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The Light and Shade of the European Union's Sustainability Model

A theoretical and practical revision of
the implementation of the European
Green Ideology

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1. Introduction

The realisation of a European sustainable future is a collective and public responsibility. The objective is not easy, and it requires the collaboration of all social agents and **a break with the conventional idea of ideology**. Compliance with green principles requires the subordination of humanity's individual interests to an unprecedented level. According to the principles proposed by green politicians and theorists, humans are for the first time forced to live with the idea ecocentrism as an ideal in the political arena, the idea that "nature, the ecosystem, has ethical value in itself, independently of humanity" (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 262). This radical political development needs of a solid moral approach and appropriate agencies with the means, capabilities, and authority (Crouch, 2012, p. 366) to make the emerging sustainability models a reality and, thus, guarantee a sustainable future for humanity. The green movements and green parties constitute the response from the world of politics to changing economic ethics in which users of capitalist systems have begun to believe that a change of ethics is possible and necessary (Crouch, 2012, p. 365).

Understanding the real impact of green ideologies and their impact on today's society necessarily involves understanding the proposal for a **new sustainable model of governance**. The questions of who has power and who executes it, in new models of sustainability, involve a deep understanding of the role/power of forces such as the economy, security, culture and the media and the ways in which these currently fail to tackle the basic green premises related to resource management, climate change, biodiversity management and social justice (O'Riordan, 2004, p. 240).

This has led to environmental science becoming part of environmental policy in recent years, as there is no environmental science outside the social and political realms (O'Riordan, 2004, pp. 234 - 235). Following this logic, authors such as Tim Forsyth (2003) offer explanations of the coexistence of the interest of both politics and environmental science in great international environmental deals. For instance, Forsyth argues that the Kyoto Protocol (1997) allows carbon emitters to invest in sustainable initiatives that guarantee their carbon neutrality in order to justify their pollution levels (Forsyth, 2003, p. 268). However, green political ideas date back much earlier and will start to become

part of the European political sphere around the 1980s and 1990s (Humphrey, 2013). In the 1980s, the German Green Party (Die Grünen) was founded in Germany in a more influential and definitive way, and its influence was fundamental in understanding the creation of other green parties in the European Member States and of the European Green Party (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 267). “New left” and “New social movements” such as the non-violent movement and feminist movements gave visibility to the emerging sustainable principles at the time (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 282). Today, they must be considered together with the shock of globalisation and the new trends in social and democratic participation (Milder & Jaraus, 2015, p. 8). Nowadays, academics such as Stavrakakis (1997), Holden (2013) or Humphrey (2013) recognise **the existence of an independent, non-leftist, green ideology** at a European level that influences greatly political process and multinational governance in institutions such as the EU. To fully understand the scope of the green ideology, which will be further explained in this dissertation, **it should be understood that there is a difference between the green ideology and other ideologies that include green themes without fully adhering to the centre of the ideology** (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 266).

Based upon environmental science and the principles of the green ideology, the **European Green Deal (EGD)** has begun to reshape the European Union’s (EU) discourse on sustainability. Especially, when thinking about energy resources, climate, and the European economy of the future (Bianchi, Colantoni, & Franza, 2020, p. 5). At the end of 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, announced the Green Deal, a multilevel sustainable strategy that would define the future of the European Union and its Member States (MS) in all areas of public life. Von der Leyen’s ambitious strategy, under the principle of becoming carbon free by 2050, lays the foundations for the EU's new political and sustainable model and acknowledges the EU economic, social, and political capacity to become the global sustainability leader (Dejonghe, 2021, p. 3).

Taking into consideration the European Commission’s intentions, the following question regarding the reality of the green deal should be posed. Is the Green Deal really the realisation of the sustainable dream, and can we say that von der Leyen's strategy is based

on the principles of green ideology or simply a strategy of sustainable economics in response to citizens' demands?

2. Purpose and Motivation

Green parties have become a familiar feature of the political landscape, particularly in Europe (Carter, 2007, p. 88). In recent years, the European political and social sphere has seen the emergence and reinforcement of ideas such as the "circular economy" or "sustainability". The vast majority of political parties in the different European Member States have been forced to either reject or incorporate ideas that are close to the green ideological principles as part of their agendas given the growing importance of issues such as climate change in the political arena. So much so that Green parties in Member States such as Germany (Die Grünen), Austria (Die Grünen-Die Grüne Alternative) or Belgium (Ecolo and Groenco) are now part of the governing coalitions in these countries (Ortiz de Zárate, 2022).

However, the emergence of parties that subscribe to certain principles considered to be green does not necessarily mean an increase in popularity of green ideology. Although this may seem contradictory, many of the parties that take ideas from the green ideology do not subscribe to its basic ideas or principles given the complex task of adaptation that must be undertaken to fit green principles into the European political reality.

Ursula von der Leyen's newly elected Commission presented the European citizens with the European Green Pact in 2019, which was intended to overcome the difficulties of this Herculean task of adapting green ideological principles to European anthropocentrism. To this end, the European Commission used its superiority as a supranational body to define a roadmap free of ideological prejudices in which a better, greener, and more sustainable future for European citizens could be envisaged. By the use of certain orientations of the green principles as a basis, the EU proposes to citizens a new economic development plan to carry out the ecological transition as efficiently as possible.

The aim and purpose of this paper is to analyse the current situation of green ideology in the European context. To this end, an analysis of the situation will be carried out, taking into account all the actors involved in the European political sphere (ideological factors,

political parties and the European Union). Firstly, we will focus on current state of affairs through the analysis of the European economic paradigm placing focus on the effects of neoliberalism and capitalism on the European sustainability model), the Green Deal and the effects of COVID on the advancement of said model. Secondly, the green ideology and its central principles will be analysed. Later, an in-depth critical analysis of the main ideas of the green ideology and its impact and representation at all political levels in the European sphere will be performed. Finally, conclusions will be drawn, and proposals will be made on how to strengthen the presence of green ideology at a European level.

On a personal level, in recent years, I have been fascinated by the ability of sustainability policies to appear at the centre of European politics. Although human beings have perfectly understood the need for these measures for our survival, I am surprised by the power of politics in the face of creating pacts between parties of various kinds. The main motivation of this work is based precisely on understanding the real significance of the ecocentric ethics of green policies at the European level. Analysing the real position within the spectrum of this ideology and the importance of the issues at its centre is relevant in order to frame the real position of organizations such as the European Union. For all these reasons, this paper aims to explore the capabilities of these organizations to follow green-ecocentric principles in order to understand the real impact of these policies on the European political imaginary.

3. State of the Art

3.1 The Neoliberal economic model and the implementation of green policies

During the 1930s, US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt implemented the New Deal, an ambitious economic recovery strategy to alleviate the social and economic effects of the Great Depression in the American Society (Barbier, 2010, p. 832). The New Deal consisted of a series of initiatives concerning employment, fiscal stimulus, development, and environment goals which proved to be essential for the American economic recovery during the first half of the 20th century (Sundaram, 2013, p. 17). Based upon Roosevelt's idea, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) put into operation, without much success, the Global Green New Deal (GGND) back in 2008 (Barbier, 2010, p. 832). Despite taking into consideration the complexities of our multi-actor governance system

and global environmental governance (Beyerin & Marauhn, 2011, p. 244), the GGND missed to include national development plans and lacked significant participation of developing countries (Sundaram, 2013, p. 19). Building on the experience of the UN and the G20 with the GGND (Bianchi, Colantoni, & Franza, 2020, p. 6), the EU created the Green Deal to set the basis that should be followed by the European Members States when dealing with the protracted economic and ecological crises.

These international initiatives as well as the major environmental treaties (Stockholm 72', Rio 92', Johannesburg 02' or the 2012 Rio+ 20) arise from a historical reaction of citizens to certain environmental conditions. Although the entry of green parties into the European political sphere took place in the 1970s and 1980s, we find the beginnings of the environmental movement in the 19th century with the first social demonstrations in England (Marcellesi, 2008). The social associations for the protection of fauna and flora of the time evolved in the 1960s into the first environmental groups as a reaction to the devastating environmental effects of capitalism with a renewed set of proposals that disassociated the Greens from the socialists of the time (López Mendoza, 2012). In doing so, environmental groups will drive from the idea of "protection of nature" to "survival of the human species" (Marcellesi, 2008). This change of focus is mainly due to the fact that this movement arose as a reaction to the so-called "**society of abundance**" and the social, cultural and economic effects of an exacerbated capitalism (Marcellesi, 2008). environmentalism sought to provide a solution to the major environmental problems generated by pollution and the unfeasibility of permanent population growth and consumption (Herrero, 2006). The struggle of the new groups of anti-nuclear pacifists (López Mendoza, 2012) along with a series of events including the nuclear tests, the publication of the book "Silent Spring" and a series of ecological catastrophes publicised by the new mass media (Marcellesi, 2008) will create in the European social imaginary a principle of environmental awareness which, in the 1970s, will materialise in the creation of the European green parties. It could be concluded that the formation of the green parties constituted the **necessary counterpart to a predominant economic model** whose consequences, apart from being irreversible, could be devastating for humanity and put its survival at risk.

The creation of a new roadmap by the European Union, the European Green Deal, means precisely dealing with the implications and **effects of profit-maximisation economic models**. The capitalist system and neoliberalism a dominant economic framework in the member states' economic system pose potential problems when it comes to following green principles, complying with sustainability policies. The triumph of neoliberalism and the shareholder maximisation model lack the ethical concern necessary to cope with long-term sustainable policies (Crouch, 2012, p. 373). It is true that capitalism, by itself, is neither moral nor evil, it is just the response to the society's demands (Crouch, 2012, p. 364). Nevertheless, the mere nature of the system poses a huge threat when it comes to facing "global problems that require a global response" (European Union, 2021, p. 20) and adhering to green ideologies.

On the one hand, **an efficient implementation of climate action policies needs of both internal and external commitment** (Dejonghe, 2021, p. 3). European Green Deal goals such as embracing renewable energies need of both EU Member States and the rest of countries' commitment to be fulfilled (Dejonghe, 2021, p. 3). Cooperation and international relations appear as the basis of the new green governance model, which entails close and constant collaboration between nations at a global level. Nonetheless, unlike the EU, great powers such as China, US and Russia have been reluctant to international green cooperation when adopting major international protocols. For example, in 2017, President Donald Trump's announced that the United States will cease all participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement (McGrath, 2020). The cases of China and Russia are no different. In the last couple of months, we have witnessed a change in Xi Jinping's sustainable policies towards a "greener" future for China, while its government remains reluctant to leave behind "brown" policies such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Dejonghe, 2021, p. 2). On Russian's behalf, Putin's climate objectives are anything but ambitious as its green policies even leave room for greater emissions of greenhouse gases in the future (Dejonghe, 2021, p. 3).

On the other hand, there is a need to **rethinking relationships between producers and consumers to ethically equip stakeholders to deal with long-term sustainability issues** (Crouch, 2012, p. 365). Without solid ethical awareness of the importance of green

policies on the part of consumers, there will be no demand for the creation of green policies and, therefore, governments and large corporations will not find themselves in the position of making issues such as climate change a priority.

The European Green Deal aims to become the routing for EU Member States to deal with both individuals' and market's interests in the green transition process due to the evident need to rethinking public policies to achieve the European Union's sustainability goals (European Union, 2019, p. 4)

3.2 The European Green Deal (EGD)

The European Green Deal is an integral part of the European Commission's strategy that aims to "transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use" (European Union, 2019). The EGD as part of the "Next Generation EU", the post COVID-19 recovery package, has two main objectives - **economic prosperity and sustainability** – and highlights that, there is no trade-off between the economy and environment (Bianchi, Colantoni, & Franza, 2020, p. 5). In the EGD, the influence of the UN's 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is noticeable (European Union, 2019, p. 3), which is essential to fully understand the impact of the green ideology in the Green Deal. This will be further explained in the following sections.

As it has been previously mentioned, the realisation of a new sustainable political model requires of the collaboration of both internal and external actors (Dejonghe, 2021, p. 3). In this sense, the EU states in the EGD that they will strengthen their "green deal diplomacy" efforts to foster external relationships to fulfil the institution's green objectives (European Union, 2019, p.20). The European Union's Member States commitment to the Green Deal was prompt and serious (Bianchi, Colantoni, & Franza, 2020, p. 5). Nonetheless, the COVID-19 outbreak changed the plans of numerous MS

committed to sustainability, which has highly affected the implementation of the EGD.



Figure 1 The European Green Deal (European Union, 2019)

The need to become **“Antifragile” institutions** appears to be essential to face current international challenges. According to Nassim Taleb (2013), antifragile institutions are those organisations that benefit from uncertainty in times of crisis more than they are affected by the negative externalities inherent to it. The EC’s Vice president Frans Timmermans has recently referred to the COVID-19 pandemic as a cruel reminder of the need to become a resilient and count on adequate preparation to face threats to our security such as the environmental crisis: **“there is no vaccine against the climate crisis, but we can still fight it and prepare for its unavoidable effects”** (European Commission, 2021). More specifically, Timmermans refers to the Green Deal as a strategy that “equips us to speed up and deepen” the above-mentioned preparations (European Commission, 2021).

Given the emergence of green parties in Europe and the growing importance of sustainability-related social movements (Holden, 2013) such as Greta Thunberg's *Fridays for Future*, many authors are asking what lies behind the Green Deal. Often, due to its sustainable and political nature, the ideological elements of the EGD are associated to a **projection of green ideological principles**, which will be further discussed in the following

sections, emphasising climate scepticism among certain social sectors (Zuk & Zuk, 2021, p. 1).

3.3 The post-COVID-19 reality: is the Green Deal still a priority?

The green objectives of the EGD will not be fulfilled by the European Union acting alone (European Union, 2019, p. 2). According to Krastev and Leonard (2020), after the COVID-19 crisis, the European citizens' positions with regards to the Green Deal and the future of the EU can be classified as follows.

3.3.1 The "DIYers"

This group of people that constitute the 29% of those surveyed believe that, after the pandemic, the European and global political scenarios will go back to the 19th century and be based on forging longstanding strategic alliances with third parties to guarantee the survival of the states (Krastev & Leonard, 2020, p. 17)

3.3.2 the "New Cold Warriors"

Representing the 15% of the surveyed, the New Cold Warriors believe the world will experience a return to 20th century Cold War bloc dynamics and that countries will have to decide between "the free world" (US as the leader) and "the autocratic axis" (China as the leader of this group) (Krastev & Leonard, 2020, p. 17)

3.3.3 the "Strategic Sovereignists"

The Strategic Sovereignists (42%) believe that the world is divided in two groups: the nationalists (accepting the limitations of national sovereignty and the need to join supranational organisms) and globalists (disenchanted by the autocratic threat to world governance) (Krastev & Leonard, 2020, p. 17).

The COVID-19 crisis deeply affected the implementation of the European Green Deal due to the growing need to face the economic consequences of the lockdowns (Bianchi, Colantoni, & Franza, 2020, p. 5) and changing attitudes among the European citizenship. According to their positions, it could be stated that the Strategic Sovereignists, which represent less than 50 per cent of the European population, are favourable to the

principles necessary to carry out an effective implementation of the European Green Deal such as the idea of **progressive protectionism** consisting in placing high taxes on goods whose production harms the environment (Krastev & Leonard, 2020, p. 21).

Taking into consideration above-mentioned variables, compliance with the European sustainability model and **the European Green Deal appears as a future possibility rather than a short-term objective.**

4. Theoretical Framework

Before analysing the components of the green ideology in the Green Deal, the basic principles of this ideology and its importance for a more sustainable future should be defined.

4.1. The Green ideology's change of paradigm: from Anthropocentrism to Ecocentrism

Defining the basic principles of an ideology necessarily involves answering the question of what an ideology is, to which scholars have not yet been able to give a definitive response (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 281). This applies in particular to the principles of the green ideology, as its main proposals need to be envisioned through a new metaphysical plane. Jonathon Porritt, in its green manifesto *Seeing Green* (1984), calls for a '**metaphysical reconstruction**', a renewed approach to the conception of the human being in the universe and the basic order of beings in the cosmos. According to Porritt, human beings need to re-envision their position in ecosystems through the development of planetary consciousness (Porritt, 1984). This human acknowledgement and respect for the rest of the creatures within ecosystems needs of a redefinition of relationships with the environment and with the Earth to '**work in sympathy and cohabit in harmony**' (Humphrey, 2013).

In order to redefine the relationships, humans have with their surroundings, it should be understood the humans' hierarchy of the environment. In recent years, academics such as O'Riordan (2004), Eugene F. Stoermer or Paul Crutzen have theorised about the position of humans in the global environment through the analysis of the so-called **Anthropocene Era** (Trischler, 2016, p. 40). The term Anthropocene is widely used in the

environmental science field to refer to a new era marked by humans' dominance as the main environmental force influencing/affecting the rest of the creatures and ecosystems of the planet with its actions (O'Riordan, 2004, p. 235).

The Anthropocene era owes its name to anthropocentric ethics "which calculate the environment's worth on the basis of its utility to humankind and see humans as distinct from and possibly superior to the habitats in which they live" (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 284). Following this logic, the political sphere of European societies is centred upon **anthropocentric ethics**: humans as the centre of everything. Nevertheless, the green ideology goes one step further and proposes to go **from 'dualism'** (the redistribution of the spoils of growth to alleviate the effect of negative externalities) **to 'holism'** (a world in which individuals recognise themselves as participants in nature) (Holden, 2013, p. 1054). This transition to holism and paradigm shift requires not only the emergence of new political parties adhering to the principles of the green ideology but **substituting the anthropocentric paradigm for ecocentric environmentalism** (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 271). Stavrakakis (1997) argues that ecocentric ethics are based in the cosmos and the intrinsic value of all the elements and beings that participate in its functioning. This means relegating the needs of humans to the background and thinking about the overall well-being of nature as a whole (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 284).

According to this new non-anthropocentric view of politics, all things in the cosmos have **moral character** (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 273), and its importance should be taken seriously. The complex anthropocentric-ecocentric transition process is further developed by Peter Singer (2011) through the Expanding Circle Theory in which the author explains the different stages of ethical concern of human beings and the current state of affairs at a political level. Singer (2011) explains the way in which political concerns are structured and highlights how the current political parties remain in the three first spheres of political concern, which are the ones dealing with anthropocentric ethics, leaving behind leaving behind other spheres (non-anthropocentric approaches) whose exploration is necessary for human survival.

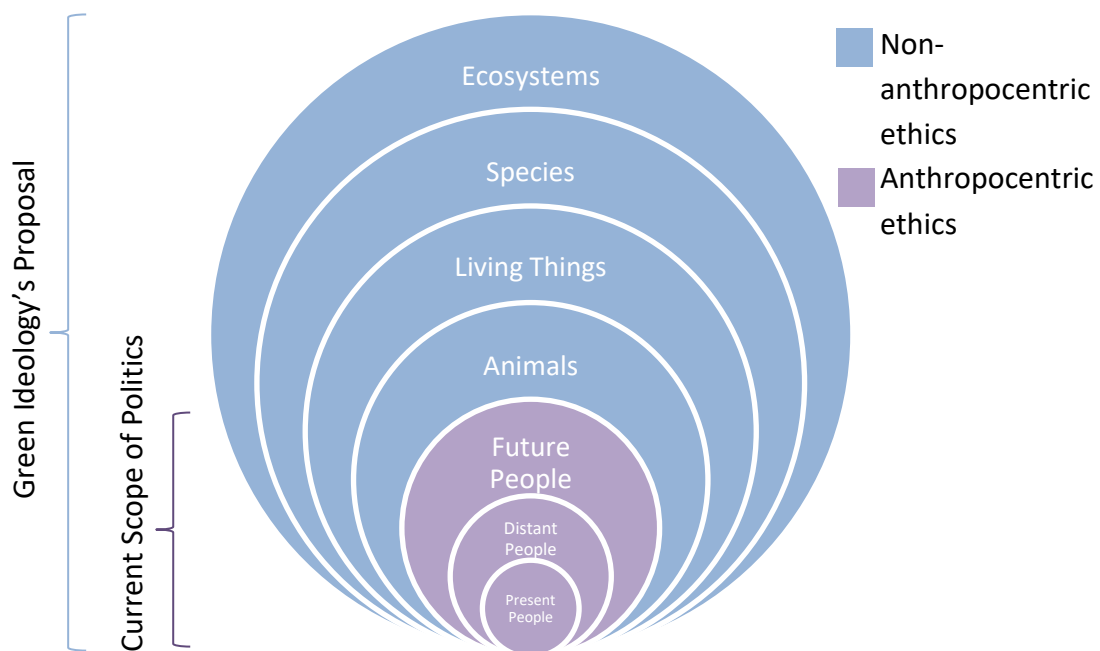


Figure 2 The Expanding Circle of Ethical Concern (based on Singer, 2011)

The green ideology and its representation in the political arena, the green parties, aimed to provide a response to this need for change of paradigm. In the case of the German Green Party, its emergence was closely related to the need for responses to political and economic issues to which **traditional anthropocentric approaches prove to be insufficient** (Milder & Jaraus, 2015, p. 14). However, the ideological foundations of the Greens and their separation from left-wing ideologies are still the subject of debate at a European level. For the moment, it could be concluded that green ideology provides a new, broader vision of the implications of human actions through its ethical proposal based on ecocentrism that will be key to understanding new environmental treaties such as the European Green Deal.

4.2. The Green ideology: a post-ideological ideology?

In the 1970s, the formation of the first green political parties was closely linked to the emergence of the so-called New Social Movements and left-wing political movements (Milder & Jaraus, 2015, p. 11). According to scholars such as Pepper (1994), the green ideology is both new and old as result of the influence of previous political traditions such as Marxism, Anarchism and Romanticism (Pepper, 1994, p. 11). Notwithstanding its possible connections with left-wing movements, the green movement has also been influenced by parties from the conservative side throughout its history, which is telling of

the capacity of the greens to deconstruct the political spectrum (Milder & Jarausch, 2015, pp. 6-7). The German Green Party summed up this phenomenon in what Silke Mende calls an example of “**post-ideological politics**”, or the ability of the Greens to transcend the political frameworks by collaborating across presumed cleavages (Milder & Jarausch, 2015, p. 14): we are “**neither left, nor right, but ahead**” (Milder & Jarausch, 2015, p. 6).

Often, the classification of green parties as left-wing parties is the consequence of a certain **lack of a substantial theoretical understanding** of green ideology (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 262). On the one hand, the green ideology lacks the long history of Conservatism or Marxism (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 281). On the other hand, the aforementioned "lack of political space" for green ideologies in the spectrum makes it difficult for citizens to understand the position of environmental ideas in society. This is especially significant when it comes to defining the ‘fathers’ or ‘great thinkers’ as the green tradition has no Marx, Mill or Freud and, therefore, there are no role models to follow (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 281). However, the most significant argument that explains this confusion with green ideology is the scientific argument. To further develop this idea, it appears as useful to draw on Goodin's theory of ideological structure and nodal points.

According to Goodin (1992), ideologies are rely on a series of **central ideas** that coexist with others recognised as **peripheral ideas** (Goodin, 1992, p. 16). The periphery corresponds to pre-existing elements (for instance, decentralisation or democracy) which are reappropriated, in this case, by the green ideology and given a new meaning (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 262). The central ideas deal with the moral value or moral conception of a particular ideology (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 262). Both sets of ideas are essential to fully understand the complexities of ideologies, particularly when dealing with ecocentric ethical frameworks. Goodin even highlights the need to define these ideas as they are considered the fundamental basis of the green theory of value, the pillar of green political programmes (Goodin, 1992, p. 19). Therefore, it should be asserted that the real importance of Goodin's argument is that it provides the foundation for understanding the differences between the central ideas or nodal points proposed by leftist ideologies and those proposed by green theory thus stating that the green theory has a life of its own.

According to Stavrakakis (1997), Green political manifestos make use of the signifiers '**Green**' and '**Nature**' as a central idea to the ideology. These prisms or denominations allow us to understand a form of democracy that has nothing to do with that proposed by left-wing ideologies. Adding the term 'green' to the word 'democracy' to refer to democracy according to green theory gives the signifier a meaning, a totally renewed application of a pre-existing element that is democracy (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 271). When we think of the pillars of a liberal democracy, we immediately associate this concept with ideas such as the equal value of human beings. In the case of a green democracy, when we speak of equality, we speak of equality of all beings that are part of the environment. In this way, a pre-existing idea (i. e. democracy) becomes a renewed idea essential to understand an ideology through the use of its specific nodal points (i. e. 'green') to adapt the pre-existing idea to the ideological prism of a theory ('green democracy') (Goodin, 1992, pp. 14-15).

The confusion between the green elements of a left-wing ideology and the green ideology has its origin precisely in a **wrong framing of the nodal points of the ideology** (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 270). In Communism, for example, the signifiers 'green' and 'nature' have a peripheral character, that is, they are ideas attached to the central ones of the ideology, such as the communist and anthropocentric concept of equality, on which the rest of the ideology's arguments are built. In the case of green ideology, these concepts are at the centre of everything. In this sense, we find a striking contradiction between left-wing ideologies and green ideology: **left-wing ideologies are anthropocentric and green ideology is ecocentric** - and these two perspectives constitute irreconcilable differences as they are contrary to each other. Following this logic, the **green ideology and left-wing ideologies are articulated around different nodal points** (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 270), thus, drawing a clear line between the two very different worldviews. Green theory's relevance lies in this proposition of ideologies outside anthropocentrism, which explains the reason why it is often considered a "post-ideological" ideology causing much uncertainty as to its efficacy as an ideology in the current social context (Milder & Jaraus, 2015, p. 10)

4.3. The basic principles of Green ideology: a 'thin' ideology?

Contrary to popular belief, the different applications of the green ideologies in Europe go beyond the common concern for the environment (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 282) and the willingness to achieve a state of peaceful coexistence with the Earth (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 273). Even authors such as Freeden have described this worldview as a **'thin' ideology**, lacking an interpretation of human beings and their socialisation sufficiently solid to found ethical principles comparable to the ideological 'thickness' of Liberalism or Communism (Humphrey, 2013). On the contrary, authors such as Stavrakakis (1997), Humphrey (2013), and Price-Thomas (2016) define the core elements of the ideology, even when admitting green theory might still be considered a thin ideology (Humphrey, 2013).

For the purpose of this dissertation, the following sections will be focused on the definition of green principles at a theoretical level (Humphrey, Stavrakakis and Price-Thomas) and their practical application through the manifestos of the major European green parties for a subsequent analysis of the European Green Deal and its ideological component. To this end, the principles of green ideology have been divided into the following blocks: **relationship with the environment and ecology, radical democracy, and human egalitarianism.**

5. Research Goals and Questions

The main purpose of this work is the analysis of the European green model. To this end, the following objectives are set:

1. The definition of the basic principles of the green ideology at the European level
2. Review of the different proposals of the main green parties of the European Union
3. The adaptation of the above objectives to the international level through the European Green Deal
4. Evaluation of the national and international political proposals of the green parties to analyse their relationship with the principles of the European green ideology

Through these objectives, it is intended to answer the question: is the European Green Deal a real practical adaptation of the principles of the European green ideology or simply a framework for the implementation of green policies? Is the green deal an efficient and viable framework for green policies?

6. Methodology

The research of this dissertation has been based on the use of fundamental sources selected according to the criteria of relevance, relevance and historical vision of the green ideology. Specifically, the literature has been reviewed on the following topics: (1) Principles of green ideology, (2) history of green ideology, (3) current application of the principles of green ideology, (4) the European Green Deal and (5) ideology of the European green parties. Mainly Germany, UK and France.

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To carry out this review, the main international databases that work with documentation in this area (JSTOR, ProQuest Political Science and SAGE Humanities and Social Science) have been used. In addition, academic journals from the political area and the area of environmental science (Energies, Science, Environmental Values...) have been consulted. As well as the current legislation of the European Union about the implementation of the political economic strategy of the Green Deal.

After reviewing the selected books, works and articles, a critical analysis is carried out in which conclusions are proposed.

7. Analysis and Discussion

7.1 Relationship with the environment and ecology

Relations with the environment are placed at the heart of the green ideology. However, this new hierarchy proposed by green ideology theorists poses a major challenge when it comes to applying it to current political realities. Nevertheless, this new concept of the perception of nature and the effect that growth can have on nature are fundamental to understanding both green ideology and the European Green Deal.

7.1.2 The conception of nature

As specified above, the green ideology is based on the ecocentric idea of appreciation of the intrinsic value of other elements of nature in which the human being should be considered only as one more element of “earth’s broader ecology” (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 284). Human beings are considered knots in a ‘bio spherical net’ as opposed to individualism and free riding (Humphrey, 2013). The green ideology therefore commits to **‘do no harm’** to the rest of the components of the global ecosystem. However, as will be further explained in this section, despite being an idea with a strong ecocentric component, the European Green Deal does not contemplate the globality of ecocentrism since it bases its policy rationale on the premise of the **human being as the centre**.

The fundamental objective of the green ideology is far from this conception of the human being, since it aims to re-envision the political, economic, and social foundations of Western societies through a new conception and **reevaluation of nature** (Stavarakakis, 1997, p. 260). The European Green parties understand this new conception of nature through the perspective of Dobson’s **‘pragmatic environmentalism’** (Price-Thomas, 2016). According to Dobson (2010), the Greens tend to leave behind ecocentric ethics as a consequence of the characteristic power struggle of the European political scene. This becomes evident in statements such as the British Green party’s highlight of the need to protect the environment and its wildlife for “both their own sake and **ours**” (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 285).

In the case of the European Green Deal (EGD), the European Commission takes up the ‘no

harm' principle and calls it a '**green oath**' through its commitment to green regulations as well as supporting innovation through sustainable initiatives (European Union, 2019, p. 19), but again, under the umbrella of the principle of putting "**people first**" (European Union, 2019, p. 2).

The EGD Biodiversity Strategy, even when being a strategy that goes beyond the 'merely practical', envisions environmental care through the lenses of **environmental utilitarianism** (Poliakoff, Fitzpatrick, Farren, & Anastas, 2002, p. 6). Authors such as Ingolfur have referred to an '**abdication of the ecologist paradigm**' due to this irrational co-existence of ecocentrism and anthropocentrism and mainstreaming of the Greens who pay little attention to the real value of sustainability (Milder & Jaraus, 2015, p. 4).

The relational foundations between human beings and their environment must be restructured (the idea of '**ecological restructuring**') for which the principles of green ideology provide certain indications (Humphrey, 2013). However, these solutions are overshadowed by the European political reality in which the Green parties are forced to fit, leaving behind basic principles of green ideology such as ecocentrism. Sociologist Wolfgang Streeck laments the damages caused by Neoliberalism in this sense and believes the only way to dismantle the current European capitalist regime for the sake of ecocentrism is through a "a break-up of the currency union" of the Euro (Milder & Jaraus, 2015, p. 4). In contrast, the European Green Deal relies on the reinforcement of the European economic model by the creation of a green strategy based on sustainable growth. In this sense, the issue of growth also becomes a key variable in terms of the EU's green ideas.

7.1.3 Sustainable growth

The issue of sustainable development remains highly relevant and controversial as a pillar of the green ideology due to its intimate relationship with the mentioned above issue of the configuration of ecocentrism in a European political sphere marked by anthropocentric ethics. Both the French and British green parties have manifested their interest in defining the **limits to growth** (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 285). The British Green Party, based on the Club of Rome's Limits to Growth, stated in its 2010 national election

manifesto its concern with economic growth by the use of the phrase “size matters” (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 285). Similarly, the French Party claimed that the main goal of the French greens was to set limits to growth as this was perceived to be “poisonous for the planet” (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 285).

In 2015, a group of researchers led by Steffen published an article in *Science* in which they expressed their concern with economic development and settled the debate on the limits of human evolution by defining what they called the **Planetary Boundaries**. According to the authors, the Planetary Boundaries are a “framework [that] aims to help guide human societies away from such a trajectory by defining a “**safe operating space**” in which we can continue to develop and thrive” (Steffen, et al., 2015, p. 2) without causing irreversible damage to the global environment. This shows that both the world of environmental policy and the world of science consider growth a dangerous variable and that it must be controlled by public bodies.

The European Green Deal and its growth strategy are presented as the roadmap that political parties and environmental scientists were looking for to face the issue of growth. The European Commission claims that the European Green Deal “supports” the green transition “to a fair and prosperous society that responds to the challenges posed by climate change and the environmental degradation **improving the quality of life of current and future generations**” (European Union, 2019, p. 23-24). This statement is revealing about the EU's intentions with the Green Deal. Despite the development of policies within the framework of the Green Deal, such as the renewed EU forest strategy or the “Farm to Fork” Strategy (European Union, 2019, p. 11-13), the EU bases its sustainable policies as outlined in section 2.1.8 *A zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment* of the Green Deal in the principle of protecting Europe citizens first and the environment later (European Union, 2019, p. 14).

As it has been analysed in this section, the main problem with the applicability of the green conception of nature in European politics is that political parties and institutions are **unable to draw a clear line between anthropocentric and ecocentric ethics** because of the intrinsic democratic need to keep winning votes. This reality appears as a problem

for big green pacts like the green deal that fail in the basic conceptions of the theory because of the power exercised by human beings in terms of enforceability. For this reason, the Greens advocate for radical forms of democracy.

7.2 Radical Democracy

The notion of radical democratisation is often linked to **decentralisation** and forms of **participatory democracy** (Humphrey, 2013). The renewed relationship with nature and the political reality of Europe call for “greater public participation and decentralisation of power in all its forms” (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 286).

The idea of decentralisation has proven to be particularly effective when it comes to the fostering the European citizenship **planetary consciousness**, as citizens find it easier to build ecological awareness when “having a sense of place, a geographical and environmental location that provides the focus for their transpersonal sense of identification (Humphrey, 2013). For this reason, the Green British Party advocates for the creation of a **citizen culture** based on sustainability and participation which is a responsibility of both governments and citizens (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 286) and which unites us all to fight against climate issues.

The European Green Deal, though it does not contain explicit references to the decentralisation of the EU economic system, establishes as one of its main objectives the development of Effort Sharing Policies to enhance the feeling of belonging to the EU as well as developing a citizen culture and green consciousness (European Commission, 2021, p. 1). In fact, the section titled “Time to Act – Together: A European Climate Pact” is devoted to explaining that the citizens should be involved in policymaking as they “are and should remain the driving force of the [green] transition” (European Union, 2019, p. 22).

However, we should not forget Goodin's ideas on the real role of democracy within the green ideology. Green principles surpass the conceptions of the current political sphere and therefore also surpass political systems such as democracy. In the end, if an alliance with eco-authoritarian groups provides the green parties with sufficient benefit for the

achievement of their green goals, **it is possible that the democratic principle could take a back seat in the future of green ideology** (Humphrey, 2013).

7.3 Human Egalitarianism

According to Price-Thomas (2016), the ideas adhered to Egalitarianism are those concerned with social justice for all groups of society. It is generally agreed in the green realm of political science, that the origins of the green ideology are closely related to the egalitarian ideas of the so-called **New Social Movements** of the 1970s (Bianchi, Colantoni, & Franza, 2020, p. 11). The term New Social Movements was used as an umbrella term to classify the emergence of single-issue movements like Feminism or Non-violent movements in the 1970s and 1980s. Nevertheless, recently, political scientists like Stephen Milder have begun to argue that there is a shared *raison d'être* between these movements in terms of political concerns that has often been misunderstood due to the internal heterogeneity of these movements (Milder & Jarausch, 2015, p. 12). This common trait can be seen in their **fight for equality** and the importance they give to women's rights, migration, sexual minorities and the situation and societies of developing countries (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 287). In Germany and the United Kingdom, these movements were particularly significant when understanding the origins of the green ideology as their single-issue struggles and fights began to incorporate green ideas (Porritt, 1984, p. 6) In this part, the egalitarian principles of the 70s New Social Movements and its influence on both the Green Ideology and the European Green Deal will be explored.

7.3.1 The influence of Feminism on the Green Ideology

In Jonathon Porritt's *Seeing Green*, the 'mother of all manifestos' of British Green ideology (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 268), the author described his ideal of sustainable society as '**Green and Pleasant Land**' in which a state of sustainable peace and equality between the sexes could be achieved. The principles of equality together with the consideration for minorities speak of an interesting dimension of the green ideology (Porritt, 1984, p. 6). In the same way that equality between species and elements of ecosystems is established through the renewed concept of nature, green parties are concerned with **equality between all human beings**. This would lead, for example, many German feminists who

were also concerned about the environmental issues to join the Greens in the Bundestag (Milder & Jaraus, 2015, p. 12).

Nevertheless, despite the weight of feminism in green ideology since its beginnings, we could say that **there are no significant references to it in the European Green Deal**, given the current roots of the feminist movement in left-wing collectives and that the EGD, in line with green principles, speaks of humanity as a whole rather than making differentiations between genders. There are some references to feminism and effects of the patriarchy in the French and German political manifestos with regards to its position in the European economic and social models (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 288). For instance, Merchant, Capra and Spretnak agree on the identification of post-patriarchal principles/relations as one of the 10 key principles of the German Grünen's ideology (Stavarakakis, 1997, p. 268) However, due to ecocentrism it could not be said that women's rights currently, despite their influence on the principle of ideology, have a fundamental weight as a nodal idea in green ideology (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 289).

7.3.2 The role of migration and developing countries on the European Green Model

Following the egalitarian principles mentioned in the previous section, the Greens have had a huge influence in the last couple of years regarding the overall situation of migrants in the Europe and the EU migrant policy. Contrary to the current situation, the green ideological principles emphasise the ways in which democratic freedoms can be "best preserved in the light of environmental needs" (Loftus, 2015, p. 267), highlighting the ways in which migrant's rights are not being respected by the above-mentioned policies.

According to Loftus (2015), "environmental values are established in a complex set of unequal relations between the human and non-human across the global North and the South". To illustrate this reality, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (1989), the so-called the Basel Convention. During the 1980s and 1990s, environmental racism from the states of the north was particularly striking in particular with regards to the internationalisation of hazardous waste disposal of northern-manufactured materials in southern soil, causing irreversible damage to the ecosystems of the southern states (Park, 1998, p. 688). Under

Article 11 of the Basel Convention, the parties commit to foster international cooperation in hazardous waste transportation and disposal following an environmentally friendly process (Wynne, 1989, p. 138). Nowadays, green ideological principles, due to the effects of environmental racism, have placed at the centre of the ideology anti-racism and pro-migration principles, as it can explain at a European level as the European Green Deal '**no harm' principle** (European Union, 2019, p. 19).

As far as developing countries are concerned, the European Green Deal seeks close cooperation between countries through the creation of bilateral and multilateral treaties. The European Green Deal states in its section concerning the organisation's role as an environmental leader that the EU is "Stepping up the level of climate action taken by international partners requires tailor-made geographic strategies that reflect different contexts and local needs – for example for current and future big emitters, for the least developed countries, and for small island developing states." (European Commission, 2019, p. 20). In terms of financing, it can also be appreciated a commitment on behalf of the Union to **ensuring a just transition for all citizens** (European Commission, 2019, p. 15).

Contrary to Sundaram's proposals, the European Green Deal, even when being openly concern with **environmental challenges as a source of political instability and forced migration** (European Union, 2019, p. 21), fails to tackle issues such as the systemic biases against developing countries of the global financial system and unequal resource allocation (Sundaram, 2013, p. 18). Nevertheless, the European green political parties present themselves as strong defenders of the rights of migrants in Europe nowadays. In the case of the British Green Party Goodin's 'Green and Pleasant land' model includes references to the issue of racial inequalities characterised by a new understanding of internationalism in which "developed" countries emphasise with developing ones (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 268). Green parties such as the French Green Party are very critical of the current European migration policy in which Europe is conceived as a "fortress against refugees" (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 289), which is unconceivable under the ecocentric ethics of the green ideology.

7.3.3 The influence of Pacifism on the Green Ideology

Currently, the political world is marked by international alliances between states of all kinds, including military alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The principle of non-violence, given the aforementioned origin in the New Social Movements of the European Green parties, is considered a variable to be highlighted within the green ideology. In the formulation of public policy and political discourse, non-violence refers to realities such as global disarmament and the construction of a society without repression (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 268). According to the literature, the reasons for the Greens' lack of support for military-style policies such as the German Green Party's support for foreign military missions (Milder & Jarausch, 2015, p. 15) has nothing to do with the efficiency of non-violent methods over violent ones, but rather with the moral principles behind the Green movement (Humphrey, 2013).

Merchant, Capra and Spretnak, in their identification of the key principles of the Green Ideology, include the **pillar of non-violence** as a central theme (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 268). Other authors such as Humphrey (2013) disagree with the identification of non-violence in the current political framework as one of the pillars of the green ideology, seeing it as a **peripheral idea** or even a methodology to pursue other fundamental goals of the ideology. The influence of the ideas of non-violence becomes particularly relevant in the manifestos of the European Green parties as their premises are often far from pacifist principles. The British Green party is even pragmatic and utilitarian when it comes to the use of force and justifies its use in certain circumstances (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 290). On the other hand, the French Green Party considers non-violence as a useful method that can be of value in the pursuit of certain green policies (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 291). The German Green Party, on the other hand, is much more open to rejecting the principle of non-violence because they believe that global circumstances have changed and that we must adapt to a new, more violent geopolitical context (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 290).

For this reason, we see how European Green parties **incorporate certain notions of non-violence in their discourse but that the idea of non-violence has taken a back seat** at the ideological level given the adaptation of green ideas to the European reality. European Green Parties cannot be, therefore, identified as pacifist parties due to the clear lack of

representation of pacifist ideas in the parties' discourse (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 291). Despite the lack of reference to the concept of non-violence as a necessary element to guarantee a sustainable future, the Green Deal, as mentioned above, seeks to build a green future based on collaboration between states, which necessarily requires policies based on non-aggression (European Commission, 2019, p. 18).

Over the years, the green ideology and its principles have evolved according to the circumstances surrounding the mere existence of Green parties and the European political situation. The influence of the New Social Movements has been particularly significant in this respect, as the green ideology has established itself with a social impact independently of these peripheral ideas, which are more part of European left-wing ideologies than of green conceptions. The green parties are now even considered an independent, united and ideological party family that have used the feminist, nonviolent and equality principles as the basis of the ideology within the European context (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 291) under the umbrella of the European Green Party.

7.4 The European Green Economic Model

Although not a pillar of sustainable ideology, the economic model proposed by the European Union through the Green Deal reflects fundamental aspects of green theory. The European economic system, given the significant entrenchment of ideas such as capitalism and neoliberalism, opens significant space for open market policies and competition. Green parties have therefore been concerned about the possible effects that the activities of governments, companies and individuals may have on the sustainable transition (Humphrey, 2013).

In order to mitigate these effects, we have seen different proposals from these parties. According to Melo-Escrihuela, these ideas include a **total modification and re-structuring of the European economic system that is closer to the citizens** "where the seed for the cultivation of ecological democracy and citizenship may better flourish" (Loftus, 2015, p. 266). This goal, according to the Die Grünen discourse, should be realised through the creation of a new social system that is not based on exacerbated competition and that provides sufficient social guarantees for its citizens (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 267). To this

end, the idea of decentralisation and participatory democracy described above appears as the basis of this new socio-economic model (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 267). This new concept of economy and society **requires laws with an ecological basis** since these are the only ones that, given their ecocentric nature, can guarantee a rule of law that contemplates a horizon of actions and effects that go beyond what happened in the Res Public (Humphrey, 2013).

The Green Deal in this sense does not disappoint since a significant number of its proposals are dedicated exclusively to the creation of a new economic approach that leaves aside individual interests in the interest of environmental protection. The European Green Deal aims to manage climate risks and environmental threats through its integration into the financial system of the European Union (European Commission, 2019, p. 17). To this end, the European Union sets itself the challenge of designing a set of new economic policies that guarantee a sustainable future for European citizens in areas such as the energy transition and transport. In this sense, the prominent position of the European Union economy in the world is the perfect vehicle for the expansion and reinforcement of policies compatible with the green ideology. As the largest market in the world, the EU presents itself as the guarantor of climate action before other foreign markets, which generates a certain spill over effect in terms of the implementation of more sustainable policies and economic models (European Commission, 2019, p. 22).

7.5 Is the European sustainable model a green model?

Is the European sustainable model a green model? The author Jonathon Porritt defines in his *Seeing Green* manifesto the minimum criteria that parties and initiatives such as the EGD must follow in order to be in line with green principles. These fifteen principles collect all the ideas that have been discussed in this section and could be summed up as sustainability, social justice, peace, liberation, and decentralization (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 269).

As has been analysed in this section, these principles are present in the current green ideology, but their prevalence has been evolving (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 293), especially with regard to their application in public policies such as the European Green Deal.

However, this also shows that there are certain bases present both in the green ideological theory and in the European green parties and their policies that can adhere to green principles (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 269).

8. Conclusions and Proposals

The green ideology has meant a paradigm shift in the European scene that has transformed the relationships between human beings and the relationships with the environment. The application of these green ideas in the European "mainstream" in global treaties such as the European Green Deal has not been to the liking of many. Nordhaus and Shellenberg (2004) even consider a possible '**death of environmentalism**'. The authors consider a future scenario of post-environmental politics in which political actors move away from the 'shallow pollution-centre ecology frame' through the adherence to politics based on the limits to growth and deindustrialisation (Nordhaus & Shellenberger, 2007). The death of environmentalism is the consequence of the green parties' detachment from ecocentric values to adapt the green ideology to the particularities of the European political scenario (Humphrey, 2013), what Nordhaus and Shellenberger called the '**politics of possibility**'. Authors such as Scerri consider the belief that the construction of another, greener world is possible, but that humans should not focus on "describing that other world, but on exploring what might be possible from within this one" (Holden, 2013, p. 1055)

Both Scerri's and Nordhaus and Shellenberg's dilemma corresponds to the European political reality as regards a faithful application of the green principles to the current political scenario. Therefore, **we can affirm that the Green Deal is not an adaptation of the principles of the green ideology since it fails to promote its basic principles.** However, **the Green Deal does provide certain foundations for the ecological transition in order, in the future, to be able to make the leap to green politics.** Taking this argument into account, the following conclusions can be drawn.

8.1 The European sustainability model: Ecocentric policy based on anthropocentric ethics

Throughout this work, an analysis has been carried out regarding the current debate

between anthropocentric and ecocentric policies at a European level. As has been analysed, the real impact of green ideology on the European political paradigm lies in the strength of its proposals that break with the anthropocentric schemes of the rest of European ideologies. The green ideology goes one step further since its fundamental basis is ecocentrism, the acceptance that not only human beings have moral value, but also the rest of the elements of the ecosystem and that all of them must be considered on the same level at the time to do politics. Due to this conception, some scholars have argued that the full implementation of the green ideology would entail the **end of the traditional understandings of 'ideology', but this is not the case** (Stavrakakis, 1997, p. 275).

Breaking with the anthropocentric parameters of European political systems is not an easy task since their dimension is not capable of incorporating the principles of the European green ideology. Authors such as Bess affirm that we live in a **Light-Green Society** in which environmental principles, despite their powerful rhetoric, have not been able to fully devote themselves to environmentalism (Milder & Jarausch, 2015, p. 10). For this reason, the green parties have been forced to adapt their discourse to this reality. Despite this need to adapt, **green ideology does not mean the end of ideology, but rather its enlargement and widening** through the incorporation of new ethical dimensions.

When the green parties jump onto the European political scene, they are forced to moderate their discourse in order to adapt to the European political reality (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 293). However, authors such as Price-Thomas (2016) argue that their position as sideliners and opponents of the European political system gives them an advantage in terms of re-adherence to the principles of green ideology, since it constitutes their fundamental difference from the rest of the political parties (Price-Thomas, 2016, p. 293). This could be the beginning of the journey towards an ecocentric European policy.

To achieve this goal efficiently at the partisan level, experts in the area advocate the need to **redefine the concept of citizenship** as a first step towards the incorporation of ecocentric ideologies in the European political arena definitively setting aside

anthropocentric ideologies in the future.

8.2 A European Green Citizenship: the first step

Authors such as Scerri affirm that in order to live in peace and harmony with nature, the concept of citizenship and the position of the human being must be redefined. Thus, human beings must leave behind the differences among themselves, the basis of anthropocentric ideologies, in order to guarantee a sustainable future. For this reason, the renewed conception of the citizen involves redistributing the earth's wealth through society's participation in nature (Holden, 2013, p. 1053) in order to acquire class consciousness at a human level. Nevertheless, this transaction and creation of global citizenship requires the help of all the elements that make up today's society, including the current state structure.

At the state level, this new position of the citizen must break with the established political structure, including the structure of citizen possibilities, that is, it must **redefine the meaning of citizen duties and rights** (Holden, 2013, p. 1054). The paradigm shift, given its own complexity, positions the human being in a totally different way, so this change in social functions is necessary to meet the objectives of the green ideology. In this sense, capitalism plays a fundamental role since becoming a green society requires **moving away from discourses of “self-realisation, creativity and authenticity”** (Holden, 2013, p. 1054). According to Melo, this new vision of citizenship requires special attention to the area of growth and economic liberalism (Loftus, 2015, p. 266), which constitutes possible the greatest challenge of the green transition.

However, this concept of citizenship is far from becoming a reality since this process requires a transition in many ways. First, citizens must put aside their differences to understand the need to work together for sustainability. Despite the threat this poses to the survival of the human species, European society is far from overcoming its differences in favour of sustainability. Secondly, it is not only a transition at the formal political level, but an ethical and internal transition of human beings who have to accept a certain “emancipation of the spirit” (O’Riordan, 2004, p. 245) and re-envision their position within a system in which their interests is no longer the main concern.

8.3 The transition's effects on the European Economic Model

the change in the economic model is presented both as an opportunity to make the transition to a green society and as a threat to citizens. The implementation of an economic model whose central axis is the green ideology can cause certain "**material insecurity**" in the public mentality (Haraway, 2015, p. 159). A paradigm change could even "trigger ecological fatalism, conservatism, and survivalism rather than force a progressive social change" (Haraway, 2015, p. 159).

At an economic level, this new model could cause a breakdown of Maslow's need hierarchy, so the capitalist economic model and its pillars of supply and demand would be modified by this new social reality (Haraway, 2015, p. 159).

Authors such as Milder and Jaraush (2015) propose that "rather than ridiculing the Greens as neoromantic, antimodernist impulse, scholars might want to think more seriously about their search for an "**alternative modernity** that would not escape from but rather redirect the dynamic forces of high technology and capitalist competition into a more humane direction" (Milder & Jarausch, 2015, p. 19). To make this transition to a sustainable economic model, a closer collaboration between all the social actors is needed, since their knowledge of green ideas is a milestone in this process (Poliakoff, Fitzpatrick, Farren, & Anastas, 2002, p. 810).

8.4 The European Green Deal as the basic framework

As has been analysed in this work, **the Green Deal, given its anthropocentric nature, does not fully adhere to the green premises**. However, this does not mean that the actions proposed by the commission through this strategy do not represent **progress in the ecological transition towards a new sustainable model**. The European Union establishes in its European Climate Pact (2020) the roadmap for this strategy.

Firstly, the Green Deal is presented to European citizens as a point of union and collective understanding to jointly face the great challenges of the ecological transition (European Union, 2019, p. 22). According to Herrero, these challenges include

1. Lack of social perception of the seriousness of the crisis.

2. People do not recognise themselves as eco-dependent beings.
3. Time is needed for change, but there is little time left to act.
4. Collective interventions are needed in the midst of a profound deterioration of community relations.
5. More sustainable behaviours are perceived as backward, ineffective or uncomfortable (Herrero, 2006)

Secondly, they make a special mention of the economy given its importance in the transition by proposing new mechanisms that are available to everyone to be able to face the great risks of the new political reality (European Commission, 2021).

Finally, through the implementation of this new model of sustainable society, the European Union intends to position itself through strategies such as the Green Deal as the "green leader" (European Union, 2019). To do this, you must focus on two aspects. Firstly, the European political sphere in which the rest of the great world powers also intend to take over this position. To do this, the Union must position itself as a mediator between the interests of great powers such as Russia and China for the benefit of humanity (Dejonghe, 2021, pp. 5-6). Secondly, the Union demonstrates in its Green Deal its intention to provide the rest of European countries and citizens with the necessary resources for this transition (European Commission, 2021) and, to this end, it is shown as the global meeting point for sustainability.

The Green Deal, despite its misunderstanding of the basic tenet of green ideology, provides European citizens with a model of "being" in the perhaps not too distant future. His proposals not only give hope for the future but are useful and practical in the present. Perhaps, the Green Deal contemplates all the progress that can be made to date following the principles of green ideology until human beings are ready to behind anthropocentrism and move towards the ecocentric ethics proposed by green theorists.

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