapters in this thesis. Finally, aspects of the arguments made in individual chapters are brought together to refine and expand the explanation for the party's emergence offered in this thesis.

9.2 The Aim of this Thesis

This thesis has helped to answer the question of why the party emerged. Chapter 2 set out how there is substantial literature on the party which includes overviews of the main events in the party's history, assessments of its electoral performance, categorisations of its ideology, studies of its membership and research into its internal structures. There has not, however, been a detailed, specific historical study of why the British party emerged. Chapter 2 also detailed the general literature which has engaged with the question of the emergence of green parties as a collective phenomenon. First, new politics theories about broad shifts in western societies have been used to explain the emergence of green parties. At best these theories highlight 'facilitators' for the emergence of green parties.¹ When considering why the British party emerged such ideas need to be considered but any account which relied wholly or mainly upon them would be deficient.

Secondly, Chapter 2 highlighted a particularly important critique of new politics theories as explanations for the emergence of green parties: that they ignore the environmental or ecological identity of these parties, treating it as essentially incidental. This is a convincing argument which advances understanding of the emergence of green parties by placing concrete environmental problems and the emergence of an associated

¹ Rudig, 1990a p.31

cleavage at the centre of why green parties emerged.² Such accounts are, however, general and theoretical, seeking to explain the emergence of green parties generally and not based on detailed primary research. The reality of how and why individuals came to be concerned about the environment in specific cases, such as Britain, still needed elaborating. Mark Williams' thesis did consider the emergence and electoral performance of the British party in detail (alongside the Dutch and Austrian cases), providing some useful and convincing ideas on the topic, which have been examined in this thesis. However, the different approach taken in this thesis has been highlighted. The thesis therefore addresses the knowledge gap of the details of the party's origins, emergence and early years. The historical method employed here to answer the research question has proved very fruitful. As outlined in Chapter 2, a vast amount of novel material has been generated, accessed and used in this thesis, through interviews with early activists, who had not been spoken to previously for research purposes or archive material which had not been accessed by researchers before. Using such material has allowed for new insights into the emergence of the party and, more generally, a thesis which provides a vastly more detailed understanding of the party's early history than previously existed. This is useful in advancing knowledge of the contemporary party and British politics, as well as green parties and environmental politics more generally.

9.3 Topics and Arguments Covered in the Thesis

At the end of Chapter 2 a series of subsidiary research questions were outlined which pertained to the overall question dealt with in this thesis of why the party emerged. Does the profile of the party members explain why the party emerged? To what extent was the party a product of the events and atmosphere of the 1970s in particular, and wider social, political and economic trends in post-war Britain? How far was the party seen as a vehicle for achieving power or a way of doing politics differently? Why was it not possible for the concerns of early members to be integrated into the existing party system or channelled into pressure group activity? To what extent was the party that emerged an environmentally-related phenomenon or a component of broader trends and concerns?

² Rudig & Lowe, 1986b; Rudig, 1990a; Williams, 1999

How and why did these individuals come to be concerned about the environment? How far was the party based around the emergence of an environmental or ecological ideological project? These questions have been examined in the previous chapters.

Chapter 3 furthered understanding of the background and profile of early party members. Early party members appear to have been overwhelmingly middle rather than working class, generally in white collar, and often 'caring', occupations. They were on average whiter, younger and better educated than a cross-section of wider society at the time and more likely to be non-religious and male (but not wildly unbalanced in terms of gender). As was outlined in Chapter 2, scholars have seen the profile and background of green parties' members and supporters as important in explaining why they emerged. This discussion has focused on members' class and occupation and the emergence of a new middle class in wider society as a causal factor for the existence of green parties. The information presented in Chapter 3 has in one sense supported this idea as those interviewed were so clearly middle class and a high proportion of participants could be categorised as part of the new middle class. Additionally, the idea of a new middle class is often linked to the expansion of higher education. Chapter 3 showed that a high proportion of early members had a degree and the evidence presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 highlighted the importance of university to early members' political ideas and motivations. Such changes in the class and occupational structure of society 'undoubtedly contributed' to the emergence of the party.³

However, aside from the general issues highlighted by previous studies in terms of relying on this as an explanation, explained in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, the new, empirical information presented in Chapter 3 also called this into further doubt. The class and occupational background of early members was not completely homogenous; in addition to many individuals who could be categorised as part of the new middle class, other participants crudely fitted into the categories of 'decommodified' groups and the 'old middle class'.⁴ It is difficult to sustain a notion of a collective class-driven interest among these disparate groups being represented by the party. Particularly given the links between the right-wing, old middle class politics and the party in its early years noted in Chapter 4.

³ Williams, 1999 p.78

⁴ Offe, 1985

Finally, it was argued in Chapter 3 that in some ways the degree of focus, in both public discourse and academic studies, on the middle classness of green parties and the environmental movement more generally is surprising and misplaced. Political participation generally is associated with those of higher social and occupational status.

The subsequent chapters in this thesis took a slightly different approach to that employed in Chapter 3, focusing on using the primary material to explore the motivations, perspectives and ideas of early party members and thereby providing further insights into why the party emerged. Chapter 4 was based on a detailed review of two distinct but linked areas of research: general post-war histories of Britain and studies of 1970s Britain. The arguments made in this literature were matched against the primary material used in this thesis in order to provide an account of both the key social and political trends in the post-war era which help explain the emergence of the party and how the party's emergence linked with the broader events and atmosphere of 1970s Britain. In both cases, while some of the connections highlighted in Chapter 4 between broader historical context, the environmental movement and, to a lesser extent, the party, had been made previously, the contribution of this chapter was to explore these in detail based on an examination of primary material.

Chapter 4 started by detailing how some of the key trends in post-war British history help to explain the emergence of the party: the growing middle class and affluence, car use and roadbuilding, deference and partisan dealignment, and progress, technology and education. The second part of this chapter focused on the events and atmosphere of 1970s Britain. It looked at how some of the specific topics which often dominate historical accounts of the 1970s are important to understanding the party and its emergence. These topics were energy crises, wider problems and key events during the 1970s, middle class discontent, and the radicalism and opportunity of the period. It was argued that the wider events and atmosphere of the 1970s intertwined with, and helped to fuel, early party activists' concern about environmental collapse. This interaction played out both in ways that one might expect and in a more unpredictable fashion.

Chapter 5 delved more deeply into the aims of early party members. It explored why early party members were willing to embrace the challenges inherent in achieving an impact with a new party in the British political system. Chapter 5 rejected the notions that when

PEOPLE was set up it was either so different from other parties in its approach that it was not actually a party at all, or that it was entirely conventional in this regard and in no way distinct from mainstream political parties in Britain. It was argued that there were differing motivations for early members' involvement with the party and, by extension, why they were not put off by the inauspicious prospects for this new and small party. Some saw it as a vehicle to pursue alternative ways of approaching politics, some were naïve about the extent of the structural obstacles the party faced and some were realistic about the scale of the challenge the party faced but wanted to try a party-political route anyway.

Chapter 6 investigated why early party members felt the need to pursue their aims through this new party rather than either through one of the more established existing parties or simply pressure group activity. It was argued that early party members were not willing to pursue their aims through an established, existing party because they felt that it would not be possible for such parties to respond to the radicalism of their demands. They saw the issue of economic growth as a particularly important source of division between them and established parties. Furthermore, they believed their party was competing on a different plain to the left-right spectrum on which the other parties sat. It was also argued that pressure group activity alone was not enough for early party members because they felt a direct political approach was needed and they associated pressure groups with single issue campaigns rather than a holistic approach to the environment. Overwhelmingly, the explanations in Chapter 6 for why the party was seen as a necessary addition to British politics related to the environment. This demonstrated two important points about the party's emergence. First, in line with arguments made in some academic literature, but in contradiction to others, the party needs to be understood with the environment at the centre of it. Secondly, to understand why it emerged there is a need for a deeper explanation for how and why early members became concerned about the environment.

Chapter 7 provided an account of this process of early members being influenced into political action on the environment. It differed from the other chapters in employing a 'life story' approach.⁵ The answers given by participants were inevitably idiosyncratic, but they fell into a series of themes. The chapter was divided into two main sections: micro- and

⁵ Hussey & Thompson, 2000

macro-level issues. The former were those aspects of participants' pathways to political environmentalism which were more localised and narrow, namely personal connections to the natural world (often stemming from childhood) and direct experiences of concrete environmental threats. The latter related to influences which pushed individuals towards a broader understanding of the global environment and its fragility such as them becoming aware of books and magazines on the topic, personal travel experiences, their formal education and jobs as well as general discussion of and media attention on the environment. It was argued that particular emphasis should be placed upon the influence and role of new texts and other intellectual influences published shortly before or just after the party was created which helped to radicalise early party members and arguably amounted to a developing ideological project that then underpinned the party.

Chapter 8 tested this idea of an ideological project further by examining the extent to which the party in its early years was based on a coherent and comprehensive ideological approach. Previous studies have sought to understand and categorise the ideology of the party, including in the early period under consideration in this thesis. The contribution to knowledge of Chapter 8 was in considering the extent to which there was an ideology underpinning the party's emergence and the role ideology plays in explaining why the party emerged in Britain. Chapter 8 agreed with the view that the party began with an approach much more focused on the environment and not associated with socialism but in the late 1980s and early 1990s this changed, and the party became left-wing and more concerned with social issues. The idea that this development was a maturing in the party's ideological approach and that prior to it the party could not be said to have had a comprehensive ideology was treated more critically. There were policy areas where ideas flowed more naturally for the early party and were core to the party's philosophy, and others that were less easy to work out and more peripheral. The policy programmes outlined were, however, linked to some clear underlying principles related to many of the ideas in the texts and publications explored in Chapter 7. It was argued that there was considerable discussion among early party members at the time over what the party's ideology was and should be. Many early members explicitly endorsed the idea of there being an ecological or environmental ideology informing the party's thinking. It was also suggested that there was

a strong sense among early members of the party's identity as part of a new, global movement.

9.4 Explaining the Party's Emergence

In assessing and explaining why the party emerged, as outlined in the previous section, this thesis has not made the case for one factor being the key determinant. Rather, several elements were important and interacted with one another. However, emphasis has been placed upon some particular dynamics and issues. In this final section, these are highlighted more clearly to summarise the argument and claims of the thesis.

9.4.1 How Important was the Environment?

There have been occasional examples offered in this thesis of early members being involved for reasons other than the environment, such as a desire for alternative approaches to politics, a general wish to push back against bureaucracy and a view that the party offered a welcome libertarian alternative to traditional left-wing groups such as trade unions or the Labour Party. Overwhelmingly, however, individuals' concerns about concrete environmental problems, both localised environmental threats and broader international challenges such as resource depletion, have been at the core of the interpretation of why the party emerged provided in this thesis.

In his assessment of the process by which environmentalists campaigning during the 1970s had come to be motivated on the issue, Stephen Cotgrove suggested that it was important to understand that nature was subject to subjective interpretations at different times and in different contexts. Thus, the problem to explain was why some people became very concerned by environmental problems and others did not. Cotgrove argued that the answer lies in a difference of values.⁶ This would appear to have a lot of relevance to the material set out in Chapter 7. It implies that the testimony from many participants that environmental threats in their local area, such as road-building, were key to their environmental consciousness, are of limited use in explaining why they came to respond to

⁶ Cotgrove, 1982 p.14 & pp.24-31

them. Lots of people were aware of or experienced environmental threats around the time the party was formed and did not respond to them with political activity, or even care very much. Similarly, there had been environmental threats and degradation before. Yet these were not problems which had never been seen until the period in which the party emerged. The process identified in Chapter 4 and Chapter 7, whereby individuals experienced or witnessed some form of, usually local, environmental threat and this influenced them to take political action on it, is therefore not a new one. Such a process was described by Robin Grove-White, a campaigner with the Anglesey Defence Action Group and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) during the 1970s and later director of CPRE and Chair of the Board of Greenpeace UK, at the Witness Seminar organised to inform this thesis, in the following way:

All sorts of people began with local campaigns and through the prism of those campaigns, understood for the first time, new kinds of dynamics that were developing in late industrial society and that's my personal experience.⁷

As detailed in Chapter 7, to pick one of the myriad examples, there are obvious historical parallels with local opposition to reservoir development in the nineteenth century.⁸ The fact that such a process or influence is not unique to the specific time and place in which the party emerged, however, strengthens rather than weakens its importance as a factor. Studies which have investigated environmental concern, activism and action in different periods and in different places have repeatedly found such experiences to have been an important causal factor.⁹ That the research for this thesis has identified such a similar dynamic points to its importance in understanding the emergence of the party, as it is in keeping with understanding of the development of environmental consciousness in other contexts. Additionally, finding concrete environmental problems to be so influential in this case also helps to further a more general understanding of environmental politics. It reinforces the idea that they are critical to the development of

⁷ Robin Grove-White, 'Witness Seminar: The Birth of the Modern Environmental Movement in Britain', held 3rd June 2019

⁸ Ritvo, 2009, p.2; Wilson, 2014 p.170; McTominay, 2017

⁹ Ferguson, 2015 p.4; Graham Murphy, *Founders of the National Trust* (Great Britain: National Trust, 2002); Nehring, 2009 p.126; Farley Mowat, *Rescue the Earth!: Conversations with the Green Crusaders* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), p.190; Peterson del Mar, 2006 p.9; Francis Sandbach, *Environment Ideology and Policy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p.21; H.R. Burroughes, 'Power Lines Across the South Downs' in R. Kimber & J.J. Richardson (eds.) *Campaigning for the Environment* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp.45-75

environmental campaigning and political activity. This view of environmental consciousness as developing in part from experience of concrete environmental problems and threats, substantiated by the primary evidence examined in this thesis, runs counter to many interpretations of environmental politics. It contradicts accounts which either implicitly place less emphasis on concrete environmental problems by focusing on broader social trends as the key drivers of environmental activism or more explicitly downplay the connection between such activism and actual environmental problems.¹⁰

Returning to Cotgrove's other point around differing reactions from different people to the same environmental problems, just because the reactions are not uniform and may be unpredictable does not mean that such problems are not absolutely central to the development of political activity on the environmental. There appear to be some predictors of whether people will react to environmental threats, for example studies of public opinion and the environment in Britain have shown over time that environmental concern is stronger among those who are more affluent and materially secure.¹¹ This has been substantiated, to an extent, in the case of the early party members through the profile presented in Chapter 3. However, there are clear limits to this point. For example, as Cotgrove suggested, in the 1970s there were relatively affluent people joining the Conservation Society or other environmental pressure groups and affluent industrialists who were not.¹²

What it is possible to conclude therefore is that where significant environmental problems are seen, they are likely to lead to reactions from some people, often leading to concern and action around environmental issues which is broader than just opposition to the original, localised problem. Exactly who will respond in such a fashion and when they will do is not entirely predictable, but this does not mean that the environmental problems themselves are not key influences. In assessing the reasons for the emergence of the party this dynamic seems particularly powerful when allied with the idea, expressed by Meredith Veldman and detailed in Chapter 4, of the environmentalism in Britain in the 1960s and

¹⁰ Gouldner, 1979; Muller-Rommel, 1985; Bramwell, 1989 p.3; Engels, 2010 p.124

¹¹ Pippa Norris, 'Are We All Green Now? Public Opinion on Environmentalism in Britain', *Government and Opposition*, Vol 32 No 3 1997, pp.320-39; Neil Carter & Ben Clements, Greener and Greener? A Long-term Perspective on the British Public and Environmental Issues (Unpublished Paper, Political Studies Association Conference, April 2019)

¹² Cotgrove 1982 p.14 & pp.24-31

1970s as a reaction against increased economic development seen in the post-war period - even if the notion of this being a form of updated romanticism has been discussed more critically.¹³ The post-war period also saw a 'population explosion'. Though this smoothed out during the 1970s, on a very basic level, such growth in the number of people clearly contributed to the amount of economic development taking place in Britain.¹⁴ As highlighted in Chapter 7, Wolfgang Rudig and Philip Lowe argue that anti-nuclear protest had not been a particularly important catalyst to the party's emergence in the way it had in countries like France, Germany and Sweden.¹⁵ The oral accounts examined in this thesis suggest that a similar dynamic was present in driving the party's emergence in Britain. However, the drivers were a broad range of environmental threats which influenced early members, such as new roads, housing projects and pollution, rather than one campaign around one specific issue.

9.4.2 What was New?

In explaining the emergence of the party and the process by which early members came to be politically motivated on the environment, several influences have been highlighted here. These influences were a mixture of what at the time were novel developments and older, more familiar dynamics. This thesis has identified three new developments or discontinuities from the past seen in Britain (as well as many other countries) that help explain the party's initial emergence. First, the increase in concrete environmental problems as a result of population growth and economic development. This was explained in the previous section. Secondly, the idea that participants in the party and the broader environmental movement which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s were simply responding to new information or knowledge. Are the political campaigns of this period simply

¹³ Veldman, 1994 p.245

¹⁴ O'Hara, 2004, p.243; Office for National Statistics, 'Overview of the UK Population', <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/mar2017> accessed 27 March 2019; There is a long-running and highly contentious debate over whether consumption patterns or population numbers are the ultimate cause of environmental problems. This thesis is not seeking to engage with such questions but merely highlighting that, given the economic system in place in post-war Britain, the higher numbers of people contributed to more developments of the kind being discussed here such as roads and houses.

¹⁵ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.273

explained as a response to scientists uncovering previously unknown facts about environmental problems? Here, as mentioned in Chapter 7, Allan Schnaiberg is very clear in his assessment of the environmental movement in America (which would logically have to apply elsewhere as well) in the 1960s and 1970s. Its emergence cannot be put down to a sudden crisis or new type of information because the technical information had 'been available for decades'.¹⁶

There is a case that, contrary to Schnaiberg's interpretation, publications on the environment in this period were highlighting genuinely new information. For example, the *Limits to Growth* study, which was shown in Chapter 7 to have been so important to many early party members, was not expressing an entirely unheard-of idea - hence the suggestion of it being 'Malthus with a computer'.¹⁷ However, as a report based on computer modelling of the earth's resources and global consumption patterns, it was a genuinely pioneering study. Whether or not a series of new scientific discoveries about the environment were being uncovered and announced during the 1960s and 1970s, what is irrefutable is that public awareness of them was raised, what Gareth Jones describes as the reaction to the 'the message emanating from scientific research about the scale and magnitude of environmental degradation'.¹⁸ Chapter 2 set out the evidence identified in previous studies of increased media and popular discussion of the environment in Britain during this period. By 1970 the environment was said to be 'more topical than sex'.¹⁹ Chapter 7 included testimony from early party members highlighting how discussion of environmental problems in the media, in popular culture and among friends influenced their concern. As one early party member described, by the 1960s and 1970s there was 'enough written in mainstream media (serious newspapers) and new magazines such as *the Ecologist* that we could absorb the message slowly'.²⁰ Therefore, an important discontinuity which influenced the party's emergence was dramatically increased public discussion of environmental issues from the 1960s onwards.

¹⁶ Schnaiberg, 1977 p.465

¹⁷ Freeman, 1973 Cited in Dryzek, 2013, p.30

¹⁸ Jones, 2004 p.43

¹⁹ John Barr, 'Environment Lobby', *New Society*, Vol 384 No 5 February 1970, p. 210

²⁰ Adrian Williams, E-mail Correspondence with Mitya Pearson 15 July 2019

Finally, as has been shown, academic accounts of the environmentalism of the 1960s and 1970s, of which the party was a manifestation, have consistently understood this phenomenon to represent a shift in thinking to a much more comprehensive, holistic and systemic understanding of the environment. This was noted in studies produced at the time and has continued to be asserted in much more recent historical accounts.²¹ Christopher Smout describes how by the 1970s ‘there was a political voice to be reckoned with on the environment’ as during the twentieth century ‘biology gave birth to ecology’.²² In a similar vein Jonathon Porritt (who was interviewed for this project) distinguished, in his 1984 book *Seeing Green*, between the movement he was part of and the less holistic, nineteenth century conservation movement.²³ As Porritt explained at the Witness Seminar organised to inform this thesis: ‘this was all about politics’. His concern about the environment was ‘all about power and ideology and that’s what really got me going in the 1970s’.²⁴ Although there are similarities between the ideas being expressed on the environment during the 1960s and 1970s and earlier movements such as the romantics, a new, ideological and intellectual project had emerged by this point which was not present 20 or 30 years earlier.

In its explanation for the party emergence of the party, this thesis places significant emphasis on this point. This is for several reasons. Most obviously, there is an intuitive rationale to the idea that the development of ideas about the environment to become more radical and political in its implications was conducive to the creation of a party expressing such views. The case rests principally, however, on three empirical points which have been established in this thesis. First, it has been argued that there was a strong perception among early members that the party’s holistic and radical approach was something that could not be absorbed by other parties. Additionally, early party members believed that such a holistic approach to the environment needed to be expressed through a political party, rather than just pressure group activity. Secondly, the interview material used in this thesis demonstrated the extent to which a number of texts were central to early party members being influenced into political environmentalism. The archive research looking at environmental journals and magazines from the 1960s and 1970s also revealed the extent

²¹ Lowe & Worboys, 1978; Peterson del Mar, 2006; Wilson, 2014

²² Smout, 2011 p.230

²³ Porritt, 1984 pp.4-5

²⁴ Jonathon Porritt, ‘Witness Seminar: The Birth of the Modern Environmental Movement in Britain’, held 3rd June 2019

to which early party members were writing to, helping to edit and reading them. Through such publications and texts there was a varied but linked set of intellectual and ideological influences which expressed the ideas and arguments underpinning the party's approach. Crucially, the majority of these books and magazines were not published until the 1960s and 1970s.

Finally, as was highlighted in Chapter 8, there is a division within political science literature over the importance of ideology to political parties.²⁵ A brief examination of the two dominant parties in Britain since 1945 underlines this ambiguity in the relationship between ideology and parties. The Labour Party, in some ways, has quite a straightforward, clear and direct relationship to the ideology of socialism, but the Conservative Party has historically had a much more complicated relationship with ideology. There have always been questions over whether conservatism is an ideology and it has been suggested that the history of the Conservative Party 'does not owe much to the work of philosophers'.²⁶ It is also true that intellectual and ideological projects can emerge without leading to the formation of parties. For example, alongside the emergence of the environmental movement in Britain and internationally during the 1960s and 1970s, there were developments in the feminist movement.²⁷ Basic guides to political ideologies generally include feminism, in addition to ecologism or environmentalism.²⁸ Although a minor Women's Equality Party was set up in Britain in 2015, the period in which PEOPLE/the Ecology Party emerged did not see a feminist party of equivalent standing emerge nor has there been a similar widespread, international emergence of such parties to match the rise of green parties. It is not then a simple equation of an intellectual and ideological project emerging and a party always naturally following.

The relationship between PEOPLE/the Ecology Party and ideology is complicated further by the strand of thinking within environmental politics, explored in Chapter 6, which

²⁵ Volkens & Klingemann, 2002; Downs, 1957 p.113

²⁶ John Ramsden, *The Age of Balfour and Baldwin* (London: Longman, 1978), p.ix

²⁷ George Stevenson, *The Women's Liberation Movement and the Politics of Class in Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); Harold Smith, *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot: Elgar, 1990); Kimberly Wilmot Voss, *Women Politicking Politely: Advancing Feminism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017)

²⁸ Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (London: Palgrave, 2012); Michael Freedman, Lyman Sargent & Marc Stears, *Political Ideologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Robert Leach, *Political Ideology in Britain* (New York: Palgrave, 2002)

has been suspicious of ideology, power and political parties.²⁹ For example, an environmental activist argued in *Vole* magazine in 1978 that 'ecological parties can do more harm than good' and 'direct environmental involvement in elections...implies an acceptance of the political system' which is 'hopelessly misguided'.³⁰ This has been reflected in part by the desire amongst some of the party's membership, both historically and more recently, to pursue their environmental aims through their lifestyles either as a supplement to, or instead of, traditional campaigning.³¹ Though lifestyle politics is not an issue which has been examined in this thesis, there was a widespread view expressed by many of the interview participants in this project that they had sought to express their political beliefs through their personal lifestyles.

Nonetheless, this thesis has demonstrated that there was ideological discussion within the party in its early years and that the intellectual and ideological influences already identified had provided the party with a relatively coherent and comprehensive approach. While there has been debate over how developed or mature the party's ideology was in its early years, it has been shown that the party was able to develop a policy programme across several areas which was derived from a set of clear underlying principles. The ideological influences provided the basis for the party's emergence and the party was, in many ways, a logical reflection of their existence. Such an insight also helps to explain why the party emerged when it did. It would simply not have made sense for this party, nor green parties more generally, to form prior to this period without the ideological project behind it. An equivalent party formed earlier in Britain, for example in the 1940s or 1950s, would have had a very different in approach and identity. This is because almost all the major intellectual influences which eventually influenced the party when it did emerge did not exist at that time. This is borne out by the occasional examples of minor parties with environmental sentiments formed in Britain at earlier points in the twentieth century. The Agricultural Party formed in 1931 was based on the agrarian tradition and the Fellowship Party formed in 1955 was linked to pacifism and Christian socialism.³² Such an idea of an ideological project developing and quickly influencing the emergence of the party is clearly

²⁹ Talshir, 2002 p.10

³⁰ BLA, *Vole*, October 1978

³¹ Talshir, 2002 p.260; Coates, 1997 p.295

³² Boothroyd, 2001 p.3 & p.91

also useful in explaining the creation of other environmental campaign groups in Britain and internationally around the same time. It is particularly relevant to PEOPLE/the Ecology, though, as opposed to the individual pressure groups which comprised the wider environmental movement during the 1960s and 1970s. Ideology is likely to be of greater importance to a political party which is more concerned with capturing political power directly and expected to provide a comprehensive policy programme.

9.4.3 Was the Emergence of the Party Inevitable?

Historical debates on the creation of other parties have often focused on the notion of inevitability. For example, work on the rise of the Labour Party and corresponding decline of the Liberal Party has discussed why this happened and the question of how far this was inevitable. The restricted extent to which the Liberal Party adopted working class candidates for parliament during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the rejection of many of the early leading figures in Labour, is a key contingency in this area.³³ Could an earlier, more accommodating attitude to working class representation within the Liberal Party have prevented the creation of the Labour Party? The argument presented in this thesis to explain the emergence of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party emerged has placed particular importance on the environmental nature of the party and what may be seen as three structural factors or trends: the increased population and development in Britain in the post-war period leading to more widespread environmental degradation, greater discussion and awareness of environmental issues during the 1960s and 1970s, and the shift in thinking during the 1960s and 1970s about the environment which has been argued to amount to the emergence of an environmental ideological and intellectual project. Once these factors were in place it may seem that the party's emergence was simply an inevitable reflection of these forces. This point seems to be reinforced by the fact that although the British party was one of the first to be established it quickly became just one of the many green parties across the world. Additionally, there are localised examples of abortive attempts to launch similar parties after 1973, such as the Spare the Earth Ecology Party, for which a total of four candidates contested the 1983 and 1987 general elections, and the

³³ Alan Sykes, *The Rise and Fall of British Liberalism* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.147; Thorpe, 2015 p.11

Greenham Common-linked Women for Life on Earth Party, for which four candidates contested the 1983 election (three of which were endorsed by the Ecology Party).³⁴ The aforementioned forerunner to PEOPLE, Movement for Survival, had been announced with the suggestion it could stand candidates if necessary and there was concern within the party when the pressure group Green Alliance emerged in the late 1970s that it might stand candidates too.³⁵ This suggests that had PEOPLE not been formed the forces that the original founders were responding to may well have pushed another group of people to create something similar.

In some ways, therefore, the argument advanced in this thesis suggests that a green party of some kind was likely to come into being. However, the reality for those who established the party and joined it in its fledgling years was that its development, and even its survival, would have felt anything but inevitable. It has been mentioned that there were points during the 1970s where activists thought it might peter out.³⁶ It was a real struggle for early members to make any progress. This is summed up by one activist's description of their experience campaigning almost single-handedly in their respective ward in the 1977 local elections (eventually getting 145 votes):

Campaigning by byke [sic] from 20 miles away is far from easy...One of my bykes [sic] was stolen...on another occasion an Alsatian dog grabbed a finger as I was pushing a leaflet through the letterbox...I was billed by a sympathetic Sunday newspaper reporter as the cycling candidate who would be canvassing from a poster be-decked bike. I hadn't reckoned with the weather & ended up with a bike festooned with soggy papier mache.³⁷

It was only in the late 1990s that the party began to secure the election of standalone representatives above the level of local councillor.³⁸ Historically, when the British party was considered as part of comparative studies of green parties, its relative lack of electoral success was seen to mark it out from many other countries in western Europe.

³⁴ Boothroyd, 2001 p.304 & p.335

³⁵ *The Ecologist*, Vol 2 No 1 January 1972, p.1; PFPA, Ecology Party Chairman's Report, 1977-78

³⁶ Wall, 1994 p.26

³⁷ PFPA, Ecology Party Newsletter, June/July 1977

³⁸ Birch, 2008

This was generally blamed on the comparably inhospitable environment the party operated in, most obviously the challenges created for small parties by the non-proportional electoral system used for general elections in the UK.³⁹ It is conceivable that, in slightly different circumstances, the UK could have stood out from other countries in having no meaningful green party to speak of. Agency and contingency have also therefore impacted on the emergence and development of the party - it was only towards the very end of the period of study in this thesis, and immediately after it, that the party became a truly sustainable and robust entity within British politics. That this did happen ultimately reflects the passion, ingenuity and hard work of the party's founders and early members, the individuals who have been the focus of this thesis.

9.5 Implications for Further Research

The insights generated in this thesis suggest several potential areas for useful further research. First and most obviously, the thesis has examined the party's history up until the point of the 1979 general election. Though it was outlined in Chapter 2 that the more recent periods of the party's history have been better documented in academic work, there are areas where such research could be beneficial. During the production of this thesis the party celebrated its 45th Birthday.⁴⁰ An approach which considers the entirety of its history could advance understanding of the party and British politics more generally since the 1970s. This could include considering and comparing the successive pieces of political research produced at the time into different aspects of its development. For example, it might encompass studies into the 1989 European election breakthrough and 'green surge' around the time of the 2015 general election, or the surveys of the party's membership conducted at different points in its history.⁴¹ It would also be interesting to apply the research methods used in this thesis to investigate the party's development over its entire history. Chapter 8 introduced some reflections from interview participants on the party's ideological development from when they joined during the 1970s up until much more recent years.

³⁹ Byrne, 1989; Rootes, 1995a p.68; O'Neill, 1997 p.302

⁴⁰ @TheGreenParty, It's our 45th birthday!', <https://twitter.com/TheGreenParty/status/936300373500981248> accessed 5 June 2019; The Party's celebration was based on a slightly different interpretation of the creation date than the one used in this thesis.

⁴¹ Rudig, Franklin & Bennie, 1996; Dennison, 2016; Studman, 1984; McCulloch, 1993; Rudig, Bennie & Franklin, 1991; Rudig, 2015b; Rudig, 2015a

Currently, there are a considerable number of activists who could provide insights in interviews on the party's long-run development, based on decades of continuous involvement with the party.

Secondly, as has been mentioned one of the most notable developments in British politics in the post-war period is the long-term fragmentation of the party system.⁴² Part of this process is the rise of small or minor parties and the research employed here could be applied more widely to deepen understanding of the emergence of other new parties such as the UK Independence Party from the 1990s. One of the reasons that this thesis, focused on the question of why PEOPLE/the Ecology Party emerged, has salience is because it developed and endured. Often, parties are formed, but fail to move out obscurity. David Boothroyd's survey history of British political parties demonstrated that there had been over 250 parties contesting elections between 1832 and 2001, most of whom even the political obsessive would not have heard of.⁴³ During the production of this thesis a party was created called Change UK, including within it existing Members of Parliament, with far greater resources and advantages than PEOPLE had when it was created, which lost all of its momentum within a few short months.⁴⁴ Although the question of why the British greens endured and developed can clearly not be fully answered by only referring to the 1970s, this thesis has identified some fundamental aspects of an explanation for this. The party was clearly founded on a fresh and radical message, reflecting concrete issues and a new ideological approach, which was neither going to be easily responded to through public policy action nor co-opted by any of the existing political parties. This points to a third area of possible broader historical research: the question of why it is that some new parties are able to survive and carve out a place for themselves in the face of the particular challenges inherent in the British system. This approach could include a detailed survey of the commonalities between the cases of the parties which have been able to make some advances in Britain and explaining the 'non-events' where parties have not.⁴⁵ Such research would appear particularly valuable given the recent turbulent and volatile period in British politics, and recent examples which suggest that developments including the invention of social

⁴² Webb, 2005

⁴³ Boothroyd, 2001

⁴⁴ BBC News, 'The party that didn't quite change UK politics', <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-49638633> accessed 5 September 2019

⁴⁵ Rudig & Lowe, 1986a p.263

media may be making it easier for new parties to form and quickly achieve an impact, such as La République En Marche! in France, the Five Star Movement in Italy and the Brexit Party in Britain.

Finally, simply by virtue of time passing, the emergence and development of green parties has shifted from the realm of political science into political history. This thesis and other studies, most obviously Sari Aalto's study of the Finnish Green League and Stewart Jackson's examination of the Australian Greens, have begun to provide detailed, academic accounts of the history of individual green parties.⁴⁶ There is scope to broaden this scholarship out to other green parties in more countries, referring to but not being imprisoned by pre-existing theories and models for understanding such entities. Piecing together these individual studies would enrich overall understanding of the emergence of green parties generally. Additionally, increased political action with respect to the environment during the 1960 and 1970s, of which the party's creation was only one aspect, proved to have long-lasting and significant impacts in Britain. The material examined here is one case study of the developments in this historical period. There is an opportunity to investigate the motivations and ideas of those involved in the numerous environmental pressure groups set up during the 1960s and 1970s. Such work could follow Andrew Tompkins' example of interviewing anti-nuclear power protestors who campaigned in France and West Germany in the 1970s.⁴⁷ Contemporary historians should take the opportunity to record such information while it is still possible to do so. This is particularly pertinent as much of the most valuable archive material used in this thesis was found in personal collections rather than public archives.

⁴⁶ Aalto, 2018; Jackson, 2016

⁴⁷ Tompkins, 2016

Appendix 1 - Template Interview Structure¹

Outline of context for project and interview questions from researcher (Mitya Pearson - KCL) including consent arrangements.

Profile Questions

Personal Background

What is your gender?

What is your date of birth?

When did you first become involved in the party?

What is your ethnicity?

Where did you grow up? Which part(s) of the country were you living in during the 1970s? (Including identifying rural / urban).

Did you attend a state school or a private fee paying one?

At what point did you leave full-time education? Do you have a degree and/or postgraduate qualifications and when did you obtain these?

If you went to university where did you go & what subject(s) did you study?

What has been your main occupation in your life? During the 1970s what was your occupation? *(Prompt)*
Could you expand on the role eg:

A - High managerial, administrative or professional

B - Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional

C1 - Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional

C2 - Skilled manual workers

D - Semi and unskilled manual workers

Other / E - such as state pensioners, casual or lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only

What were your parents' occupations and class(es)?

Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to a particular social class? If so, which one is that?

(Prompt)

(a) Working class

(b) Lower Middle Class

(c) Middle Class

(d) Upper Middle Class

(e) Upper Class

(f) Never think of myself in class terms

Was this the same in the 1970s?

Would you consider yourself religious? If so, what is your religion? Was this the same during the 1970s?

Were you a member of a trade union during the 1970s?

¹ This was a long list of questions, including some optional questions, which was shortened for individual interviews – reflecting the limits on time people were willing to give. Also, as the research process progressed some of the questions establishing points of fact were no longer necessary.

What was your marital status during the 1970s?

Did you own your own home during the 1970s? If not, did you rent privately or through some form of council/social housing?

How would you describe the social characteristics and background of the people involved with the party during the 1970s? Has this changed at all over time?

Political Involvement

What party did your parents vote for? Were they involved in any other activities? If so, what were they?

Had you had any political involvement prior to joining PEOPLE/the Ecology Party?

How regularly and in what ways did you participate with the party once you had joined?

Were you involved with any other voluntary or political organisations during the 1970s? If so, what were they?

Were you involved with any other environmental organisations during the 1970s? If so, what were they?

Have you remained active within the party since the 1970s? If not, why not and when did you stop being involved?

Interview Questions

Individual Ideology and Experience

During the 1970s, can you recall what the main political issues you were concerned about and why?

Why were you interested in PEOPLE/the Ecology Party?

Possible follow up questions:

- When and why did you become interested in environmental issues and growth?
- During the 1970s, did you think of yourself as having a specific ideology?
- To what extent did you feel that your lifestyle needed to match your politics during the 1970s?
- What had been the main influences on your political ideas when you joined the party and during the 1970s? (*Prompt*) Eg books, texts, media, news.

Party Ideology

What were the key things which you and other people in the party wanted to change?

Possible follow up questions:

- How would you describe the party's ideology when you first became involved with it? Did this change at all?
- How similar were your views to those of the people you met who were involved with PEOPLE/the Ecology Party during the 1970s?
- To what extent were people involved with PEOPLE/the Ecology Party in the 1970s left-wing or right-wing? Are these labels useful in relation to the party's activists?
- Did you feel that you and the other people involved in the party during its early history had a comprehensive worldview or has it taken time for this to fully form?
- Was the party a single-issue environment and growth party? Did you have aims for other areas such as social and foreign policy?
- How far were ideas about feminism part of what the party stood for when you joined?
- How far were ideas about peace and nuclear weapons/power part of what the party stood for when you joined?

Party Aims

Once you joined, what were your aims for the party and in what time scale?

Possible follow up questions:

- In its early years, did you feel that the party differed from other parties in terms of its structure and organisation as well as its policies?
- Was having an alternative or unconventional organisation something that you agreed or disagreed with?
- Were you aware of any disagreement between members during the 1970s about party structure and strategy?

Party Emergence

Why do you think growth and environmental issues gained much greater attention in the late 1960s and early 1970s?

When and how did you first become aware of PEOPLE/the Ecology Party?

Why did you feel that a new party was necessary? Why did you join it as opposed to joining a pressure group or getting involved with other parties?

When did you first become aware of other similar parties in other countries?

Possible follow up question:

- Why do you think the party emerged when it did?

Structure and Leadership

When you became involved and during the 1970s who were the leading individuals within the party?

What structure did the founders put in place and did this develop in the very early period?

How was the party funded during the 1970s?

Possible follow up questions:

- Are you able to remember who had which roles among the leading figures in the 1970s?
- How did the role of the four founding figures change during the 1970s, why did they step back and when?
- Is the description of a new guard taking over from the original founding four, in the form of Jonathan Tyler, Jonathon Porritt and David Fleming, correct?
- How did the party's membership numbers change over the 1970s and early 1980s?
- How many local parties were forming during the 1970s?

Elections

What are your recollections from involvement in national, European and local elections in the 1970s?

Where and when were the first local election victories?

Conferences

Did you attend any national conferences in the 1970s and what are your recollections of them?

Possible follow up questions:

- Were you aware of the June 1973 plan for a Jigsaw / Survival conference?

- Was the first conference in November 1974 in Coventry? How many people attended this and do you recall debate and argument around socialism and social policy?
- Did this include argument around the manifesto?
- Could we go through and try and detail the location, attendees and any other recollections from the following conferences: 1975, 1976, 1977 (Constitution), 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983.
- Do you know when attunement started and why?

Wider Environmental Movement

Was there much collaboration between the party and the wider environmental movement in the 1970s?

Possible follow up questions:

- What was the attitude of party activists to them?
- What was the attitude of environmental groups to the party?
- What was the interaction between the party and other party's groups such as SERA?
- How far did you come across Teddy Goldsmith? What was his and Movement for Survival's impact on the party?
- What was the relationship between the party and the anti-nuclear and peace movements?

1980s

What impact did the influx of new members after the 1979 general election have on the development of the party?

Party Development

How do you feel the party has developed and changed since its formation in the 1970s?

Further Exploration

Who were the key individuals involved in the party during the 1970s and early 1980s? Could you look at my list?

Do you have any party materials which might be of use to this project? Are there any other sources of material I should look at?

Appendix 2 - A Guide to the Public Archives Holding Documents Related to the British Greens¹

This guide has been compiled by the researcher (Mitya Pearson - KCL). It is unlikely to be fully comprehensive, but it is much more extensive than any previously produced list.

General Archives (England)

Bedfordshire Archive & Record Office

A small selection of party documents such as manifestos and leaflets from 1987-2019.

British Library Archive

A small selection of party documents including manifestos and newsletters. A small amount of material from the 1970s.

Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre, London

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

Cornwall Record Office, Truro

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

Derbyshire Record Office, Matlock

A small selection of local Ecology Party documents (relating to the County Council) from the 1980s.

Devon Heritage Centre (South West Heritage Trust)

A small selection of material related to Devon Ecology Party from the 1970s and 1980s such as Devon Ecology Party manifestos.

Dudley Archives and Local History

GPEW Newsletter from 2013.

Durham County Record Office

A small amount of Durham GPEW election material from the 1980s and 1990s.

East Sussex Record Office (Lewes)

GPEW election leaflet from 2005.

Essex Record Office (Covering Chelmsford, Colchester, Harlow, Saffron Walden and Southend)

GPEW election leaflet from 1992.

George Padmore Institute, London

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

¹ A full list of the material and archives used in this thesis is provided in the bibliography. The bibliography includes archives and sources about the party such as newspaper and magazines covering the party and broadcast archives containing material related to the party. This list only covers archives which contain actual party documents such as newsletters and campaign material.

Greater Manchester County Record Office

Two pieces of sound archive material related to the party from the 1980s.

Hampshire Record Office

Sound recordings of two local BBC radio programmes on the 1979 general election featuring constituencies with Ecology Party candidates.

Hull History Centre (Hull City Archives, Hull University Archives and Local Studies Library)

A small selection of local GPEW documents from the 1980s and 1990s.

Lambeth Archives

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

Lichfield Record Office

'Calendar for Survival' from 1981 produced by various environmental organisations including the party.

LSE Archive on Parties, MPs & Elections

Selection of party material - mainly manifestos and some election material from the 1970s onwards.

Modern Records Centre, Warwick University

Relatively large selection of party material including from the 1970s.

Media Archive for Central England

Small amount of archive video footage of television programmes on the 1979 general election featuring constituencies with Ecology Party candidates.

The National Archives of the United Kingdom], Kew

A small selection of material from the 1980s and 1990s.

Norfolk Record Office, Norwich

Various party files from the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

North Devon Record Office

Selection of party documents from 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

Oxfordshire Record Office

Papers relating to the Oxford Ecology Movement from the 1970s and papers relating to the Oxford Green Party from the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

Oldham Local Studies and Archives

Small amount of party material from the 2010s.

People's History Museum, Manchester

Papers deposited by Michael Steed, President of the Liberal Party 1978-79, contains some documents pertaining to the party.

Plymouth and West Devon Record Office

A small selection of party material from the 1970s and 1980s.

Record Office for Leicestershire (Leicester and Rutland)

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

Sandwell Community History and Archives Service

Candidate leaflets from Wolverhampton Council election 2003 including GPEW.

Somerset Heritage Centre (South West Heritage Trust)

A small selection of party material from 1979-2010.

Suffolk Record Office (Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft)

A selection of material from 1978-2017.

Surrey History Centre (Woking)

A small amount of party material from the early 1980s.

European Green Archive, Teesside University

Largest archive of party material, including a selection of material from the 1970s and a vast collection of documents from the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

University of Bristol Special Collections

A small selection of party material from the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

West Yorkshire Archive Service (Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds and Wakefield)

A small selection of election leaflets from the 1970s and 1980s.

General Archives (Wales)

Carmarthenshire Archives Service

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

Ceredigion Archives, Aberystwyth

A small selection of party documents from the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s.

Conwy Archive Service (Llandudno)

Selection of party documents from 2003.

Flintshire Record Office (Hawarden)

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

Glamorgan Archives (Cardiff)

Two party leaflets from the 1980s.

National Library of Wales (Aberystwyth)

A small selection of party material from 1979-2014.

Pembrokeshire Record Office

A small selection of party material from the 1980s and 1990s.

West Glamorgan Archive Service (Swansea)

A small selection of party material from the 1980s and 1990s.

General Archives (Northern Ireland)

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

A small selection of material from the 1990s.

General Archives (Scotland)

Clackmannanshire Archives

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

Highlands Archive Centre

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

National Records of Scotland

A small amount of party material from the 1990s.

National Library of Scotland

Scottish Green Party Archive from 1977-2002.

Archive Services, University of Dundee

Election leaflets from the 2007 Scottish Parliament elections.

North Highland Archive, Wick

A small selection of party documents. No material from the 1970s.

Online Public Archives

Green History Website (<https://green-history.uk/>)

An extensive archive of party material (as well as wider environmental movement), particularly from the 1970s and early 1980s.

University of Stirling, Scottish Politics Archives (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/scottishpoliticalarchive/>)

Ecology Party 1979 general election leaflet from Edinburgh South.

Archives without Party Documents²

The following general/document archives were searched but found to have no party documents:

Barnsley Archives and Local Studies; Berkshire Record Office (Reading); Birmingham City Archives; Borthwick Institute for Archives (York); BP Archive (Warwick); Bristol Record Office; BT Archives (London); Cambridgeshire Archives and Local Studies (Cambridge and Huntingdon); Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (Aylesbury); Cheshire Record Office (Chester) City of Westminster Archives Centre; Coventry Archives; Cumbria Archive Service (Barrow, Carlisle, Kendal and Whitehaven); Doncaster Archives; Dorset History Centre (Dorchester); East Riding of Yorkshire Archive Service; Gloucestershire Archives (Gloucester); Herefordshire Record Office; Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies; Kent History and Library Centre (Maidstone); Lincolnshire Archives (Lincoln); Liverpool Record Office; London Metropolitan Archives; Medway Archives (Strood); National Co-operative Archive (Manchester); North Yorkshire County Record Office (Northallerton); Northamptonshire Record Office (Northampton); Northumberland Record Office (Berwick-upon-Tweed and Woodhorn); Nottinghamshire Archives (Nottingham); Nottingham University (Manuscripts and Special Collections); Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service; Shropshire Archives (Shrewsbury); Sheffield Archives; Southampton Archives; Tyne and Wear Archives Service (Newcastle-upon-Tyne); Walsall Local History Centre; Warwickshire County Records Office (Warwick); West Sussex Record Office; Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies; Worcestershire Record Office; York City Archive A.N. Palmer Centre for Local Studies and Archives (Wrexham); Anglesey County Record Office (Llangefni); Caernarfon Record Office; Denbighshire Record Office (Ruthin); Gwent Archives (Ebbw Vale); Powys County Archives Office (Llandrindod Wells); Angus Archives; Archives of the University of Glasgow; Ayrshire Archives; Dundee City Archives; East Dunbartonshire Archives; Highland Council Archive (Inverness).

² It is difficult to say for certain that they have no material, not least because the party was called 'PEOPLE' initially making searches for this period difficult. However, basic searches at these archives produced no results for such documents.

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Robin Grove-White
Peter Harper
Jonathon Porritt

E-mail Correspondence with Author

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