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Summaries

The Greens in the Federal Republic

by Ralph K. van Haren

In this article three major approaches to the rise and the electoral success of the West German Greens are critically examined. It is argued that a certain combination of these theories offers the best explanation of the green phenomenon.

Postindustrial theories are relevant, since there appears to be a strong and direct relationship between postmaterialist value priorities and green party preference. The question, however, of when and under what circumstances value change translates into the formation of a new, postmaterialist party, is left unanswered by these theories.

With respect to the deprivation theories it is necessary to distinguish between the material and the ideological deprivation thesis. The former seems to be insolid, as the Greens articulate, above all, non-material issues. The ideological deprivation thesis is much more plausible, since in particular leftist postmaterialists found themselves no longer represented in the existing party system. Founding a new party proved to be a logical reaction.

Finally, the green label of this new party has to be explained. Historically the Greens have emanated from a strong and widely respected ecology and anti-nuclear movement, whose demands were ignored by the existing parties. Contrary to the postindustrial theories the movement theories do not, however, account for the typical social background of the green electorate.

Consumption Inequality: Consumer expenditure as a basis for measurement of inequality in cross-national studies

by M. van Dam and G. Kraaykamp

Cross-national studies in inequality mostly use income-inequality as proxy-variable for wealth-inequality. This procedure has two shortcomings: the theoretical link between income and wealth is not perfect, and the international comparability of the income-data is limited. In this study, a new measurement of inequality is suggested, based on national consumer expenditure. From the pattern of spending within a country, we derive a Consumption-Inequality Index. An important advantage of the Index is that it can be computed for more than 80 countries. We show that, together with income-inequality, the Index can serve as a valid indicator for wealth-distribution.

Medewerkers aan dit nummer

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