

**Can politics really be given back to the people?  
An analysis of Green parties' organizational developments  
in the Hungarian context**

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## Abstract

*The organizational structure of Green parties reflects their attitude to political participation and aims at raising political consciousness, and contributing to a greater political knowledge of both their party membership and citizens. On the other hand, Green parties also have to adopt themselves to the national structure of political opportunities. The structural arrangements of the new Hungarian Green party LMP (Lehet Más a Politika) shows its relative integration within the political system as well as the effect of national political culture along the conception of political participation. In this thesis I will analyze the factors that affect the interplay between the two different set of expectations; the logic of constituency representation and the logic of vote maximization. In my research I found that the new challenges of parliamentary politics following the sudden electoral breakthrough, the ensuing expansion in size and the growing internal tensions has put LMP under significant pressure, pushing the party towards a fast organizational change. I will argue that even though Greens parties compromise their original goals during their political development, they keep their key characteristics that clearly distinguish them from the established traditional parties.*

# Table of Content

<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
METHODOLOGY .....	6
THEORETICAL BASIS .....	8
<b>CHAPTER 1: THE ORIGINS OF THE HUNGARIAN GREEN MOVEMENT.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: ‘ANTI-PARTY PARTY’ .....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 INTRA-PARTY DEMOCRACY .....	17
2.2 DO GREENS REALLY REPRESENT “NEW TYPE OF PARTY” OR BUSINESS AS USUAL?.....	21
2.3 HIERARCHY – LACK OF HIERARCHY DICHOTOMY .....	28
2.4 INNOVATION IN COMMUNICATION .....	33
<b>CHAPTER 3: LMP .....</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF LMP .....	37
3.2 THE LMP’S ORGANIZATION WITH THE ACTIVISTS’ EYES .....	43
3.3 LMP’S FORMAL ORGANIZATION.....	46
<b>CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>LIST OF REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>57</b>

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# Introduction

A great amount of scholarly interest has focused on party organization in competitive liberal democracies that concentrates on mobilizing electoral support. With the appearance of the Green parties, first in Western Europe in the 1970s and recently in Central and Eastern Europe we have had a chance to observe their evolution and the “Green challenge” (Richardson, Rootes 1995) to the established parties that, according to Katz and Mair suffer from problems of interest representation (1992). In the First chapter I give an account of the origins of the Hungarian Green movement that laid down the social foundations of LMP. The Second chapter deals with the characteristics of Green parties compared to the conventional ones, pointing out the differences and going into details with their innovative political methods. In the Third chapter I focus on the LMP’s, so far, short history and its rapidly changing organizational structure. Whilst such a study may seem premature, given the fact that LMP is only been founded less than two years ago and has just been elected to Parliament, it is worth examining how it started its political debut in the light of its Western “sister” parties since it might provide base for my future research on its organizational developments and possible adaptation to its political environment. The analysis of LMP is a timely one given the fact that the Hungarian party system has undergone fundamental changes in the recent general election. LMP managed to capture 7,48% of the popular vote, a surprisingly strong showing from a party founded by activist from different non-governmental organizations (NGO) in February 2009. After a successful election that has raised public awareness about the Green party and has brought it over HUF 200 million per year in state funding the question of financial limitations of party building has been solved.

Twenty years after the transition to post-communist rule, Hungarian voters radically changed the country's political landscape, sending the incumbent socialists into opposition after two terms in office and laying the ground for the centre-right to win an absolute majority in parliament. The party systems in Central and Eastern European countries are usually considered to be shaky and show only slight signs of consolidation. In the sixth post-independence general election in 2010 not only the vote shares of individual parties have swung dramatically but also the 'menu' of viable parties changed surprisingly. Theoretical models explaining political parties in traditional Western democracies should be applied to new democracies only with great caution (Sikk 2003). As in Western European countries, in post-communist Hungary we also find a growing and continuing disaffection with established parties; a declining system performance in the context of the economic recession with profound effects on the party system. Evidence of fragmentation, electoral volatility and the emergence of new political issues are common trends and are opening the way for some restructuring of the political system. Altogether, these features present a situation in which Green parties might have unparalleled opportunities. In this thesis I analyze the new patterns of party organization and strategies that Green parties apply and which somewhat differ from what conventional theory suggests in a European parliamentary democracy. I draw on Western European lessons to see how dynamics of Green parties develop and how a new vision of interest intermediation between citizens and state translates into a new type of party organization and strategy. While there are several important cultural, social and historical differences between the developments of post-communist Hungarian and Western European party systems, I believe we can still make some generalizations in terms of organizational transformation and behavior of Green parties in a competitive political environment. I will mainly build on the assessment of Herbert Kitschelt, who explains left-libertarian Green

parties' evolution between the logic of constituency representation and the logic of party competition and how these changes translates in their party structure and practices.

Recent research of the Green parties has identified characteristics that distinguish them from the traditional forms of European parties. For authors such as Poguntke, most Green parties belong to a family of 'new politics' parties (1987). These parties are distinctive to the extent that they are considered as representatives of 'new politics' parties, participatory party organizations, and an electoral base rooted in the 'new politics' layer of society. The 'new politics' is thought to consist of a shift in individual political preferences towards post-materialist values, and a change in the patterns of political participation. Representing issues such as peace, ecology, feminism, new social movements pioneered this new style of politics. At its center lay a rejection of the dominant political paradigm, centered on economic issues and a concern for enhanced individual freedom and broader political participation (Burchell, Williams 1996). From this perspective, Green parties are the party political manifestation of the 'new politics' phenomenon reflecting a new ideological and organizational features, values and demands of its support base.

In contrast to this argument, Kitschelt suggests that Green parties belong to a class of 'left-libertarian' parties (1988). In his view, 'left-libertarian' parties are based on interplay between changing individual preferences, political institutions and opportunity structures, and new social movement conflicts. The ideological dimension of Green parties is 'left', since the latter are critical of the logic of the economic profit maximization and committed to social solidarity. It is 'libertarian' because Green parties 'reject centralized bureaucracies, party elites and call for individual autonomy, political participation and the self-governance of decentralized communities' (Kitschelt 1988). In terms of organization, Green parties tend to implement fragmented, decentralized and informal power structures which broadly reflect their libertarian attitude (Kitschelt 1993). Similar to Poguntke, Kitschelt draws attention to

the distinctive socio-economic features of Green party electorates: they tend to be young, well-educated, new middle class, leftist and post-materialist in their political conviction and sympathetic to the new social movements (Kitschelt 1988). Despite their different terminologies and explanations of Green party development, both approaches give a high importance to the role of ideological and organizational issues concerning their character. O'Neill's study also makes this point; referring to Green parties, he states that:

Two issues have become decisive in determining their precise character. One is organizational - the extent to which Green parties should conform to the organizational conventions and procedures of the established political order. The other is ideological; whether they should adopt a purist strategy and reject alliances with the old left, or seek to build red-green coalitions (O'Neill 1995).

How or why do Green parties' organizational and ideological characteristics change over time? Kitschelt suggested that 'left-libertarian' parties generally face a choice between pursuing 'logic of constituency representation', based upon the representation of core party activists, and a 'logic of vote maximization, which emphasizes electoral success and effectiveness in the pursuit of policy gains (1989). He argues their choice depends on the political circumstances within which they find themselves; the more pragmatism is rewarded within a political system, the more this will be reflected in the organizational and structural aspects of 'left-libertarian' parties (Kitschelt 1989).

The sudden electoral success of LMP in April 2010, when it gained 16 seats in the Hungarian Parliament can be considered not much as a growing public concern for Green issues but rather as a critique of the existing established parties. The recent Hungarian general elections saw two parties of the transition fall out of the Parliament; Alliance of Free Democrats and Hungarian Democratic Forum and the entering of two brand new political actors; LMP and *Jobbik (Movement for a Better Hungary)*. These developments fundamentally redrew the political map of the Hungarian party system. The deep political



apathy and disillusionment with the established parties might have the potential to restructure the societal cleavages in the medium term. If new cleavages are translated into new Green party organizations, that may remain politically significant, even if the settings that made possible their rise no longer exists, because parties with a certain organizational consolidation become independent actors of mobilization. (Muller-Rommel 1989). In terms of political opportunity structure, one might argue that neither institutional conditions in Hungary did not facilitate the success of small parties (high electoral threshold, ambiguous party financing and the obligation to collect ‘recommendation slips’), nor high level of public post-materialist or environmental consciousness. LMP appears to have overcome these difficulties and entered the political arena by benefiting from the vacant political space on both the left and the liberal spectrum. Besides, the general disillusionment with the established parties in general, could also have the potential to mobilize some of those voters who usually do not vote at all as a sign of protest.

Are European Green parties possibly converging towards some general type of party, such as the electoral-professional party, leaving their extensive intra-party democracy behind as ‘Michel’s iron law’ of oligarchy suggests? Does the case of the Western European Greens and the emerging Hungarian LMP demonstrate that the grass-roots democratic paradigm cannot survive the development and institutionalization process of political parties? This thesis will not be able to provide a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer to the question, due to the nation-specific contextual or cultural elements. I will examine parties at different stages of institutionalization; while in the West Green parties have been developing since the 1970s and have even participated in government coalitions, in Hungary LMP is not only the first such party being elected to Parliament with twenty years after the Transition but is among the very first new parties at all. One might argue that the greatest challenge in front of LMP is to

create a party structure that satisfies both the demands of political efficiency and inner party democracy.

## ***Methodology***

This thesis relies on both the formal structure of LMP, as laid down in the party constitution and the informal working of the organization based on the participants' accounts. According to Katz and Mair, parties are the primary representatives and legitimizing links between citizens and the state (Katz, Mair 1992), providing the principal means through which voters can hold their governments accountable for policy and performance in office. For some time now, the literature on the politics of the western democracies has been dominated by claims about the decline of political parties (Katz, Mair 1992), while, for different reasons, public trust in political parties has been low in post-Communist Hungary as well ([www.median.hu](http://www.median.hu)). Katz and Mair argue that, at best, parties are being challenged or are under threat, and at worst, parties have failed (1992). Either way, one might suggest that parties have lost their traditional representative ability and are cutting themselves off from societies. If parties are indeed in crisis, due to social changes and/or technological development, these changes should be evident at the organizational level and visible in terms of adaptive behavior (Katz, Mair 1992).

Party organizations can be seen from many perspectives; depending on different conceptions of democracy. These diverse aspects can be considered as three faces that co-exist within a single organization and reflect the differentiations of function, of motivation among members, and of power base of, and constraints of leaders. These are; the party as voluntary membership organizations; the party as governing organization and the party as bureaucratic organization (Katz, Mair 1992). In this thesis I will look at Green parties from

the first point of view; as membership organizations, where, above all, party members legitimize the power of the party's leadership. Such parties have member representative institutions, such as congresses with established rules to fix the number of and types of functionaries, their competence and their tenure in office (Katz, Mair 1992). These parties also have a network of subunits, regional branches from which representatives can be selected and delegated. The party congresses are the main policy-making bodies of membership organizations that are also characterized by the dominance of officials in the party over party members in the parliamentary faction. From the perspective of the members, the primary incentives for participation are primarily solidaristic and commitment-related, rather than material (Katz, Mair 1992).

The most important source of my thesis is the empirical material of in-depth open interviews, lasting from one to two hours that I conducted with LMP party founders, office-holders and activists. These include members and non-members, people from both Budapest and from the countryside. The interviewees were chosen to reflect the variety of party members' experiences, views, and positions in the party organization to help the analysis of organizational structures and processes. In addition to direct contacts, the emergence of the Internet as a central resource cannot be overestimated. LMP, similarly to other Green parties, maintain detailed party website that presents the party history and outline party ideological beliefs, as well as party policy. The development of numerous LMP discussion forums provided access to debates within the party and the within the wider base of supporters. In order to collect information, besides using the party website, I analyzed on-line press materials, LMP's newsletters to party members, newspaper articles and archived records of party meetings. Finally, participation of the party executive meetings helped me to check and expand my knowledge of the party's procedures. The rest of the material has been collected from more traditional secondary sources.

## ***Theoretical basis***

In order to provide the following chapters with a common conceptual framework, in this chapter I will first elaborate how Green parties might differ from other types of parties as defined in the literature. Secondly, I will list the effects that might cause the parties to alter. The analysis of political parties is one of the most important subfields of comparative political science being Ostrogorski (1903, 1964) and Michels (1911, 1962) among its most significant contributors. The main reasons for this lasting interest in political parties is that they have been widely regarded as playing a crucial role in both the theory and the practice of modern liberal democracy. Parties constitute a vital link between the sovereign people and the politicians to whom the exercise of the affairs of the state is temporarily entrusted. (Luther 2002)

In most European countries, political parties first emerged during the latter half of the nineteenth or the first decades of the twentieth century. As Duverger (1964) noted, they tended to be either ‘internally created’, i.e. they were the creation of existing elite groups trying to preserve their hold on political power in the wake of suffrage extension, or parties were ‘externally created’, originating from social movements by underrepresented groups seeking access to political power (Luther 2002). The organizational forms they adopted were those of the ‘cadre’ and ‘mass’ parties respectively. Despite its democratic deficits, e.g. Michels’ ‘iron law of oligarchy’ that claimed the unavoidability of the formation and consolidation of a group of leaders in parties, it appeared to many observers that the competitive advantages of the latter type would result in its organizational form being emulated by other party-political entrepreneurs. Thus Western Europe was thought to experience a ‘contagion from the left’ (Luther 2002). While cadre parties were generally loosely organized and had low memberships, they were not ideologically programmatic, as Table 1.2 shows, mostly conservative and right of centre in terms of their place in the

political spectrum (Bradbury 2003). On the other hand, mass parties developed a more formal organization, full-time functionaries, a mass membership, and a systematic political programme. These parties also tended to be social democratic and much more directed by internal party democracy.

Nonetheless, the crises of the inter-war period saw not only the first ‘failure’ of social-democratic parties, but also the appearance of greatly ideological parties of the extreme left and the extreme right. Almond and Verba (1963 and 1980), Lipset and Rokkan (1967) emphasized political parties as agents of social representation stressing the societal origins and “embeddedness” of Western European parties. As the social “rootedness” and ideological intensity of ‘democratic’ mass parties faded away, they implemented more inclusive strategies for voter mobilization. Whilst Kirchheimer (1966) emphasized the modernization of the mass parties towards the so-called “catch-all” parties, Epstein (1967) was making important contribution in respect of the development of bourgeois cadre parties. Otto Kirchheimer's “catch-all” model of party organization proposes that whilst historical roots have continued to give a distinctive ‘look’ to parties, the logic of party competition has increasingly made them conform to common characteristics. These have included: de-emphasizing the original social base in order to be able to appeal to a larger electorate; de-emphasizing particular principles so as to be able to respond to electoral views on short-term issues. These “common” features of an ideal party-type also point towards the strengthening central party leadership and hierarchic control to provide a clear electoral message; sacrificing intra-party democracy so as to be able to present a positive reflection of a united party; searching for links with certain social groups to enhance party funding opportunities; and a shift from membership campaigning to leadership campaigning through the media (Bradbury 2003). In 1988, Panebianco argued that the development of the ‘electoral-

professional party' was featured by a further liberation of the party leadership from its grass-roots (see Table 1.2) and a professionalization of the party apparatus (Luther 2002).

As the traditional model of the party systems in West European politics has been decreasing since the early 1980's (Maier 1990). The ability of the two main branches of parties to engage large parts of the electorate has been continuously eroding in almost every country. The rise of Green parties in the West can be accounted for the claim that they represent a "new politics", referring to the process of a rise of post-materialist values, a new middle class and new social movements that has modified the political agenda, leading to the rearrangement of established party system (Carter 2001).

While new left-wing parties sometimes assume a comparatively more hierarchical party structure than Green parties, they are both designed to realize a new style of political participation and give the grass-root level a maximum inclusion in decision-making. (Bolleyer 2007). When Green parties emerged in Western Europe in the early 1980s, many of them made strong commitments to intra-party democracy, something they saw as central to their broader pledge to do politics differently (Dalton 1996). Ideology often plays some role in shaping parties' organizational decisions. This can be seen most clearly in parties whose organizational *forms* are closely linked to their ideological identities. "Both the capitalist and state-socialist form of concentration of economic power surrenders to destructive forms of economic growth, which contaminate and destroy the very basis of human and natural life (Europeangreens.eu)." They suggested that only by self-determination at the grass-roots, the ecological, social and economic crises can be appropriately dealt with. "They favored self-determination, the free development of every human being, they supported the idea that people should be able to creatively determine their own needs and wishes free from outside pressure" (Maier 1990). In terms of organizational style, they advocated grass roots democracy that encouraged active and decentralized direct democracy. Their fundamental

belief is that decisions should be taken at the grass-roots because the local level is smaller and more easily accountable to the people and therefore must be given maximum autonomy (Maier 1990). While in Hungary few political observers would argue that the same factors have led to the rise of LMP, the collective political power of NGOs and their, so far, unseen unequivocal support for a single party has been unprecedented. The *Forsense Institute* research shows that LMP has the highest percentage of voters and supporters under 25 (Forsense 2010) out of all other parties that might refer to a slight modification of political preferences or a starting political engagement among Hungarian young people.

While many major parties may tend to evolve from elite or mass parties into people's parties, small parties can deviate more often from dominant trends that explain in some cases why they have remained a minor party (Frankland 2008). Some may be elite or mass parties, which failed to accommodate themselves to a changing environment, or people's parties appealing to the wrong social groups. However, some parties may be difficult to classify in this typology and constitute new type of parties that Poguntke (1987, 1993) and Kitschelt (1989) call 'alternative' or 'new politics' parties. Kitschelt's concept of "left-libertarian" parties accepts central elements of socialism, notably an egalitarian distribution of resources and a mistrust of the market (Carter 2001). However, unlike the traditional left, rejects the authoritarian and technocratic statist solution in favor of libertarian institutions that increase autonomy and participatory democracy. Kitschelt identified two groups of left-libertarian party: first, a small group of socialist parties that emerged in the late 1950s, early 1960s in several countries: second, the Green parties. Poguntke regards grass-roots democracy or "basis democracy" as the central notion of the new type of party. The "new politics" concept refers to the realignment of the established party systems from the 1970s in Western Europe with the rise of post-materialist values and a new social movements led by a new middle class. Carter argued that these events had changed the political agenda (2001).

Poguntke argued that characteristic of Green parties are the following elements: collective and amateur rather than professional leadership, rotation of the leadership in office, open access to meetings, pre-eminence of the lowest unit and even gender parity for all party offices (1993). According to Poguntke's empirical analysis, even in the German Green party that has undergone some centralization process since its pure "basis democratic" foundation; do seem substantially more participatory than other German parties (1993).

Frankland call the Greens *amateur-activist* parties that are founded by activists from new social movements rather than party politicians (2008), while Gunther and Diamond label them 'movement parties', which can be either 'left-libertarian' or 'post-industrial extreme right' (2003). It may not the simple rank-and-file members who have the most influence but the party activists who hold some function at the local level or regional level. 'Left libertarians' are characterized by a 'negative consensus' on ideological questions, a diverse clientele, open membership, a weak centralized organization and loose network of grass-roots support (Gunther and Diamond 2003). Although the amateur-activist movement party has become an independent organization, it seems to keep at least informal ties with the social movements. The activists attempt to create a party organization that leaves them a maximum of power, even at the expense of electoral success, and direct impact on the policy-making process (Frankland 2008). For that reason, decisions are taken at the lowest possible level; the local or regional branches that are firmly in the activists' hands and are open to all of them. In many Green parties, the activists try to control both the party executive and the parliamentary fraction, through direct tools such as rotation and recall, while in other cases such as in LMP, the collective leadership provides extensive forums to voice opinion and influence decision-making. For the same reason they prefer collective leadership and oppose professionalization that serve the interest of activists. Clearly, mass parties cannot offer their tens of thousands of members as much power as amateur-activist parties to their thousands of members or even



less than a thousand in LMP. What Green parties lack in membership contributions, they can make up in state subsidies if they can attract sufficient votes. (Frankland 2008)

It is widely agreed that “alternative” and “new politics” parties, ‘amateur-activist’ or ‘new parties on the left’ (‘left-libertarians’) and Green (ecology) parties belong to the same party family. I will use the above party categories interchangeably since in this thesis, I will concentrate on organizational development of the “new politics” parties in terms of political participation and intra-party democracy, rather than on the ecological aspect.

## Chapter 1: The origins of the Hungarian Green movement

The roots of the Hungarian Green movement go back to the beginning of the 1980s, the first attempt to found an NGO was in 1984, when the Danube Circle (Duna Kör - DC) tried to disseminate secret information on a project for damming the Danube in Czechoslovakia and in Hungary. (Gabcikovo-Nagymaros) Ramet (1991) argued that the DC was created in the early 1980s by young scientists and intellectuals opposed to the dam project and included few environmentalists. DC members published articles in the relatively open Hungarian media and in samizdat journals (e.g. Watermark) describing the ecological disaster that the dam would cause if completed. From 1984-1986, DC members actively worked to expose the environmental devastation of the dam, but failed to have a significant effect due to government harassment of DC participants and public apathy (Rupnik 1991). DC organized several protests since 1986, received significant prizes, such as the Right Livelihood Award (the Alternative Nobel Prize) and was important political actor during the change of regime. The key figures of the DC decided to support civil society, and to help parties which had a chance to take over the soft dictatorship.

As a motive behind founding LMP, András Schiffer emphasized a return to morality in politics and promoting civil engagement with public affairs. He also asserted the LMP's continuity with the 1990s alternative political movements in Hungary ([www.index.hu](http://www.index.hu)). Despite the underlying leftist roots, Hungarian Greens were aiming to create a new political identity for themselves and categorically reject either the “left” or the “liberal” label (Halász 2008).

In terms of party structure, the experiences gained in movement-activism had an important consequence on the Green parties' structure when these alternative parties were founded. The members of those movements that formed the core of LMP long cooperated in several environmental or political issues, starting with the protest against the dam in the late 1980s to the Zengő-conflict or in the Sólyom-campaign in 2005. Arguably the most visible environmental conflict in Hungary in recent years was the so-called Zengő-conflict during 2004-2005, when Hungarian NGOs, among which being the *Védegylet* ("Protect the Future") ecologist NGO the most prominent, challenged a joint decision of the government and NATO to install a NATO aircraft radar locator system in an environmental protection area on the Zengő Mountain in Southern Hungary. The loose alliance of NGOs that later consolidated and became LMP, were able to put the issue on top the national public agenda and involve party politics by framing the issue efficiently, mobilize supporters, build coalitions. The activists successfully shifted the scale of the conflict from the local to the national and then the European/international level, creating and using political opportunities to change a major security decision and stop its implementation. (Sükösd 2005)

The other important achievement of those activists who worked for the *Védegylet* ecologist NGO was the campaign to put forward László Sólyom for President of the Hungarian republic in 2005, when a new presidential candidate was sought. According to the Hungarian Constitution, the President is elected indirectly, by the majority of the MPs. This campaign also required essential skills of lobbying, convincing Members of Parliament and coordinating efforts to mobilize support. *Védegylet* announced that on their initiative 110 public personalities were writing to MPs, asking that László Sólyom be elected as the next president of the Hungarian Republic ([www.vedegylet.hu](http://www.vedegylet.hu)). One might argue that the above two high profile campaigns also provided opportunity for the participant NGOs to accumulate expertise in how to use new and related to that, the old communications technology in order

to reach their goals. The skillful use of new media has been an important component in mobilizing enough voter support to send LMP to the Parliament. Sükösd argues that the diverse types of uses of online interactive communication in coalition building, mobilization, framing, and informing members and the mass media, might have contributed to the success of the movement in the Zengő conflict (2005). In the Zengő-conflict, *Védegylet*'s important role was to provide other local NGOs the know-how and legal help to make their case a high-profile national issue. One of the founders of LMP, a member of Greenpeace Hungary, Vay Marton told me that the attachment of LMP to those NGOs that supported its campaign has important implications for its politics; LMP will need to keep their support in future election campaigns and their knowledge of the local problems while the party is in parliament. It follows that LMP cannot afford a political behavior that would alienate these NGOs.

LMP's activist support has another important implication. LMP placed itself on the Hungarian political map, when it became a successful candidate party for the 2009 European parliamentary elections and achieved a significant result. According to the Hungarian electoral system, any party wishes to run, need to collect a certain number of "recommendation slip" from the voters that, in practice, affirms public approval for a party. This task is a major logistic challenge, especially for a small party and requires significant organizational skills and ability to mobilize a large number of activists, willing to knock door-to-door for the recommendation slips. LMP not only qualified for the election but it received 2,6 % of the votes on the election day. Even though it was a little more than half of the necessary 5% threshold, it has had a huge motivating effect for LMP's activists that kept them working for the next challenge; the general election of 2010.

## Chapter 2: ‘Anti-party party’

### *2.1 Intra-party democracy*

This chapter discusses the advantages and risks of intra-party democracy, examining some of the questions parties may confront in establishing more inclusive decision-making procedures. I will also provide arguments that justify the feasibility of power devolution from the top to the bottom of the parties.

If ecological matters have been one of Green parties’ characteristics, their commitment to new political methods, such as increased participation in decision-making has been equally important in the formation and development of their political organizations (Poguntke 1987; Kitschelt 1989). They have been committed to alternative politics as much as to a sustainable society and social justice. Greens have also been critical of traditional parties which, as they perceive, do not fulfill the demands of citizens and only offer restricted occasions of participation in the formation of policies (Faucher 1999).

“Intra-party democracy” is an extensive term describing a wide range of techniques for including party members in intra-party deliberation and decision making. Some advocates for intra-party democracy suggest that those parties that use internally democratic procedures, such as Green parties, are likely to select more able and appealing leaders, to have more responsive policies, and, as a result, to enjoy greater electoral success. Some, moreover, converge on the premise that parties that “practice what they preach,” (May 1973) in the sense of using internally democratic procedures for their deliberation and decisions, strengthen democratic culture in general.

However, realistic observers recognize that intra-party democracy is not a magic solution: some procedures work better in certain circumstances than others, moreover, some procedures seem to evolve distinct costs, and there are also stable democracies with parties that lack guarantees of internal party democracy (Faucher 1999).

Green parties stress that they consider the participatory aspects of democracy as an end in itself and they see parties not primarily as intermediaries, but rather as incubators that foster citizens' political competence (Scarrow 2005). To carry out this role, such parties' decision-making structures and processes should provide opportunities for both party members and individual citizens to influence the choices that parties offer to voters. These opportunities are aiming at helping citizens increase their civic skills, and inclusive processes can boost the legitimacy of the alternatives they produce (Scarrow 2005). In the same time, party rules and procedures also aim at transferring power to a broader sector of society so that decisions are made by a much larger group of people than in ordinary, centralized party structure.

Green parties would argue that their favored techniques of intra-party democracy meet the "outcomes test", which provides more opportunity to participate toward their supporters also offer the voters better choices. This might be so because, following they reasoning; they are more likely to be open to new ideas and new personnel, and less likely to concentrate on retaining or enhancing the power of a handful of party leaders (Katz 2001). However, extreme forms of democratization, such as that in the early years of *Die Grunen*, could weaken the power of a party's leadership and policy coherence too much. This, in turn might make it difficult for a party to keep its electoral promises and keep the unity of the party (Scarrow 2005). Experimental and innovative decision-making processes can have direct or indirect dynamics that might effect on political outcomes in unexpected ways.

Especially so, as I will demonstrate it in details in the chapter about LMP party activists opinions about their party's organization, when the lack of party hierarchy, created to prevent power centralization, ironically lead to informal decision-making, informal power centers and a consequent lack of transparency and accountability of informal leaders.

It is also important to look at other dangers of too extensive intra-party democracy. Formally founded as a political party in 1980, the Green Party in Germany emerged out of social-protest movements of the 1970s. From the beginning, *Die Grunen* was committed to developing a new organizational style, one that left as much power as possible with the membership, and in which the party's officeholders were subordinate to the party, and not the other way around. (Scarrow 2005) One early sign of these principles was the widespread use of party meetings to make party policies on various matters. Such meetings, generally held on a local or regional level, were often open to all party supporters, not just for the paid party members. Given that only a small proportion of party members would attend these meetings, it was not unusual to have a small group of committed individuals push through decisions that were unrepresentative of the wider party. After several years of experience with this method, state Green parties mostly changed their rules to place less power on all-member meetings, and more on delegate conventions. They also began to keep out non-members from decision making (Poguntke 1993).

At least since Michels created his 'iron law of oligarchy', students of political parties have considered the transfer of power from party leaders to party membership as an irrational policy for parties to pursue (Scarrow 1996). However, in 1993 the British Labour Party and the German SPD and CDU changed their national statutes in order to give individual members the right to participate directly in the voting to select party leaders. By this measure, these parties transferred important decision-making competence from delegate assemblies to individual party members. As support for the large German parties dropped in the beginning

of the 1990s even before the unification, CDU and SPD also attempted to tackle the phenomena (Scarrow 1996) in a similar way than their British counterparts. CDU had a report made by a group of social scientists and party-officials to understand the problem. This report suggested that new organizational ideas were needed to communicate better with undecided voters, the main argument being that the number of politically unengaged citizens seemed to be growing in the 1990s, and they were beyond the reach of centrally directed media campaigns by which they could be politically convinced. The report pointed out that in the mass media era, people join parties for participating in discussions, for exerting political influence and for assuming party or public office, while previously they joined a party for getting information about politics. (Scarrow 1996) The CDU report argues:

While television makes people passive and frustrated, party work makes them active and creates hope. That is our chance as a peoples' party to win new members. (*Scarrow 1996*)

Scarrow linked specific organizational changes, chiefly the broadening of member participation in decision-making, with party leaders' changing views of party structures as an instrument for improving a party's electoral chances. She argued that the recommended reforms are intentional responses to what the party elite considered to be the dominant preferences of a larger party electorate (Scarrow 1996). The reforms, similar to those organizational features that constitute Green parties' organizational identity, served to improve the parties' electoral appeal: hoping that they would directly enhance party legitimacy by strengthening the appearance of popular control. On the other hand, the structure changes could attract members who would indirectly help by making new contacts in the society. In short, party leaders supported reforms that decentralized top-down powers because they calculated that their own immediate electoral prospect would be increased by party commitment to participatory democracy at a time of what was perceived to be strong public rejection of established party practices (Scarrow 1996). In the British and German



cases observed by Scarrow, she found a changing perceptions about membership utility, and transforming of opinions about the priorities of potential members (1996). She argued that these findings played decisive roles in determining the direction of organizational reforms.

## **2.2 Do Greens really represent “new type of party” or business as usual?**

This chapter focuses on parties’ organizational characteristics which tend to depend on the given party’s location on the right - left side of the political spectrum (whether on the old left-right continuum or on a “new politics” dimension): New parties on the left tends to resist power-centralization and bureaucratization that impose constraints on grass-root participation and citizen access and usually try to set up bottom-up structures with intense possibilities for member participation (Burchell 2002; Heinisch 2003; Kitschelt 2000).

Green parties emphasize the role of agency; the means of achieving the sustainable, fairer and healthier society (Carter 2001). The German Green party *Die Grunen* is often considered the paradigm Green party because its programme, organization and electoral success have provided a dominant model for Green parties elsewhere. The founders of *Die Grunen* aimed at creating a unique kind of party, which its leading activist, Petra Kelly called the ‘anti-party party’ (Carter 2001). This concept had two main elements: a party organization based on grass-roots democratic principles, and a refusal of coalitions with established parties. The principle of grass-roots democracy or “basis democracy” constitutes the organizational structure of *Die Grunen* that is in sharp contrast to most major political parties (Frankland and Schoonmaker 1992). Established parties are usually hierarchical, centralized, bureaucratic and professional: generally they are led by a small, dominant parliamentary elite, a powerful professionalized national party machine, a strict rule-bound

organizational structure, while their party membership is weak and inactive (Carter 2001). These parties seem to prove the “iron law of oligarchy” observed by Robert Michels (1959), which stated that every political party, even those with strong democratic principles, would sooner or later fall under the oligarchic control of a small ruling elite. According to Michels three main factors contribute to these oligarchic trends:

- “Direct democracy is difficult to manage once an organization grows beyond a certain membership size and task differentiation, so it follows that hierarchy is more efficient.
- Individual party members lack the skills, resources or motivation to participate effectively in complex organizations, so the management is left to the professionals.
- Party leadership develops their own interests, particularly a love of power and enjoyment of regular contacts with the ruling elite. As a consequence the oligarchic elite run the party in its own interest and not those of the activists (Michels 1959).”

The organizational structure of *Die Grunen* was created to avoid these oligarchic tendencies by preventing the appearance of separate ruling elite of professional politicians who might resist the radical demands of the membership (Poguntke 1993). Party office holders were elected and unpaid; there was an enforced job rotation, even in the parliamentary fraction and a prohibition of being re-elected immediately to the same position. Just like in LMP, there was no single party leader; instead a collective leadership with three spokespersons to share power and responsibility with the Federal Party Executive. Also rules prevented the professional MPs to accumulate power over the party by a mid-term rotation system and the ‘imperative mandate’ bound Green deputies to the decisions of the party congress. MPs had to live on an income corresponding to that of a skilled worker, donating the rest of their wage to environmental causes. By controlling the temptations and trappings of office, the Greens hoped to prevent the personalization of politics (Carter 2001). The grass-roots membership was given extensive rights to enable it to follow the activities of the leadership: all party meetings were open to both members and non-members and a gender equality policy was pursued both in the bodies of the party and on the candidate lists (Carter 2001). The second element of the ‘anti-party’ party model, the rejection of coalitions aimed at preventing the

‘internalization’ of the party establishment. Coalitions could have compromised its radical principles, whereas activists wanted the party to be the parliamentary arm of the new social movement (Carter 2001). As Kelly noted: “I am afraid that the Greens will suddenly get 13% in an election and turn into a power-hungry party. It would be better for us to stay at 6 or 7 % and remain uncompromising in our basic demands (Markovits and Gorski 1993).” As we see, *Die Grunen* started its political career as an alternative kind of party that would defy ‘elitization’. It was also a hope that this unique approach to politics might encourage a more participatory political culture beyond the Greens and permeate into the society.

What happened, however, when ‘idealistic’ principles were exposed to the practice of competitive party politics? The organizational development of every party is formed by competition from other parties (Duverger 1954). Upon entering the parliamentary arena, a Green party will face the “logic of electoral competition” that is to change its ‘anti-party’ structure into a hierarchical, professional one, in order to maximize its votes. Another important factor, however, shaping the behavior of a party is the strength of ideological conviction of its members. This latter element creates the “logic of constituency representation” in a party that opposes the “logic of vote maximization” and might provide a counter-balance (Panebianco 1988). Timea Szabo, one of the current MPs of LMP told me about the political principles and convictions of LMP that by entering the Parliament, LMP has pledged to represent. She said, LMP would ensure the assertion of NGO interests in the national forum of the Parliament, by taking advantage of the Green party’s ability to propose new bills. She is aware of LMP’s minuscule political power to realize its goals; however, they also hope that it would be boosted by the public opinion via the national media. She asserted that the continuous control of the political power is an essential goal of LMP, both inside of the party and beyond.

Pursuing radical political strategies may keep core Green voter support; however, it is less likely to appeal a broader electorate (Carter 2001). On the other hand, a more moderate and compromising approach may win more votes but it could also antagonize the party activists. This strategic tension created a chronic internal conflict between the Fundamentalists (*Fundis*) and Realists (*Realos*) that has weakened *Die Grunen* until today (Carter 2001). The two different perspectives have the same long-term goal; to achieve an ecologically sustainable society, but disagree over how to get there.

As during the 1980s movement politics declined in Germany, the Greens had to come to terms with staying a small party of about 10%. From the mid-1980s, Realists such as Joschka Fischer argued the 'anti-party' politics had to come to an end and the Greens need to centralize the party and make it similar to a conventional party. In order to formulate a more efficient parliamentary strategy, nonetheless, some participatory principles must have been sacrificed and coalitions built with other parties (Carter 2001). The debate was decided by the shock of the 1990 electoral defeat that was seen as a justification for the *Realos*, who afterwards reached the merger with *Bundnis '90* East German party and consolidated their positions at the expense of the *Fundis*. The *Realists* abolished the practice of rotation in office, and it was suggested that politicians needed time to develop a strong personal presence and become professionals. The principle of amateur politics proved to be unfeasible as well: how could 27 unpaid, part-time federal executive members hold almost 200 salaried, full-time parliamentary staff to account (Poguntke 1993)? Other new reforms were introduced as well; the post of federal executive membership became a paid job and a new Party Council was formed to improve co-ordination between MPs and the wider party (Carter 2001).

Carter argues that despite the above reforms, *Die Grunen* are still different from other parties, they do seem substantially more participatory than other German parties, not least by

the gender parity rules that encourage women to participate at all party levels. Also, the fact that Greens reject to be led by a single leader, the prohibition of holding posts both in the fraction and in other party body, the openness of sessions or the left-libertarian values of Green membership create a unique political identity (Poguntke 1993). In addition to it, *Die Grunen* still retains a distinctive anti-elite culture. In the continuous fight of the “logic of electoral competition” and the “logic of constituency representation”, the former one seems to be stronger after the victory of Realists and the Greens entering into government coalition. Still, Carter suggests that the continuing structural distinctiveness of Greens and the lack of single oligarchic elite in their party show that the logic of representation is still influential.

Carter also argues that the intra-party democracy created by the ‘anti-party party’ system might actually produces the opposite effect than originally intended. The grass-roots democratic party system was built on the assumption that members would be highly motivated and willing to participate in the political process. However, collective decision-making is a very time consuming process with few people ready to spend ‘endless’ hours on party meetings (Goodin 1992). My own experience supports this claim; in LMP weekly National Executive Board’s (NEB) weekly sessions that start at 17:00, often last until 22:00 or later, with several non-NEB members adding their comments that results in tiring and long debates. Particularly individuals who belong to the busy professional middle class leave the party quite fast as a result. Also, the unpaid or lowly paid nature of party positions does not create strong material incentives to take on party work. On the other hand, the continuous supervision of office-holders by rank-and file membership might further reduce willingness to participate actively (Carter 2001). Thus, a party based on participatory principles might contain a paradox: rules made to institutionalize democratic values in the party structure might have the unintended consequence of hampering internal democracy. It denies power to one sort of elite by creating the conditions for the appearance of a new kind of elite: those

having the necessary time, resources and patience to play an active role in the party (Carter 2001). This argument also coincides with my own observation in the Hungarian Green party, where I saw the same small group of non-NEB members visiting the executive meetings every week, trying to get the most possible political information and exert some influence on the collective decision-makers. It appears that only a tiny fraction of the 600 LMP members is willing to make the sacrifice and practice their right of participating.

While it is a simplification to consider new parties on the left as a homogeneous group, it is widely agreed that new parties on the left and ecology parties belong to the same party family. While new left-wing parties sometimes adopt a comparatively more hierarchical party structure than ecology parties, they are both designed to realize a new style of political participation and give the grass-root level a maximum say (Muller-Rommel 1990).

As I have mentioned in the Introduction, political party is the forum in which the political interest of social groups it represents is articulated. It is the mechanism that makes it possible to hold government accountable to the people and create a bridge between the clearly separated state and civil society. Therefore it is argued that since established parties ruled by a cartel lose their capacity to represent citizens' demands efficiently, new parties such as the Greens offer a new opportunity for the articulation of protest and of those issues neglected by the party establishment (Katz and Mair 1995; Mair 1997). It would consequently be a paradox if new parties opposed the elitist characteristic of the established parties but nonetheless adopted cartel party features when it comes to organization-building. While the political innovation of Green parties' programmatic profile has been widely debated, it remains ambiguous, whether their proclaimed organizational 'newness' is reality rather than rhetoric, particularly when focusing on those new parties which are repeatedly exposed to the requirement of democratic competition and public office.

Skeptics could say that new parties might not have developed closer structural similarity to the established party organizations and maintained a low level of institutionalization simply because of the shortness of their history. In the West, Green parties have been developing only since the 1970s, while in Hungary; LMP was founded as late as 2009. One might argue that ‘organizational immaturity’ is an existing feature in LMP, however, it does not necessarily follow that developments will point towards more resemblance with the established parties’ structure. As Biezen argued, old party models such as “catch-all” or cartel, are characterized by a ‘transformative bias’ (2005). Developed for established parties, they reflect in part those needs created by current environmental conditions, in part they reflect those needs created by already existing organizational structures. Today’s established parties, the successor party types might be adapted to new circumstances but can be identified as organizational heritage rather than functional responses to environmental challenges. Newly formed parties, such as the Greens, in contrast, are not ‘biased’ by the same restrictions imposed by organizational legacies. If parties reflect periods characterized by a particular pattern of socio-political factors, new parties cannot only be expected to jump over prior stages of party development (Biezen 2005). They also reply demands of modern governance and societal challenges more immediately than old parties that are product of a long term development and can only gradually adapt to but are not created by current societal constraints and opportunities. Moreover, it is a common claim that due to their different ideological orientations, they tend to choose different organization-building strategies (Bolleyer 2007). Bolleyer grouped new parties to two basic groups those on the left and those on the right to demonstrate their distinctness from the established parties, of which groups I will only focus on the new parties on the left, where Green parties belong. Poguntke 1993, 2002, Burchell 2002; Kitschelt 1988 defined particular types of new parties capturing their core characteristics in Western democracies. Bolleyer pointed out that new parties on the left,

despite their anti-organizational rhetoric, are also dependent on organizational rules and procedures, since it is necessary to guarantee individual information and decision-making rights and to avoid the domination by a leader or a small elite over the party (2007).

While emphasizing ‘citizen participation’ neglected by the traditional parties as their principal political mission, their membership mainly includes a narrow group, highly educated, young and urban parts of the population (Burchell 2002). Therefore, internal cohesion in terms of preferences is assured by these parties’ narrow profile; however the capacity to generate organizational loyalty remains limited. The social costs of exit and members’ willingness to prioritize individual preferences are low (Bolleyer 2007). As Kitschelt points out, membership turnover in new parties on the left is exceptionally high (1990). The extensive privileges related to membership, such as the access to information, are mainly attractive for a particular group of people with substantial intellectual capital and social skills. As a consequence, both Green activists and office-holders often proved to be individualists among whom coordination proves often difficult (Richardson and Rootes 1995). Individualist and self-interested orientations are all the more problematic since these parties give considerable decision-making power to ordinary party members.

### ***2.3 Hierarchy – lack of hierarchy dichotomy***

Istvan Hegedus, an ex-leadership member of the FIDESZ told me about his personal experiences of the “childhood diseases” of the currently incumbent centre-right party and pointed out to the early dynamics of organizational development that might have implications for LMP. FIDESZ was founded by group of young people in 1988 from a civil movement ([www.hetek.hu](http://www.hetek.hu)), determined to show a new political alternative to the citizens. However,



right after the Transition; in the early 1990s it underwent decisive internal changes. According to Hegedus, the then liberal party was, in practice, a “basis democratic” organization, similar to today’s LMP. It did not have a formal leadership in the party, only spokespersons. However, FIDESZ had another analogous feature to LMP as well; the fundamentalist – realist conflict, a typical cleavage line in Green parties, which led to decisive reforms in the structure of the FIDESZ in the early 1990s. Hegedus said that FIDESZ’s “basis democratic” wing was seen as radicals and fundamentalists who did not recognize representative democracy inside the party at all and, insisted to a continuous monitoring of the leadership. Hegedus added that their uncompromising attitude made professional party work impossible. At the end of the factional clash over decision-making process and party structure, the “basis democratic” wing was defeated, providing pretext for the winning faction not only for the establishment of a representative intra-party decision-making system, as opposed to direct rank-and-file participation, but the elimination of the party opposition altogether. It made any membership participation in the decisions impossible from then on, and did not allow meaningful control of the centralized leadership anymore. After that, a new party elite emerged in FIDESZ, with unconditional loyalty to Viktor Orban the party chair, gradually excluding some of the founding members, and parallel with this change, a new political culture was established in the party, where feed-back by the rank-and-file was drastically reduced (*www.hetek.hu*).

Hegedus emphasized that trade-off is necessary between representative and participative intra-party democracy and with it; a feasible balance in party hierarchy. As opposed to radical “basis democratic” claims, parliamentary politics requires autonomy of the parliamentary faction from the membership’s control, because they need to react immediately to newly emerging issues, and, as Hegedus continued, they do not always have the time to come to an agreement with the whole party before making decisions. Besides, it does matter in today’s

highly mediatized politics if a party can react to an issue rapidly; reaction speed might become a political advantage, while as he argued, participatory democracy is slow and tiresome. On the other hand, he affirmed that the principle of political efficiency should not mean that the intra-party democracy must be eliminated altogether. Incremental personalization is unavoidable because part-time politician cannot compete with the resources of full-time and salaried parliamentary politicians in the same party, because the latter have more access to information. Political marketing might also strengthens the party leadership in by its ability to determine the party's central message. While old-type campaigning was decentralized into several hundred constituencies, today, party headquarters direct the production of country-wide election broadcasts, advertisements and can produce direct mail centrally for communication at local level. The second respect is that the decline of party identification and the growing influence of television, Internet and political marketing all contribute to political personalization, or to a focus on the leaders (Swanson, Mancini 1996). In modern politics, because of the focus of television on the leader, the party's message is carried by and through him or her. The emphasis on discipline is to the leader and the centrally prepared message (Kavanagh 2003). Internal dissent or debate is discouraged, or any other action that makes the leader seem weak in the eyes of the public. According to Kavanagh; the effect of this has been to weaken political parties as collective bodies (2003). Leaders may also calculate that it is advantageous to create a distance between themselves and the party, in part to gain a "personal" vote and in part to attract voters from other parties.

Hegedus argued that personalization of party politics, however, should be limited, for instance, by rules of maximum tenure in office. While professional politics need strong leaders, the possible dangers they might pose to the intra-party democracy also need to be dealt with by institutional instruments. Hegedus added that the Internet provides such a forum that makes intra-party democracy broader. Communicational abilities are greater than 20

years ago that can, by itself, satisfy the rank-and-file's demand for political participation. The ex-politician suggested that internally democratic parties leave room for the different views inside of the party. The existence of different political alternatives within a party has the additional advantage of rapid political renewal in case of a grave electoral setback. In an undemocratic party, nonetheless, the winning faction might think, as it happened in FIDESZ, that the conflict is not resolvable by accommodation with other factions but only by the elimination of one's opponents from the party. The question is whether the factions can accept the presence of different opinions and accommodate each other, or they follow zero-sum logic instead that might lead to the complete elimination of party opposition like it happened in the FIDESZ.

Ferenc Hamori., a party activist, who led the organization-building project team, expressed his opinion that a party should work on similar principles than a company and expressed his disagreement concerning the current trends in LMP' organizational developments. He pointed out to the conflicting structural requirements of new social movements and a professional party machine. Any organization needs a clear hierarchy and a management that determines its direction, which in turn, entails the responsibility of a single leader or a collective leadership. Money, paid to functionaries has an important function: it buys professional work done by a certain deadline and creates accountability that are practically non existent elements in the current culture of amateur-activism in LMP. This observation was shared by several other party activists I spoke to, who agreed that LMP, in its first two year history, has had no organizational structure at all in the traditional sense. Hamori, however, recognized that in the same time, the movement-culture might have been responsible for the successful supporter mobilization during the recent electoral campaign. Given the peculiarities of the Hungarian electoral system, parties need thousand of activists to collect the necessary number of 'recommendation slips' nation-wide and qualify for running

in the elections. Since LMP had extremely scarce financial resources, and it could not afford to pay its activist, motivation and enthusiasm were essential tools for the party to have enough volunteers. The new social movements had experience in the spontaneous organization that does not require a formal structure until, at least, a certain stage of party development. Hamori claimed that it had the potential to mobilize lots of people and function effectively even without having a hierarchic organization with operative management. Amateur-activist mobilization strategies seemed to compensate the lack of effective management with successful activist motivation in the early stage of an amateur-activist party's lifetime. Nonetheless, he claimed that as a side-effect, it has also lead to waste of resources, parallel organization and the alienation of several activists by the lack of recognition of their hard work.

He asserted that working in a professional and hierarchic organization requires different skills from the prevailing movement knowledge that most LMP activist possess; it should be able to produce coherent policies and strategy, keeping deadlines and quality requirements. Activist mobilization has a limited scope and effect, unless new motivational effects are invented, when old ones lose their appeal. While the effect of enthusiasm has worked well during the electoral campaign, now that the goal of the mobilization has been attained and LMP entered the Parliament, an organizational change is unavoidable. Everyday party work has a different logic; it requires a hierarchy. He stressed that sooner or later, these amateur methods would lead to failures in the professional political environment, inside of the Parliament political opponents will exploit political mistakes emanating from weak organization and the media will also emphasize these failures. Since the parliamentary faction will be in the focus of attention, he insisted that it would need effective support of experts for their work. Hamori also drew attention to the paradox that the lack of hierarchy makes informal networks necessary that produce informal decisions that in turn cause a lack of

transparency, an opposite of Green values. This is the problem with collective leadership as well; while Andras Schiffer, the leader of the parliamentary faction is seen by many party members as *de facto* chairman of the party, the lack of his formal leadership does not allow him to be held into account.

One of LMP's female MPs, Timea Szabo saw the party's organizational situation more positively, claiming that the party structure should reinforce its policies, which is currently the case with LMP. She recognized that the party is in a transitional period and its structure is unique since it based on social movements such as *Védegylet*, the national Green movement and the human rights movement. As a consequence, it resembles more to an NGO than to a "normal" party, but it is evolving organically and incrementally by a trial-and-error process.

Timea told me that since LMP wants to strengthen public political awareness and convince people to keep following politics because they share the responsibility with the politicians concerning the direction of the country between elections. LMP has a dual political leadership body: National Political Council (NPC) has been created to serve as a political balance of National Executive Board (NEB) by monitoring and questioning it. Co-decision – a super OPT with fraction, NPC, NEB. Timea suggested that these three bodies are planned to check and balance each other. In urgent issues spokespersons can make autonomous decisions within their portfolio.

## **2.4 Innovation in Communication**

The emergence of the Internet and e-mail has given rise to a variety of claims about their potentially democratizing impact both on the political system and on intra-party democracy. Some have argued that the Internet will lead to a more direct style of democracy eroding the

role of parties as participatory vehicles (Mulgan, Adonis 1994). LMP also has an efficient Internet-based channel of communication, an intra-net website called *www.szimplakör.hu*, which makes it easy for members to participate nation-wide in the matters of the party and express their opinions. During the recent 2010 electoral campaign, the party had an extensive presence on the social networking sites (Facebook, IWIW, Twitter, Youtube) and offered various on-line opportunities for political involvement. The official web-site of LMP; the *www.lehetmas.hu* displayed the party's open campaign account, a unique initiative to set example of transparent party financing on the one hand, and providing an easy opportunity for supporters to make their donations. The on-line party account was designed to boost the party's credibility and stress its "different" nature and given the lack of state subsidy, was an essential financial lifeline as well.

It has also been suggested that if political organizations adapt to the new technologies, they can help revive political engagement (Budge 1996). Parties could use the Internet to give more opportunities for participation, mobilization, and more information for rank-and-file party members. As a consequence, closer contact can be established between leaders and the party grassroots. Does electronic participation actually deepen the quality of participatory politics? It may be useful to consider the potential impact of Internet on intra-party democracy in two areas. The first area is vertical (top-down/bottom up) power distribution, concerning the relationships between the party hierarchies, central organizations and the grass-roots members. Here the use of Internet could enhance individual activists' abilities to be informed about the leadership's decisions and hold leaders accountable. The greater volume and speed of information flow offered through computer mediated communication combined with interactivity could results that members have more direct access to party elites to communicate their opinions on policy matters, and organizational structure (Ward 2005). Such developments would also provide party members with more information on what their

leaders are doing, more quickly, and thus promote the accountability of elite level decision-making. Such statements could apply to all parties; however, one might argue that such a prospect would appeal in particular to Green parties for two reasons (Ward 2005). The first, ideological angle has to do with the Greens' attachment to participation and membership activism that the use of Internet facilitates to a great extent. Secondly, from a practical point of view, they have a comparatively larger potential on-line target audience available for political mobilization. Currently, the Internet is still a minority medium; however, the traditional bastions of Green support (universities, teaching and public sector professionals) are likely to be the ones with most access to the technology (Ward 2005). For this reason it would make sense for Greens to pursue a strong Internet participation strategy.

Web-based communication has at least two related, 'market' driven characteristics as well that should also be considered to differentiate it from traditional way of communication, such as TV, radio or newspapers: it is low cost and has a global reach. Given the poor financial resources of LMP, these are key factors in its competition with parties receiving state subsidies. While the current financial cost of web access is higher than for TV if one is starting from scratch, viewed as a 'one-to-many' publishing medium, the web provides a cheaper way to reach an increasingly mass audience. Overall, therefore, one might argue that the potential changes to communication by Internet are to make it a more in-depth, immediate, dynamic, interactive and unedited process (Ward 2005). While according to the *www.europa.eu* statistics; in Hungary in 2009 55% of the population had access to Internet, its geographical and demographic unevenness might limit LMP's access to possible audience to mainly urban and young individuals.

In conclusion, the use of Internet as a tool for increasing political participation is relevant from two different points of views: from the rational choice perspective the use of Internet will lower the costs of participating within parties. They can make collecting

information, joining and contacting parties much faster and easier. Thus for those who found conventional participation in parties difficult, (the housebound, elderly, single parents, those in rural areas) Internet might offer an alternative solution (Percy-Smith 1995). In this context, the Internet could widen the numbers engaged in party politics (Smith 1997). The recruitment network model also suggests a potential increase in participation through Internet. This model stresses the importance of interpersonal to citizen mobilization, rather than socio economic characteristics as the key to organizational participation. Political organizations mobilizing strategies are therefore of prime importance. Parties could use on-line tools to target and mobilize supporters by e-mail lists, or offer interactive dialogue for members or try to reach new supporters through web-sites (Ward 2005).

Electronic communication adds to traditional ways of communication: firstly, they allow permanent debate and provide for more regular contact between party members than previously was the case. As a consequence, it contributes to maintaining activists and member solidarity. Secondly, the debate is potentially more transparent than traditional meetings; members can easily join and see what is happening in the party, even if they themselves do not actually participate. The fact that participation is in the form of written contributions might also reinforce this effect. Thirdly, the speed of electronic communication means that it is particularly useful for quickly bring together activists for meetings or demonstrations. Fourthly, when the Internet forums are moderated and formally integrated within the party organization, the outcomes could be used as a point of orientation for the decision making process within the party.



## Chapter 3: LMP

### 3.1 A brief history of LMP

LMP was founded by a small group of mainly urban intellectuals, a circle of friends of similar scientific background and committed to liberal, ecologist and left-wing values. Their determining political experience was the disappointment over the unresponsive party system produced by the transition of 1989. They long planned to found a new party and create representation to environmental and social issues that, as they felt, all of the then existing parties ignored. This small collegial group met periodically for several years from the turn of the millennium, to discuss the viability of a new party and waiting for the right time to arrive. Most of them were part of the leadership, or related to, the Green NGO “Protect the Future” (*Védegylet*), arguably the best known NGO in the last ten years, due to the Zengő-conflict and following that Sólyom campaign, which gained considerable prestige to the organization.

The *quasi* unification of diverse NGOs - ecologist, human rights, feminist - were crucial in forming LMP, which was based on similar organizational principles with these groups, that is continuous consensus seeking and cooperation. *Védegylet* was founded in 2000 after the cyanide-pollution of the Tisza river, and had a membership of former participants of the DC. Among its first actions was the organization of demonstrations against the building of underground parking houses in downtown Budapest that required the chopping down of trees, the Zengő-case or the protest against the controversial police attack of street demonstrators in the autumn of 2006. Thus *Védegylet*, an originally ecologist organization adopted a broader, ‘Kitscheltian’ left-libertarian portfolio of social and human rights issues, not least due to the active participation of the lawyer András Schiffer, who acquired such experience working for the “Company for Civil Liberties” NGO.

However, *Védegylet* was, and still is, after the leaving of the founders of LMP, a small ‘elite’ circle of intellectuals of professional expertise who would regularly release recommendations for the public and for policy makers of education, foreign policy, health care, economy or urban development. These ready made and matured “packages” of knowledge in several policy fields were essential, when Schiffer and his friends finally decided to leave *Védegylet* and the establish LMP, first as a movement and a year later as a party, and suddenly became a candidate for the 2009 European parliamentary elections. The party ideology and a consolidated electoral program were, thus, ready also for the general elections a year later. *Védegylet*, however, did not have a country-wide network of activists that LMP could use and which was necessary for the electoral campaign. The credibility of *Védegylet* participants, accumulated during previous campaigns in cooperation with other activist groups, nonetheless, managed to get the critical mass of support. With this support of the national network of various NGOs, who joined forces to get the new party elected to parliament and secure political representation for, as they perceived, long ignored environmental and social issues. In other words, LMP was only a feasible political project, given the lack of any significant financial resources, if its ideological core-group, *Védegylet* could count on the country-wide network of civil activists and their know-how of organizing the campaign. As the party history states on the LMP’s official website: “Growing dissatisfaction with this state of affairs led a group of prominent representatives of Green-, social NGOs and public intellectuals to start organizing a new political force. After having been active for more than a year, LMP have taken on board a remarkable group of experts, researchers and activists. At present, we have about 300 active members and are expanding rapidly.” (*Lehet Más a Politika* Party Constitution)

In terms of organization, an important feature of most NGOs is a deep-rooted reluctance to centralized structures. Since these non-profit groups are based on a non-hierarchical,

horizontal relationship with each other by nature, as several of my interviewees argued they would not accept a leadership style that is not inclusive and consensus seeking. The ideological link among the various groups of the alternative movement, as an LMP activist told me, was a democratic minded and non-violent globalization critique that encouraged civil participation in politics and was determined to represent otherwise suppressed minority interests in society. On the other hand, one might suggest that the movement-experience of the leaders of the participating NGOs is also essential for the future success of LMP in the professional party politics. By the shift of environmentalist NGOs from raising public awareness by protest activities (such as the Zengő-conflict) to directly influence the policy process, the NGOs became more prominent political actors and representatives of environmentalist interests.

With the freshly forged alliance, the newly born LMP became a national movement overnight on 8 October 2008 and an official party in 2009. LMP first appeared before the public in spring 2008 under the name *Okopolitikai Muhely* (Eco-political Workshop). Entitled ‘Can politics be different?’, activists launched a series of political discussions with the goal of exploring the most urgent political and social problems in Hungary and sketching out potential alternatives. Every two weeks, an audience of 200 to 300 people attended the debates in university lecture halls, hosted by two of the country’s most prominent universities. These debates only reinforced their conviction, as they point out in the Party Constitution, that in the face of the then present supply of mainstream political ideologies, a new political force could be established. Thus, convinced as they claimed that politics could indeed be different, they set out to start up the present initiative called *Lehet Más a Politika!* (Politics Can Be Different!) As also a characteristic feature in Western Green parties, many of LMP founders came from environmentalist NGOs, where they had direct experiences about the non-cooperation of authorities. As they perceived, compared to deeply rooted

business interests and technocratic elites in government the environmental movement wields only an insignificant influence over key policy decisions (Carter 2001). They saw party politicization as a key to fight for a sustainable society and against an electoral politics dominated by economic and material issues.

However, the new party raised several problems still waiting to be resolved, probably the most important being the question of organizational structure. LMP merged several different attitudes and organizational patterns, reflecting the diversity of the NGOs that made it up. *Védegylet* is a relatively small group of activists working on “basis-democratic” principles. Its 16-member Organizing Committee is highly flexible, open to individual initiatives of the participants, who work together on equal terms by cooperation and consensus. LMP also absorbed NGOs such as the Hungarian Environmental Protectionist Organization (HEPO) that is an umbrella association of several ecologist groups, coordinated by a central head-office. Since HEPO has a national network, it unavoidably needed to develop a system of effective coordination in the course of its one-decade-long history. As opposed to it, *Védegylet* represented a very different organizational culture; it only cooperated with other NGOs loosely on a case-by-case basis, along single-issue campaigns. As a consequence, there are deep disagreements on the desirable organizational structure in LMP that is manifested by the lack of a long sought after operational manager, responsible for the effective day-to-day organizing of activists, working groups and for the efficient communication between them and the Executive Board. D., one of the sixteen LMP members of Parliament (MP) argued that LMP has a very low level of efficiency because of the lack of an operational leadership and a very weak structure. He pointed out that several mistakes happened during the 2010 electoral campaign, in part due to the fact that the party could not afford paid, professional employees for key positions. As a consequence, there were not strictly determined and enforced procedures, a system of individual performance assessment

and clearly agreed-upon spheres of responsibilities. He emphasized that it is impossible to call a member to account unless he or she is a paid employee. He also added that for the forthcoming municipal election campaign a much greater level of professionalization is needed, with a paid operations manager and a small team that provides the informational background and an all-inclusive support for the smooth running of the local campaign. Dávid argued that “basis democracy” works best if used selectively; it can provide participation but it also can make effective work impossible if minor technical issues are decided by it, for example what should be the right font of the campaign poster slogan. The highest decision-making body of the party, the Congress should decide what questions should be decided by full participation of the members. To find the right balance of intra-party democracy is a trial-and-error process, the MP continued, and should be created as a result of open debate. Nonetheless, these debates are time consuming and in today’s highly mediatized politics there is not always time for an all-inclusive party deliberation. The press expects an immediate reaction from the parties to the rapidly emerging political issues and the political forces cannot afford not to communicate with their electorate. On the other hand, the fact that LMP is a brand new party and its members are of very diverse backgrounds raises the possibility that ruptures will appear in the future over divisive political topics. Symbolic political issues (e.g. LMP’s position about Hungarians living in the neighboring countries, drug liberalization, abortion or the issue of the *Trianon Treaty*) need to be settled soon if LMP is to keep its image as a cohesive party.

As an activist pointed out, because of the lack of top-down instructions from the party leadership to activists, individual creativity in local party branches has a great space that is important during campaigns. Besides, decentralization created an increasing feeling of ownership and commitment among those activists, who made significant voluntary contributions to help the party’s electoral efforts. The interviews I conducted with LMP

supporters made it clear that the grass-roots philosophy motivated many people by creating the common feeling that everybody matter; all are equal partners in the common cause. Still, all my interviewees agreed that the party needs a responsible manager to coordinate the different issues more effectively and it should be clear for all the activists who he or she is in the organization to avoid confusion. It would be not against democracy, concluded nearly all participants in the research. Aniko, an activist of a Budapest regional LMP branch, argued that if communication and feed-back is continuous between the group leader and the group members, it is not against democratic principles to have a centralized party structure, since the leader ensures true representation of the interest of those who elected him or her. She suggested that the representative system, as opposed to the participative one, is the condition of becoming a middle-size party from a small one. She added that LMP needed to decide what type of democracy it wanted to build; “basis democracy” that provide everyone an equal say and participation or the members elect formal leaderships, who represents certain values, has the trust of the membership and credibly embodies LMP’s values in the eye of the wider public opinion as well. The latter version, while limiting individuals’ ability to directly influence decisions, makes the party more efficient.

The tenure of the secretary of the Executive Board is rotating in every 18 months to impede the consolidation of party positions. A senior party member, Sallai Robert Benedek suggested a counter-argument to this; this practice might make the organization politically instable by the difficulty for charismatic leaders to emerge that, in turn, might hamper voters’ identification with the party. In a formally centralized organization, on the other hand, decision-making is faster and bureaucratization is smaller.

However, there are features of centralization in the LMP’s national structure: at the moment it is the responsibility of the Executive Board to approve the creation of “local groups”, that is the smallest party unit in the local level. According to a party activist on the

on-line intra-net surface, this is a sign of extreme centralization; this power rather should be devolved to the level of the Regional Executive Boards.

### **3.2 The LMP's organization with the activists' eyes**

Marton Vay, a founding member of LMP stressed the disadvantages of “basis democracy”, claiming that it has been failing LMP by generating too much conflict. He emphasized the disadvantages of participation in politics that LMP is advocating, and he said that it is very hard to deal with those members who insist on having a say in party issues but either do not actually do party work, or do a poor quality work. He also stressed the damages that it has caused for the party. The currently ruling organizational culture of LMP, by allowing unselective participation, does not guarantee that only skilled members shape party policy. Since members in such a party have no obligation to accept explicit rules and instructions from a supervisor in the working groups (e.g. program writing), it created difficulties to cooperation in a number of cases. In his opinion the reason of misunderstanding and confusion about “basis democracy” can be traced in the fact that LMP is “political stillborn”. The goal to become parliamentary party by 2010 was too early and it had several negative consequences, the principal one being that the membership did not have enough time to internalize the organizational culture and identify with the already existing values of the party. He told me that if LMP had wanted to keep its original principles and commitments, it should have waited to enter the political arena until the 2010 autumn municipal elections and venture into national politics only in 2014 as a more mature organization. At the moment there is a multitude of party activists with a variety of different political ideals, who invested large amount of work in the LMP's electoral campaign and, now they rightly feel entitled to question the political direction of the party.

The decentralized leadership has been created to prevent power centers inside of the party. Marton said that this measure, however, makes control and accountability harder, since in this environment the informal power centers are being built without due control over them. Transparency means that decisions need to be explained effectively inside the party. Balazs Polakovics, a party worker from the operative management, who participates in the human resources project team said that the fact that the electoral campaign has further strained the weak organizational structure. It is manifested in the National Political Council that has not found its role. There is a chaotic and intensive period behind the party. From now the parliamentary faction will be in the focus of policy-making; the party cannot control it day by day. The goal of the party now, as he told me, is to prevent the parliamentary faction's separation by its inclusion in the dominant decision-making party bodies; in the National Political Council and in the National Executive Board.

Marton Fabok, the coordinator of network-building team told me that there is no clear party structure in LMP; the "frames" of the organizational development are not yet consolidated. For that reason, informal channels of communication are important in terms of decision making and it has far-fetched implications. First of all, responsibilities are not clearly separated in certain issues, so the rank-and-file do not know who to turn to for questions. For that reason informal relationships are important, those with better networks inside the party being in an advantage. It is not always obvious that office-holders share information with others; some functionaries avoid debate in order to prevent critique. The National Political Council (NPC), the party body created to be a check and balance on the National Executive Board (NEB) became a rival to the Board, representing its own partial interests. It was especially obvious during candidate selection period before the election campaign, when the NPC, instead of giving recommendations to the NEB, explicitly promoted its own applicants and opposing those of the NEB's. According to M., the recent



leaking to the right-wing daily *Magyar Nemzet* about internal tensions in the party might have been a tool for one of the party factions in its fight against others. LMP devised a new institutional solution in order to fight distrust and suspicion in the party by ensuring a better flow of information and also to make sure that the new body organ, the parliamentary faction stays under party control. This solution is a very different from that of *Die Grunen's* answer; while the German Green party declared incompatibility of party office and parliamentary office to prevent concentration of power in the hands of a single person, LMP considers it more important to facilitate the communication between party bodies by creating overlap of the party and the parliamentary party unit. These institutional overlaps are expected to work as bridges that help better understanding of each other and prevent intra-party rivalry. In LMP there is no job incompatibility rule for the time being, which means a significant deviation from basic Green principles.

Marton saw it as a real danger to LMP that strong persons become even stronger by their greater informal influence to candidate selection. This process might become a self-perpetuating cycle. The key question for LMP, said Marton; is whether it can remain a flexible organization that recognizes the dangers to its intra-party democracy in time and is able to correct these or, a small group of the party elite will be able to cement its power before the membership could prevent. The consequence of the latter scenario might be a loss of meaningful rank-and-file control over decision-making. It might happen because of the members' comparative disadvantage to access information or because they cannot unite to draw attention and represent their interest.

Another major problem is that decisions of the NEB are not communicated effectively towards the membership, while activists do not find an effective way to give a feed-back and shaping the decisions that concern them. As a consequence, NOB decisions cannot always be implemented. The situation is even worse for the membership in the countryside that has

worse resources for the access to information. Marton suggested that the solution could be establishing formal channels for procedures that would make sure the inclusion of various interests. At the moment LMP has several structural problems, worsened by quick-fixes and *ad hoc* planning of procedures in the rush to the elections, and those who have access to information via informal channels are at an unfair advantage. If LMP cannot find solution to these problems, the well-intentioned party activists will lose trust and enthusiasm and desert the party, concluded M.

### **3.3 LMP's formal organization**

According to the LMP's official web-site, the party's organizational structure is aiming at minimize the hierarchy and enable efficient membership participation in the party's work (*Lehet Mas a Politika - Szervezet*). Each party member has the right to participate in any of the different working groups and in the sessions of the Congress. The working groups are the followings: Programme Writing (society, economy, democracy and globalization), Strategy and Political Analysis, Communication, Fundraising, Social Relations, International Relations. The day-to-day working of the party is coordinated by the Operations Manager who is appointed by the National Executive Board (NEB). The operation of LMP is based on the network of regional party branches, where the members actively participate in the decision making forums such as the assembly of regional branches or the National Congress by delegates. On the other hand, different party bodies, made up by elected office-holders are assigned with executive tasks (e.g. National or Regional Executive Boards) or various specialized functions (Ethical Committee, Auditing Committee). The party's organizational units are the following: Regional Branch, Regional Assembly, Regional Executive Board, Congress, National Executive Board (NEB), National Political Council, the permanent

committees of the Congress (ethical committee, auditing committee), Regional Conciliatory Forum, and local party group.

The **Regional Branches (RB)** (Table 1.1) constitute the basic units of the party that are autonomous political actors. If the membership of Regional Branch exceeds 15 members, it can create further sub-units: Local Groups.

The **Regional Assembly** (Table 1.1) is the superior decision-making body of the Regional Branch, where all the members who belong to the given Branch have the right to vote. Usually decisions are made by open ballot, except for votes about personal questions, using a simple majority vote. The Regional Assembly elects the Regional Executive Board and its leader, the regional coordinator, who is responsible for communication with the National Executive Board. The Regional Executive Board holds the executive powers; it coordinates the daily work of the Regional Branch.

The **Regional Conciliatory Forum (RCF)** (Table 1.1) is a party unit responsible for coordination between Regional Branches and strengthens their cooperation. Every Regional Branch delegates one person to the RCF from the board members of the given branch.

The **Congress** (Table 1.1) is the superior decision-making body of the party; its decisions are obligatory for every member. The sessions of the Congress are open, but with vote of simple majority of the members, it can decide about closed meeting as well, with the exclusion of non-delegates. The last party Congress significantly modified the form of political participation in LMP. Before, all the membership had a right to vote on Congress meeting; however, since membership exceeded 500 members, due to physical constraints, a representative delegate-system took over from direct participation. A quota system determines the number of delegates from each Regional Branch; that is the number of RB members divided by the party's membership and the result is multiplied by 120. The most important competences of the Congress are: to elect the membership of National Executive

Board and oversee its activity, to determine the method of election of party office-holders, to vote on the party's finances, to approve or reject the party's candidates for the National or European Parliament or decision about entering into coalition with other parties. Only the Congress is entitled to found or dissolve Regional Branches.

The **National Executive Board (NEB)** (Table 1.1) is the superior elected body of LMP that leads the party in the period between two Congresses and responsible for the realization of the party's goals. The NEB has 13 members, elected by the Congress and with the observation of the gender quota. As a body of collective leadership, demonstrates LMP founders' determination, just like those of *Die Grunen*, to prevent the emergence of "old-party" style elites. NEB provides the political direction for the party, elaborating both short term and strategic scopes, while the operative the management deals with the practical aspects of party functioning, such as the activist coordinating during campaigns. The NEB convenes the Congress at least twice a year, and prepares its agenda; it communicates with the media and coordinates nation-wide political campaigns, it evaluates the work of the parliamentary fraction and makes recommendations to it. The collective leadership of the party can make decisions for the membership and for other party bodies excluding the Congress, Ethical Committee and Auditing Committee. The NEB elects two to four spokespersons, who are authorized to represent the party and who keep direct contact with the press being the 'faces' of the party. The prominent party body has a formal secretary, who chairs the sessions, in a rather collegial manner, and whose maximum tenure is 18 months. After 18 months in office, the same person cannot be re-elected for at least another 18 months. The secretary prepares the agenda of the Board meetings and keeps records of debates that must be made public for the party membership the latest three days after the Board meeting. Common party members have the right to participate on the NEB meetings as visitors if they let the secretary know about their intention to take part at least 24 hours

before. With the approval of all present NEB members, visitors are also allowed to make questions, remarks to the Board.

The five-member strong **Ethical Committee (EC)** is elected by the Congress. It helps the party in the interpretation of the constitution and ensures its observation by the party bodies. It arbitrates in intra-party conflicts and conducts disciplinary processes. The EC also decide whether the party can accept donations from private sources exceeding 300.000 Ft. The president of the EC cannot hold any other office in the party.

The **Auditing Committee (AC)**, just like the EC, is an independent body from the NEC, which controls the finances of the party and informs the Congress about its findings. The AC has three members, who cannot hold any other party office.

**National Political Council (NPC)** is a party unit that monitors and supports the work of the NEB and the operative bodies. It can communicate its opinion and recommendation to the membership about the functioning of the various party bodies that have to respond to these concerns within a month. Each Regional Board delegates one person to the NPC, who cannot be a member of the NEB as well to avoid conflict of interest.

The last Congress modified the constitution in the wake of LMP becoming a parliamentary party with the inclusion of all the membership. As a consequence, the amendment procedure took four weeks for the party. Discussing the alternatives takes lots of time and money. However, the parliamentary work requires the fraction to give faster replies to government proposals and there is non possibility to convene the Congress. As a result, the solution of LMP was to use the Internet as a tool to enable political participation for the rank-and-file. As soon as the bills are available for the parliamentary faction, they are uploaded on the party's intra-net website for discussion, where the all the members can comment on the party's original point of view and exert influence to modify it. The secretary of the NEB

reacts to the comments and the fraction is expected to take into consideration the membership's opinion.

Since party fractions are independent bodies according to the Hungarian constitution, LMP created institutional solutions to ensure harmony between the fraction and the rest of the party. In order to include the opinion of the membership, the Congress created an overlap between the fraction and the National Executive Board (NEB) and this co-decision procedure ensures the participation for 4 fraction members in the sessions of the superior political decision making body, the 13-member NEB. This institutional solution is an interesting deviation from the separation of party office and parliamentary mandate what Poguntke considers a typical characteristic of Green parties (1987) and points out to the experimental and innovative nature of Green party politics.

The party declares in its manifesto equality, trust, good faith, fairness, cooperation and reasoning one's standpoint as guidelines for the membership. The principle of decentralization is also among the main points, which is aimed at preventing too strong formal or informal concentration of power on the top of the party. (Party Manifesto 2010) Another important goal is to make decisions through consensus. The internal openness of the party and its transparency is of great importance in the manifesto; every step of the decision-making process should be made completely public for the party members, including the recruitment for paid party positions.

The fact that LMP was elected to parliament just two years after it was founded, and before it had the chance to reach some kind of maturity as an organization, might have implication for the future direction of its evolution. While in the West it were sharp electoral setbacks that worked as catalysts (e.g. in the 1990s for French, Swedish and German Greens by failing to reach the electoral threshold) (Carter 2001) for internal party reform, for LMP it might be the parliamentary presence and the new challenges it will entail. According to

Frankland, crossing thresholds that means qualitative leap must have some consequences for the organizational change (2008). Moreover, since Green parties are small organizations, as compared to most established parties, it is assumed that they are more likely to undergo reforms and experience more variations in size. At the moment, LMP is experiencing a sudden membership growth, boosted by the electoral success and a need for a stronger and more professional apparatus to manage the organization. Reforms of the electoral system or that of public funding of political parties may also have an effect on the manner parties are organized (Frankland 2008). The recent legislation passed by the FIDESZ government aiming to decrease the number of MPs in the Hungarian Parliament and modify the electoral law might have a negative impact for small parties in the coming general elections. On the other hand, the new bill proposed by LMP that intends to increase state subsidies for parties to a more reasonable level and establish a transparent system of party and campaign financing might help equalize chances among established and new parties.

Other possibly relevant factors at the intra-party level might be a change in the balance of power between factions. As an ex-member of the currently governing centre-right FIDESZ, Istvan Hegedus argued that trust between the ‘strong personalities’ of a party might break down and conflicts between different standpoints can become unbridgeable. As a consequence, a chain reaction of factional conflicts might start, in which the leaders of the opposing groups try to maximize their support of loyalists in the party behind them, preparing for possible escalation. Such a break might lead to either the expulsion of the minority faction or create a new balance of power along some kind of compromise.

## Conclusion and discussion

There has been disagreement among students of political parties about the necessity for parties to organize themselves in internally democratic way, in order to promote the democratic working of the political systems in which they compete (Scarrow 2005). Even if there are different views on the need of intra-party democracy, most agree that there are often reasonable and even self-interested reasons for parties to implement more open decision-making procedures. Such processes may help parties to be successful on elections, recruit and select good candidates and keep popular support. On the other hand, in some cases, internally democratic procedures may undermine parties' chances in the political competition, at least until these procedures become internalized and matured (Scarrow 2005). In this way, organizational matters are often more practical than they are simply ethical, which is one reason why it is difficult to support legislation to impose democracy on parties. There is no one-size-fits-all form for how to run a party; in countries where there is widespread popular disillusionment with politicians and parties, such as the case in Hungary, responsive parties might rightly decide that they adopt more transparent and inclusive internal procedures. In such case, the changes the parties make to benefit themselves might result in being beneficial for the wider society and for the stability and legitimacy of democratic institutions.

One might argue that the greatest danger to LMP is to find itself assimilated in a political culture, where the party elite is detached from the membership and the party from the citizens. Inside of the Parliament, under the pressure to professionalize itself, the temptation for the LMP party elite might be greater than ever to cement its rule and to resort to authoritarian decision making practices. As I pointed out in the earlier chapters, LMP uses innovative ways of member participation that aims at establishing a more democratic and



constructive attitude to political debate and making an impact on the policy process. One might argue that if LMP manages to overcome its initial structural weaknesses in the short term, successfully consolidates its voter-base and creates its political identity in the middle term, it might stay a lasting actor of the Hungarian polity. LMP's 'logistic' dependence of the local ecologist NGOs seems to guarantee the Green party's original principles and values.

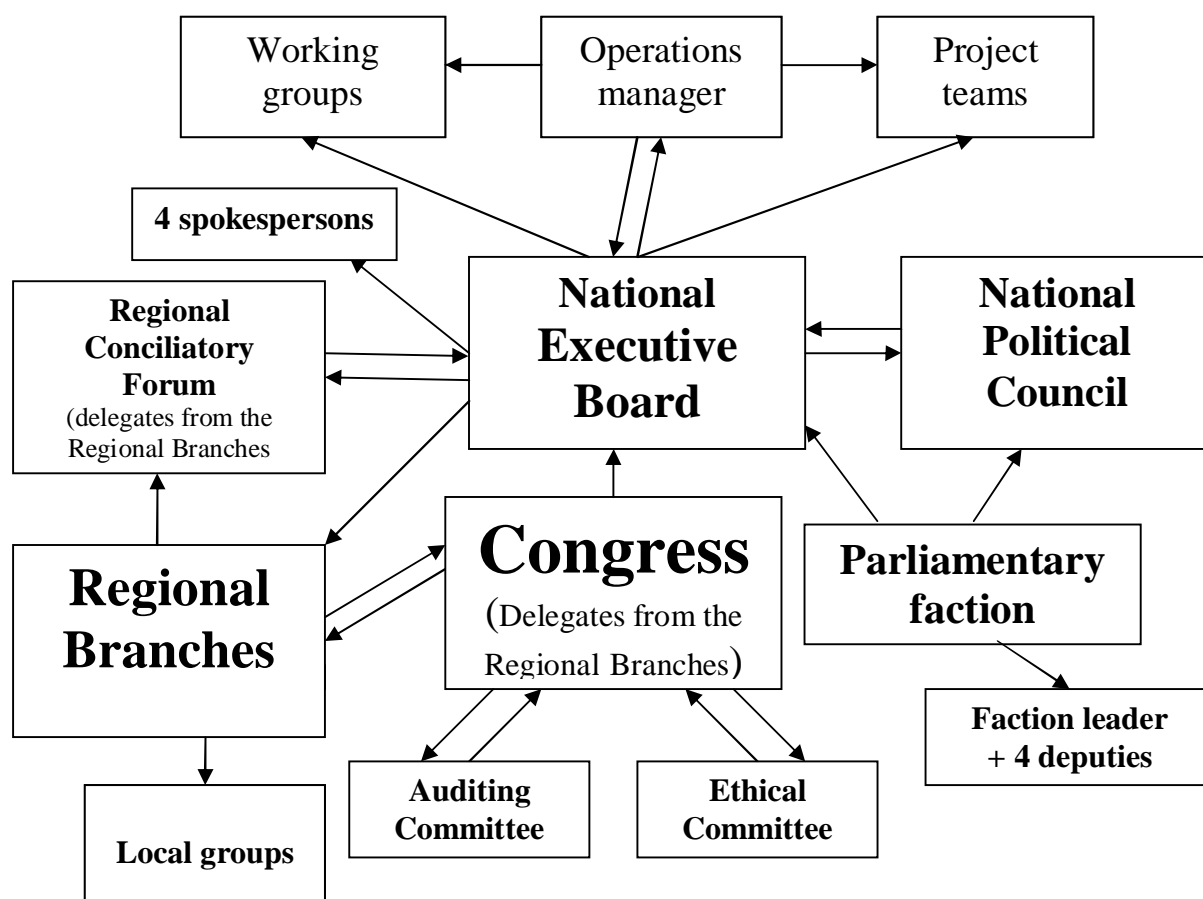
In this thesis I identified newly emerging political methods in LMP, where the elite foster alternative organizational forms as a way of giving members greater influence over party behavior instead of party leaders promoting organizational structures as a way of gaining better influence over supporters' behavior. Intra-party democracy rooted in social movements is still in the "experimental stage" and new parties themselves are undergoing changes to adapt to requirements of the electoral competition. In this process they might lose some of their organizational distinctiveness. However, their attempt to re-balance relation between parties and their members could radically change democratic procedures not only within the single parties, but, in the long term, also within the whole political system. Green parties appear to politicize the masses by new mechanisms for the empowerment of the polity, working to enable the people to set the agenda for discussion and encouraging the people to actively involve themselves in the selection of candidates for election, in the electoral process and in the entire political life of the country.

Establishing effective control over subgroups seems to be a condition to stability. However, it is impossible to make correlation between formal party hierarchy, or "basis democracy" for that matter, and electoral success or automatic liability. It is probably that if the spirit of internal party organizational processes is in harmony with the ideology of the advocated legislature, it might facilitate the communication of policies and strengthen electoral credibility. For example one such case has been the LMP's advocacy of consolidating transparent party financing, while it has an open party account that facilitates

accountability. Now voters have given the chance to LMP to carry on along the way and give politics back to them.

## Appendix

**Table 1.1**      **Organizational structure of *Lehet Más a Politika* party, May, 2010**  
The arrows show the way of delegating power.



**Table 1.2 Types of parties and their characteristics** (Frankland 2008)

Type	Elite cadre party	Mass party	People's party	
Professional electoral party	<u>Amateur-activist</u>			
<b><u>Green party</u></b>				
<b>Origin</b> initiative	Parliament New social movement	Church or class movement	Cadre or mass party	Private
<b>Ideology</b> Partial ideology	Implicit principles	Complete ideology	Principles explicit	Eclectic
<b>Relation to civil society</b> Informal ties	Elites overlap	Strong ties	Weak ties	No ties
<b>Relation to state</b> ties	Elites overlap Distance	Distance	Intermediate	Close
<b>Member/voter ratio</b> Low	Low	High	Intermediate	Low
<b>Leadership</b> Personal	Personal amateur Collective-amateur	Formal or charismatic	Formal professional	
<b>Candidate selection</b> Local or regional	Local	Central	Central	Central
<b>Relation MP/party</b> control	MP in control Party in control	Party in control	Balance	MP in
<b>Main locus of power</b> leader and staff	Local leaders Activists (congress)	Congress and party leader	Party executive	Party
<b>Basic unit</b> Electoral district	Electoral district Regional or local branch	Local branch	Local branch	
<b>Relation basic unit</b> support to top	Direct delegation Direct delegation	Indirect	Indirect	Direct
<b>Role of members</b> Applause and donations	Election campaign Total participation	Total participation	Limited participation	
<b>Funding</b> Donations and subsidies	Donations Member fees	Member fees	Member fees	
<b>Party apparatus</b> Professional staff	Volunteers Mainly volunteers	Volunteers	Professional staff and volunteers	

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