

Environment, post-materialism and post-communism: Green politics in Estonia

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Abstract

The paper discusses the ideological foundations of Green politics in a post-communist setting. Unlike most Green parties in Western Europe, the Estonian Green party is only partly post-materialist in its orientation and is placed close to the centre on the ideological spectrum. In combining environmental values with some socially conservative ones and emphasising technological innovation over limiting consumption, the party comes across as "ultra-" rather than "post-modernist". These discrepancies can be explained by historical and contextual socio-political factors, especially the nexus between socialist industrialisation and environmental degradation.

The Estonian Greens

- Green Movement in late 1980s
- Green party/parties established in 1989/90
- Disappeared after 1995 elections
- Re-established in 2006
- 2004 European elections: Marek Strandberg
- Entered the parliament in 2007 (7.1% votes, 6 seats)
- Poor results in 2009
- Lost parliamentary representation in 2011: 3.8% votes

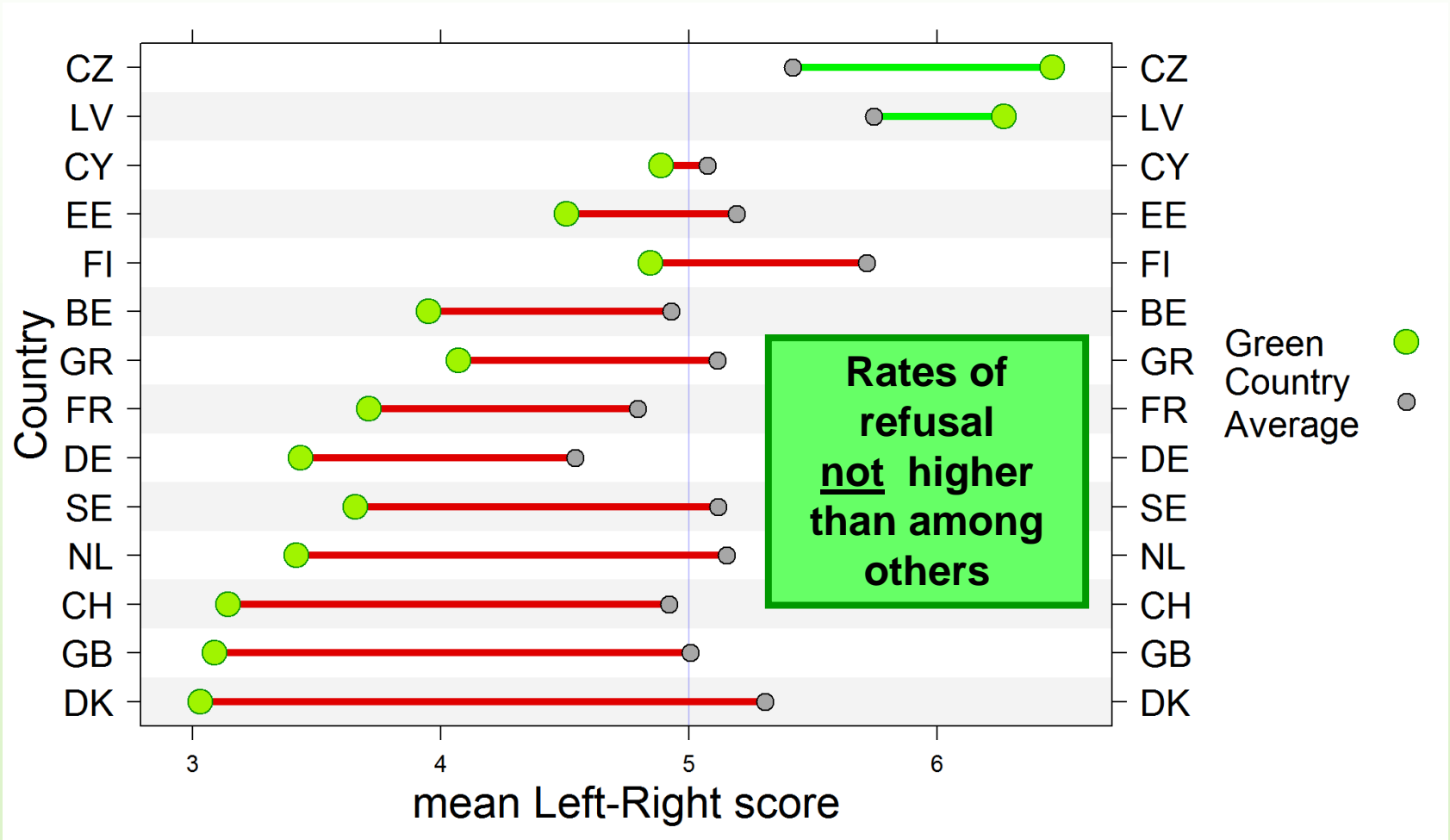
Green parties in ECE

- Weaker than in Western Europe
- Some recent success stories: HU, EE, CZ, SI?, LV?
- **Estonian Greens** still the second most popular in ECE
- Interesting case study / comparisons to CZ and WE greens
- European Social Survey 2008/9 (65)
- *Party supporters = “Greens”*

Greens, Post-materialism and the Left

- **Value change** in 1960s/70s a crucial factor behind the rise of Greens in Western Europe
- **Post-material / self-expression values**
- As against material/survival
- “Green”, “new politics”, “new left” & “liberal left”
- But: providing an alternative to the Right/Left a Green aim

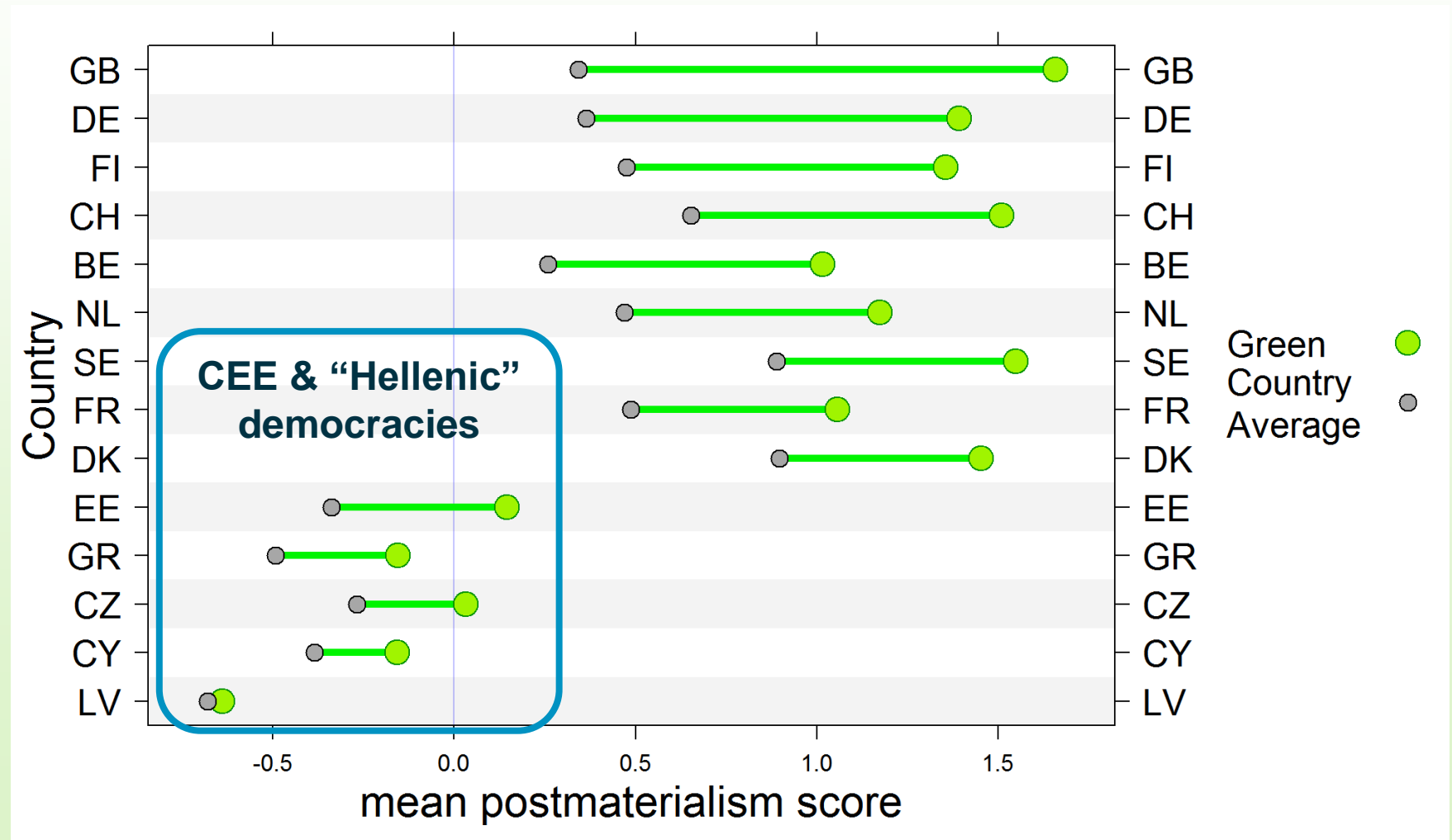
Left-Right self-placement: Greens & others



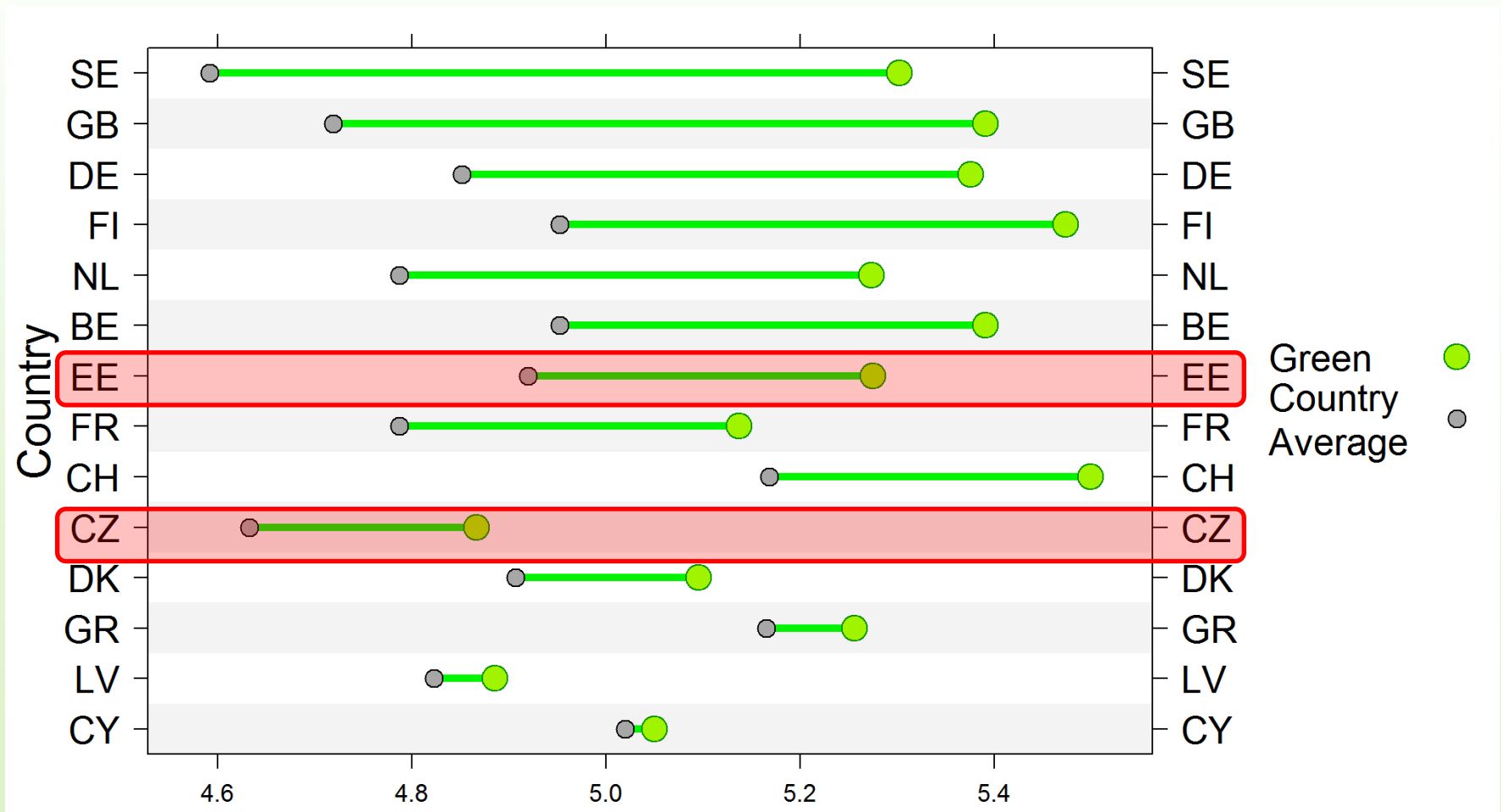
Post-materialist value orientations

- Emphasis on **self-expression & quality of life** over economic & physical security:
 - *Important to make own decisions & be free, think new ideas & be creative;*
 - *Not important to be rich, have money and expensive things, live in secure and safe surroundings, that government is strong and ensures safety.*
- How **happy** are you?
- **Gays and lesbians** free to live their own life as they wish
- Signing a **petition** / taking part in a **demonstration** / **boycotting** goods.

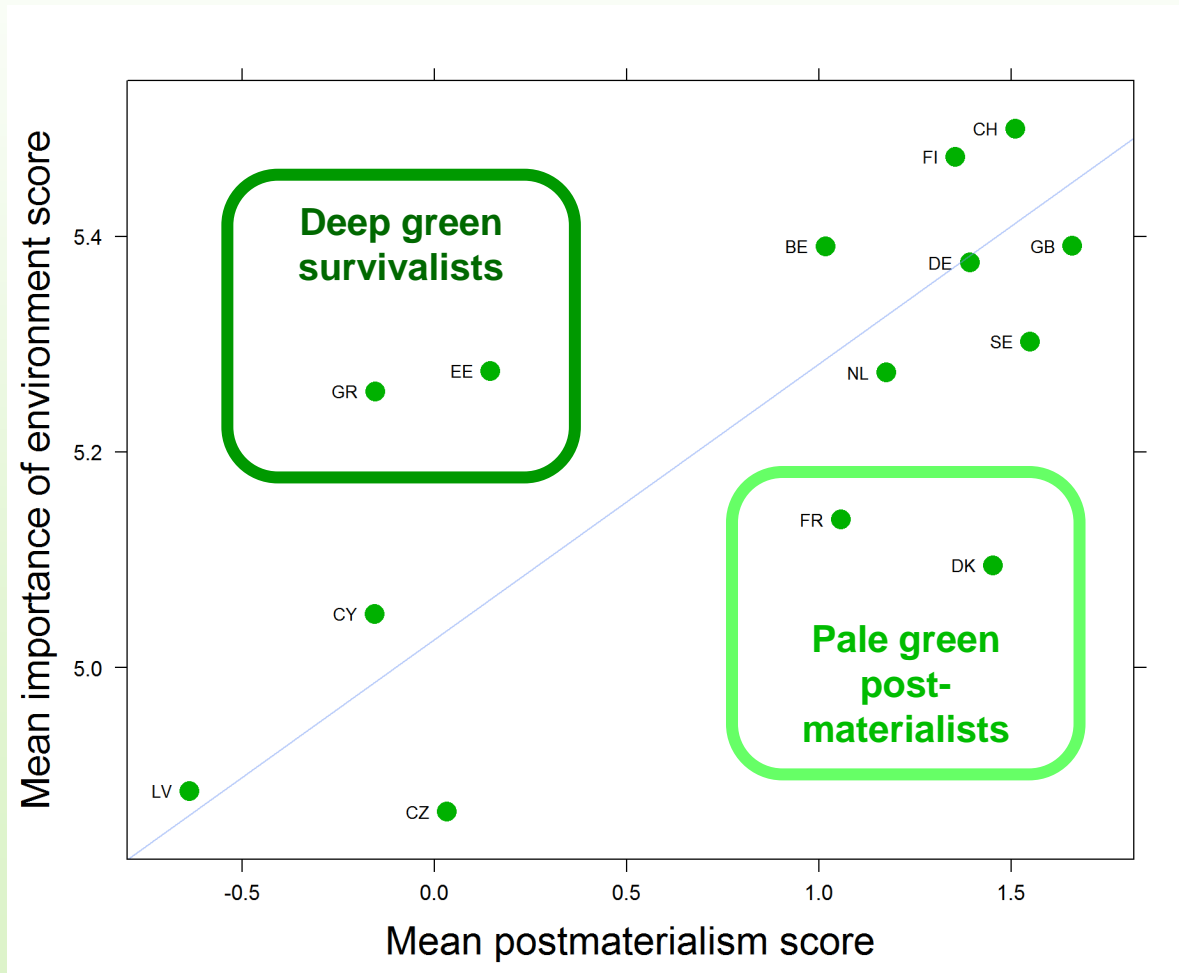
Post-materialism: Greens & others

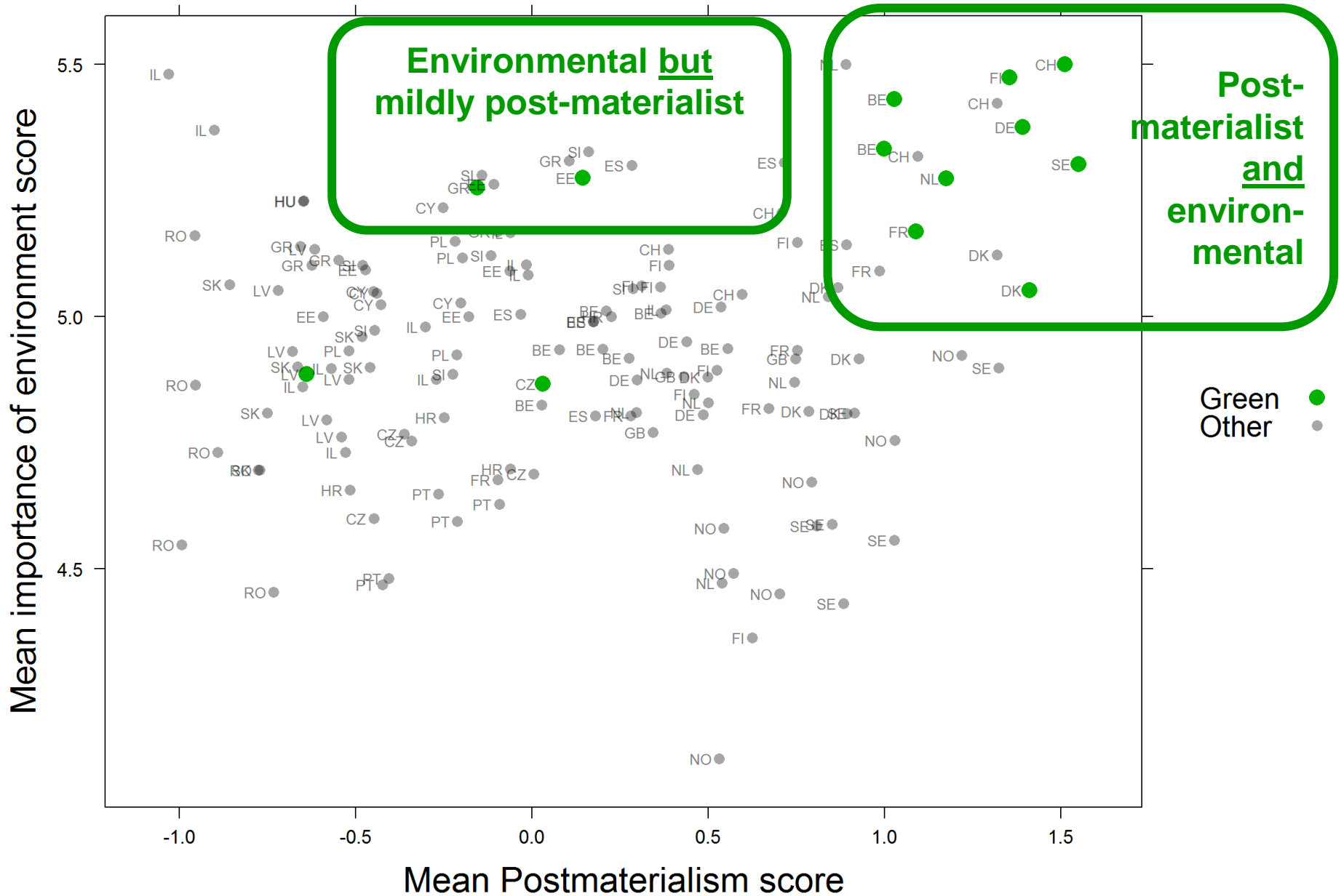


Important to care for nature & environment



Greens: Post-materialism and care for nature & environment





ECE and WE Greens compared

- Only in core WE countries is **post-materialism** unambiguously linked to **the Left**
- **ECE Greens** are not post-materialist compared to WE Greens, **but:**
 - are equally environmentalist and
 - are post-materialist in the national context

Explaining the lower post-materialism scores

- Lower score of Estonian Greens explained by:
 - **lower civic engagement** (petitions, boycotts, demonstrations) and
 - **tolerance of gays & lesbians**
- Different from the **Czech Greens** who trust others less and believe being rich is more important.
- Estonian Greens extremely **technophile**.

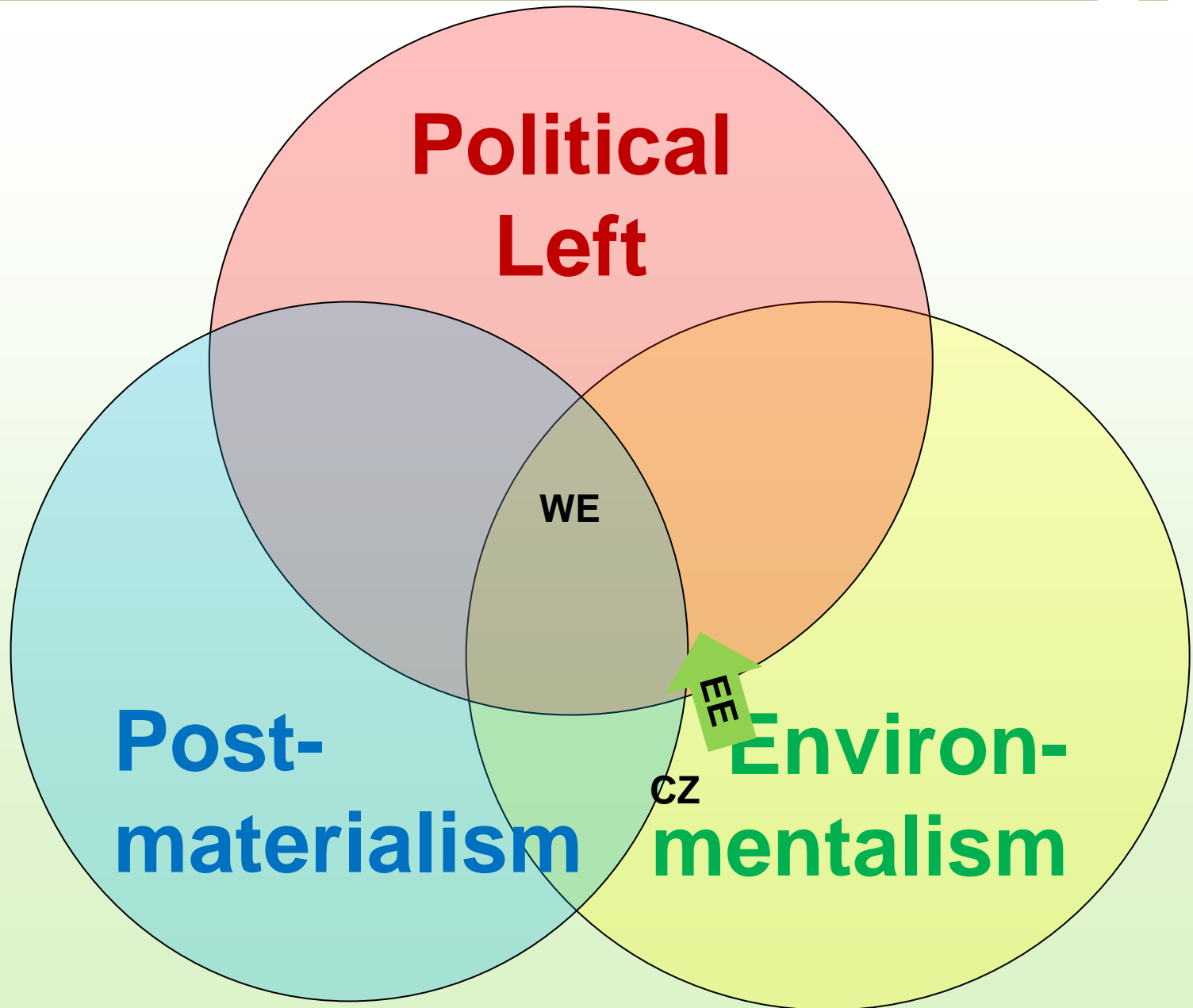
Can modern science be relied on to solve our environmental problems

Party	Agree/agree strongly (%)	Disagree/disagree strongly (%)	N
EE:Estonian Greens	89.9	0.0	65
BE:Ecolo	64.6	12.3	45
CY:The Cyprus Green Party	60.0	20.0	103
FI:The Green League	54.2	20.6	20
FR:Les Verts	47.7	29.2	60
BE:Groen!	44.5	26.7	157
LV:Greens and Farmers Union	44.2	14.7	20
Average	40.9	31.7	1342
SE:Green Party	40.0	21.3	69
NL:Green Left	38.4	24.4	131
CH:Green party	36.9	44.7	15
FR:Autres mouvements écologistes	33.4	13.4	65
GB:Green Party	30.4	52.2	23
DE:Green Party (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen)	23.0	42.7	210
CZ:Green Party	18.3	55.0	86
DK:Enhedslisten	15.0	70.0	80
DK: Socialistisk Folkeparti	13.5	60.1	193



Explaining the differences

- Socialist experience and environment
- Anti-communist roots of environmental movements/parties
- Capitalism and environment
- **Centre-right post-materialism**



**Political
Left**

**Post-
materialism**

Environmentalism

WE

CZ

EE

Table 1. Electoral support for Green parties in Europe

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Denmark (Socialists)	8.3			7.3				7.6		6.4			6.0		13.0							
Luxembourg				10.9				9.1					11.6						11.7			
Austria	4.8			7.3	4.8			7.4			9.5					11.0			10.4			
Germany	5.0			7.3				6.7			8.6				8.1				10.7			
Switzerland		6.1			5.0			5.0					7.4					9.6				
Finland		6.8			6.5			7.3					8.0					8.5				7.3
Hungary^a																						7.5
Belgium (Ecolo)		5.1			4.0			7.4					3.1					5.1				4.8
Netherlands^b				3.5				7.3				7.0	5.1			4.6						6.6
Sweden		3.4		5.0				4.5				4.6					5.2					7.3
Estonia			2.6															7.1				3.8
Belgium (Groen!)		4.9			4.4			7.0					2.5					4.0				4.4
France				4.1				6.8					4.5					3.3				
Czech Republic	4.1		6.5					1.1					2.4					6.3				2.4
Ireland			1.4					2.8					3.8					4.7				1.8
Denmark^b	1.7			3.1				2.7				2.4				3.4		2.2				
Italy			2.8	2.7		2.5						2.2						2.1				
Greece																		1.1		2.5		
Cyprus												2.0						2.0				
Latvia^c			1.2																			
Great Britain			0.5					0.2				0.6				1.0						1.0