

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE GREEN
PARTY'S SUCCESS IN GERMAN POLITICS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PURPOSE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
German Politics.....	2
German Political Parties	3
LITERATURE REVIEW	4
Data.....	4
Interview	5
Bundestag 2009.....	5
Baden-Württemberg 2011	6
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011.....	6
RESEARCH DESIGN	7
Case Studies.....	7
Contributing Factors	8
RESULTS	
Case Study: Bundestag Election 2009.....	10
Background: Bundestag 2005.....	10
Political Atmosphere.....	12
The Campaign	13
Election Results.....	16
Demographics	17
Importance of Other Parties	18
Analysis of Factors Present.....	20
Case Study: Baden-Württemberg Election 2011	22
Background Baden-Württemberg.....	22
Political Atmosphere.....	23
The Campaign	25
Election Results.....	27
Demographics	28
Importance of Other Parties	29
Analysis of Factors Present.....	30
Case Study: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Election 2011.....	32
Background Baden-Württemberg.....	32
Political Atmosphere.....	33
The Campaign	35
Election Results.....	37
Demographics	38
Importance of Other Parties	39
Analysis of Factors Present.....	40

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

DISCUSSION	42
Implications.....	42
Limitations.....	45
REFERENCES.....	47
ABSTRACT	51

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to determine which factors contribute most to the Green Party's recent success in German politics.

In light of the German Green Party's growing popularity, this study seeks to find explanations for why populations choose to support the Greens. In examining the results of three recent German elections, expect that certain factors outweigh others in contributing to incidences and respective levels of Green success.

INTRODUCTION

“Horror of horrors! The counterculture had entered the bastion of the mainstream. How could this be? What costs and compromises would such a gigantic step exact from this world of young people, these quintessential baby boomers that perceived their very identity, their core, as the vanguard of the anti-establishment...?”

This quotation by Andrei Markovits (2012), a renowned scholar of political science, German politics, and the German Green Party, is an apt description of the Green Party's situation as they first gained representation in the Bundestag (German Parliament) in 1983. The Greens of the 1980's looked strikingly different from the party recognized today. They were officially founded in 1980 from the remnants of the activist social initiatives of the 1960s and 1970s. The Greens were founded with the intention of providing an “alternative” to traditional German politics; these people were dissatisfied and rebellious. The major issues that brought this diverse party

together were ecology, feminism, pacifism, anti-nuclear power, and anti-class divisions.

Since the 1980s, the German Greens have undertaken a tumultuous journey, from great highs as they first entered the Bundestag in 1983, to dismal lows through the 1990s as internal discord threatened to break them apart. However, since 2005 the Greens have seen great success in both national and state elections. They are now widely considered the most influential “green” party in the world. This major shift from activist youth to established political party is key to this study; within the Green evolution lie specific changes that influence the party’s ability to improve electoral performance.

The goal of this study is to gain a better understanding of how the Greens have been able to capture increasing votes. Detailed case studies of three recent German elections are intended to reveal a pattern between the presence of certain political factors and the Green Party’s subsequent electoral success.

German Politics

It is important to provide some background information on the nature of German elections covered in this study. I focus on the German parliament: on the federal level this is the Bundestag, on the state level the Landtag. This is the main decision making body in German politics. Germany practices a form of proportional representation; a party will receive a percentage of parliamentary seats proportional to the percentage of votes they received in the election. There also

exists a threshold of 5% of the vote, which parties must exceed in order to enter parliament, commonly called the 5% hurdle. Germany also operates on a two-vote system in Bundestag elections, where each constituent has one vote for their local representative and one vote for a party in general. The results of both of these votes are reflected in the final parliamentary seat count for a given party. This system can be crucial for smaller parties, and many small parties receive the majority of their seats from the second vote.

Coalitions are crucial to party politics in Germany. Since no one party generally receives a majority of the vote, two or more parties will band together in a governing coalition in order to control a majority of parliamentary seats. A coalition generally takes the form of one major party and one or more smaller parties. Coalitions can also be important during campaign time, as often parties will state which coalitions they would deem acceptable and which parties they would not work with in a particular setting, allowing voters to consider the governing consequences of a particular vote.

German Political Parties

In modern German politics, there exist five major political parties. In addition to the Greens, these parties are the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, and The Left. Because these parties will be referenced throughout the text, and because the actions and performance of these parties undoubtedly have an effect on Green performance, it is important to describe each of these parties.

- CDU/CSU: The CDU (Christian Democratic Union) is Germany's main conservative party. The CDU is concerned with fair economic competition, providing

jobs, and social welfare. The CSU (Christian Social Union) is the CDU's counterpart which exists only in Bavaria, and the two are generally considered one in the same.

- SPD: The SPD (Social Democratic Party) is a center-left party which is often concerned with the working class. The CDU and SPD represent Germany's "Volksparteien" – literally, people's parties. They are the two largest parties; they encompass all political issues that voters might be concerned about, similar to the Republicans and Democrats of the United States in how they operate.
- FDP: The FDP (Free Democratic Party) is a smaller party that often works well with the CDU. It is pro-business and promotes a free market economy.
- Die Linke (The Left): The Left has been formed by Germany's communist and socialist remnants. It is further to the left ideologically than the SPD, and often catches voters disenchanted with the SPD's more conventional politics. This party can be a competitor for the Greens especially in the former East Germany, because the two occupy a similar position ideologically.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Data

The data for this study comes mainly from the extensive online database of Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (literally translated, Research Elections Group). This is one of the most reputable polling and election analysis organizations in German politics. For each election, one can find basic election results as well as many graphic charts representing voters' attitudes toward specific candidates, parties, and the major issues in the election, among many others. The figures found in the *Election Results* section of each case study are also from Forschungsgruppe Wahlen. Baden-

Württemberg's statistical office was also helpful in providing supplemental data for that case study.

Interview

In my research of the Green Party, I was able to contact with Mr. Frank Schwalba-Hoth, one of the founding members of the German Greens. Mr. Schwalba-Hoth has served as a member of the European Parliament and now works as an independent political analyst, consultant, and strategist. He was able to provide his comments on each case study in this paper.

Bundestag 2009

The main sources of analysis for Bundestag 2009 are two compilations edited by Jens Tenscher and Oskar Niedermayer. Tenscher's volume (2011), entitled *Superwahljahr 2009* (Super Election Year 2009), encompasses articles which examine each party's campaign tactics during the Bundestag 2009 election. Niedermayer's compilation, *Die Parteien Nach der 2009 Bundestagswahl* (The Parties after the 2009 Federal Election), includes an article by Lothar Probst (2011) which comments on the Greens' evolution into a more mainstream party. I also utilized several articles written in *Der Spiegel*, a prominent German newspaper, that report on the Greens during election time and reflect how the Greens were perceived by popular culture. Finally, Joseph Klaver and Andrei Markovits' 2012 publication through the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies provides a great deal of commentary on the evolution of the German Green Party since the 1980's.

Baden-Württemberg 2011

An article in *German Politics* by Silke Keil and Oscar Gabriel (2012) entitled “The Baden-Württemberg State Election of 2011: A Political Landslide” is an excellent analysis of the results of the state’s 2011 election. In addition to this work, several articles in *Der Spiegel* were crucial in gaining an understanding of the election. The 2013 workshop *Creating Participatory Democracy: Green Politics in Germany Since 1983* is also a source on the underpinnings of Baden-Württemberg’s present voting behavior. Between these sources, statistical findings from Forschungsgruppe Wahlen and Baden-Württemberg’s statistical office, and personal communication with Mr. Frank Schwalba-Hoth, a clear picture of this election can be formed.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011

There exists considerably less material on Mecklenburg-Vorpommern’s 2011 state election than the other two case studies. Dieter Roth’s (2011) article written for the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies is one of few comprehensive examinations of party activity in this election. *Der Spiegel* also supplied remarks on the Greens’ campaign for the election and Mr. Frank Schwalba-Hoth contributed to the understanding of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern’s political atmosphere. Much more information on the voters of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern’s history, attitudes, and predispositions are found within the polling of Forschungsgruppe Wahlen.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Case Studies

The research design of this project is based upon case studies of three recent German elections. The first of these elections is Germany's most recent federal election, or the 2009 Bundestag election. This is a key election to study because it allows the German Green Party to be analyzed on a national level; it considers factors that are important for all citizens of Germany. The strength of the Greens nationally is central to the understanding of what could facilitate their success in any given election; ultimately any party is looking to increase their power in the Bundestag.

The next two case studies constitute a kind of regional comparison. I have chosen two state elections with vastly different histories. Baden-Württemberg's 2011 state election is the first of these state case studies. Baden-Württemberg is a Western German state; it is industrial, urban, highly educated, and boasts a very strong economy. The other state case study is Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, a former East German state. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is rural, sparsely populated, and poor. Despite these major differences between Baden-Württemberg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the Greens enjoyed success in both elections, albeit to entirely different degrees.

In order to gain a comprehensive picture of exactly what happened in each case study, each election will be evaluated in the same fashion. First, background information is crucial to determine any historical voting dispositions that may exist. Then, the political atmosphere at the time of the election will help demonstrate

what was determining the average voter's decision. Then, the Green campaign will be explored, followed by a description of the election's results. Any demographic factors that might have been important are explained as well as how the performance of other parties may have affected the Greens' results. Finally, a thorough analysis of what factors contributed most to the election results will be conducted.

In the investigation of these three very different German elections, certain explanatory factors may arise that can influence the Green Party's performance. The next section defines which contributing factors will be the focus of this study.

Contributing Factors

The Green Party's performance in each election case study will be examined on the basis of three potential contributing factors. It is my proposition that the relative presence or absence of these factors in an election can affect Green performance.

The first contributing factor to be analyzed in this study is the expansion of the Green agenda. This factor refers to the Greens' development from a primarily single-issue party into one that fosters multiple political objectives. While the Green Party began with a very narrow and confined platform, as any party gains legislative seats and executive offices, it must naturally take a stance on issues it had in the past considered irrelevant. The Greens making policy statements on taxation, the economy, and business represents a shift in party behavior. It is important to understand whether the Greens are more successful through expanding their

agenda in the effort to attract more voters, or if they tend to perform better when they “stick to their roots”.

The second proposed contributing factor is the graying of the party. In simple terms, this is a reflection of a maturation in Green leadership and in their voters. The Greens are unique in the fact that its members remain largely first generation. However, they have aged from their 20's and 30's into their 50's and 60's. People generally grow out of their rebellious phase, and the same cannot be overlooked in this party. Graying of a party is marked by a movement toward pragmatism, mainstream thinking, and more conventional policies. An older and more established party is more concerned with getting elected by any means, whereas the younger Greens were unwavering in their principle values and unwilling to make concessions in order to gain political power. This study aims to discover if this transformation has allowed the Greens to become more popular as the leaders, the voters, and the party as an entity have aged.

The third and final possible contributing factor is the presence of environmental concerns. The Greens are universally equated with the environment, especially in Germany. It stands to reason that, when there is a particular environment-related issue, the Greens by reputation would be the party to turn to. By now voters know what the Greens stand for in terms of the environment and nuclear power, and I wish to discover if the presence of pervasive environmental concerns proves a major advantage for the Greens, and if an absence of environmental issues preceding an election could prove disadvantageous to Green performance.

CASE STUDY: BUNDESTAG 2009

Background: Bundestag 2005

The most important elements to consider in studying the Bundestag 2009 election are the results of Bundestag 2005 and the Green response to those results. This was an incredibly disappointing election for the Green Party in many ways. First, they dipped to 8.1% of the total vote, after the 2002 election constituted the highest vote percentage the Greens had ever acquired (8.6%). This dip was an unsettling downward movement in Green electoral performance in an overall upward trend since their entrance into the Bundestag in 1983. Second, Joschka Fischer, the major Green figurehead and political leader, stepped out of politics and left a considerable power vacuum within the party (Probst 2011). Though one of the founding principles of the Greens was egalitarian democracy within the party, it became clear that Fischer truly had the final say in all Green policy matters. Joschka Fischer's popularity gave the Greens an illusion of cohesiveness, and without him old rivalries and divisions began to resurface and the Greens faced a structural crisis.

The Green reaction to the party crisis they faced following Bundestag 2005 is perhaps more important than simply the election results. The Greens quickly overhauled their structure, strategy, and overall attitude in response to these problems. The changes enacted by the Green Party post-2005 fall into four main categories: personnel, organizational, platform content, and coalition strategy.

In terms of personnel, the Greens worked to create a more centralized party leadership. The election of two members (always one male and one female) for

many different leadership positions was instated to make the Greens more inclusive and in touch with their party base. For example, Renate Künast and Jürgen Trittin became the new leaders of the Greens in parliament; Künast represented the Green middle class while Trittin represented those ideologically left of middle. This leadership system helped to ease the transition out of Joschka Fischer's dominance and represent more of the party members in important decisions.

The Greens also undertook a large organizational reform in order to professionalize their party structure. They even hired an outside consultant in order to improve their organizational capacities. The Greens created a party council to act as a clearinghouse for internal dissent, special training and increased opportunities for the youth of the Green Party to become more active, and they revamped their advertising, communications, and networking strategies. All of these organizational changes were an attempt to make the Greens more functional in national politics, modeled after the structures of the more established parties.

The platform of the Greens also underwent extensive alteration after the 2005 Bundestag failure. The party rolled out a new program called The Green New Deal (interestingly originally in English). The Greens saw that their historic emphasis on environmental issues would not be enough to support sustained political growth. The Green New Deal introduced a "green" way of looking at all realms of politics. This platform change will be explored more when the Green campaign for Bundestag 2009 is analyzed.

Finally, the Greens began to see their role in relation to other parties differently. The party had been founded upon a principle of opposition; it had

historically been called the anti-party party. Eventually, as the Greens gained entrance to local governments, they began to form coalitions with the SPD, the traditional left party. However, after 2005, the Greens were no longer satisfied with either being the opposition or clinging to the coattails of the SPD. The Greens realized they would have to work with other parties at the governing level, but were unwilling to become stigmatized as a tag-along to the SPD, especially since the interests of these two parties were often at odds. So, they effectively emancipated themselves from the SPD and began to consider new coalition possibilities. In 2008, the Greens entered into a historic coalition with the CDU in Hamburg.

These important party changes played a major role in helping the Greens to improve dramatically in the 2009 Bundestag election. The post-2005 adjustments encompass many of the factors that this study proposes facilitate electoral success. The disappointment of the 2005 Bundestag election set up a unique environment to analyze how exactly the Greens evolved in order to effect electoral change in 2009. Given that the Green performance jumped up to nearly 11% of the total vote in Bundestag 2009, it can be inferred that many changes between 2005 and 2009 are key factors in influencing Green success (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2013).

Political Atmosphere

As the 2009 Bundestag election approached, Germany was experiencing the global economic crisis. Unsurprisingly, the top issues according to polled voters were: jobs, economy, education, banks and finances, and family (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2013). With the exception of education and family, which the Greens traditionally perform relatively well on, the public's preoccupation with economic

improvement most likely hurt the Greens by creating a campaign atmosphere dominated by fiscal policy questions.

Another important component of the pre-2009 political atmosphere is the approval rating of the governing coalition. The CDU/CDU and SPD were governing Germany in a grand coalition – comprised of the two major German parties (usually one of the major parties attempts to form a coalition with a much smaller and ideologically more similar party such as the FDP or the Greens in order to gain a simple majority in parliament). Both the coalition itself and Angela Merkel enjoyed high public approval going in to the 2009 election. A grand coalition is a very interesting and relatively rare possibility in German political culture; it could be crudely likened to the Republicans and Democrats of the United States deciding to band together and govern as a team. This unique aspect of the political atmosphere both helped and hurt the Green Party in the election, as will be discussed later.

A final important consideration in terms of the political atmosphere in 2009 is that this year constituted a “Superwahljahr” (super election year) for only the second time in German history. In 2009, the European Parliament elections took place in June, the Bundestag followed in September, all alongside three state parliament elections and several other local elections. Such a year of elections can easily lead to fatigue, both on the part of voters and on campaigning parties.

The Campaign

Overall the campaign period before Bundestag 2009 has been considered extremely boring. In fact, Jens Tenscher (2011) reveals that the catchphrases used by campaign observers to describe Bundestagswahl 2009 were “langweilig”,

“geräuschlos”, “wenig inspirierend”, and “inhaltsleer” (boring, silent, uninspiring, and devoid of content). There are several reasons that this may have occurred. First, the grand coalition made it difficult for the CDU and SPD to take up opposing positions on many issues, given that they were working together to govern the country. The economic crisis also necessitated that the parties work closely together, as this national emergency transcended many party disagreements. Finally, the parties used the European Parliament election to test possible campaign strategies, so by the time the Bundestag election rolled around, the public had already heard the parties’ messages and grown fatigued. Each of these elements reduced interest in the Bundestag election, however the Greens did make very important changes in preparation for this election year which undoubtedly played a role in their results.

First, as previously mentioned, the Green Party greatly updated their party platform after Bundestag 2005. The Green New Deal introduced the connection between ecology and economy. This new platform attempted to stress that an ecological mindset can produce economic progress while practicing sustainability. Lothar Probst (2011) emphasizes the Greens’ conscious shift away from a one-issue party. By encompassing economics into their basic principles, the Greens had taken a major leap toward mainstreaming their policies and behaving much more like an established multi-issue party. In fact, the name of Probst’s article, “Bündnis 90/Die Grünen: auf dem Weg zur Volkspartei?” (The Greens: On the Way to a People’s Party?) suggests this very trend.

The marked differences in Green policy statements between the 2005 and 2009 elections demonstrates this shift. The Greens described their 2005 policy platform simply thus: "Green politics aims for freedom and self-determination". In contrast, this statement can be found in the preamble to the Green policy platform in 2009 (translated into English): "We can no longer act as if things don't have to do with the way we live and manage economically. The financial crisis is the expression of a mentality that puts short term profit interests above everything else." (Probst 2011) This expansion in agenda made the Green message more relevant to the average voter's interests in 2009.

One of the most interesting indications of the changes in the Green agenda is introduced by Brunsbach, John, Volkens, and Werner (2011). In their analysis, they ranked the importance of political issues as reflected in each party's campaign for Bundestag 2009. The CDU's highest ranked issues were economy, followed by political system and welfare. The SPD's were economy, welfare, and employees. Shockingly, the Green's top three campaign issues were economy, welfare, and then environment. In fact, in an analysis of ideological distance between the campaigns of the parties, the authors found that the distance between the CDU and SPD (24.7%) was actually larger than the distance between the CDU and the Greens (19.1%). For a political party founded by the radical fringe, the finding that the Greens now lie in a rather ideologically moderate position is quite remarkable.

The Greens also changed their campaign methods in 2009. In the effort to professionalize their party operations, the Green strategy became notably less activist than it had been in previous years. Lothar Probst (2011) notes a clear

concerted effort in 2009 to move away from radical campaign marketing, such as displaying nuclear or pollution-related horror stories, into packaging their policy proposals into smaller, more manageable doses effectively appealed much better to the middle class and more moderate voters. Much of this change can be attributed to the Greens hiring a professional campaign manager to make their “brand” more relatable and appealing. The Greens’ endeavors to appeal to a wider voter base and become less extreme in methodology is a strong indication of the graying of the party.

Election Results

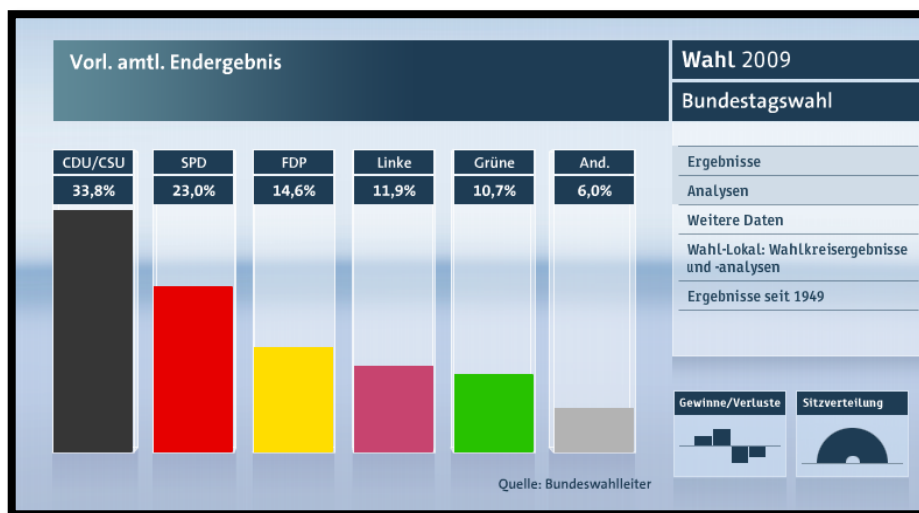


Figure 1: Election Results, Bundestag 2009
(Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2013)

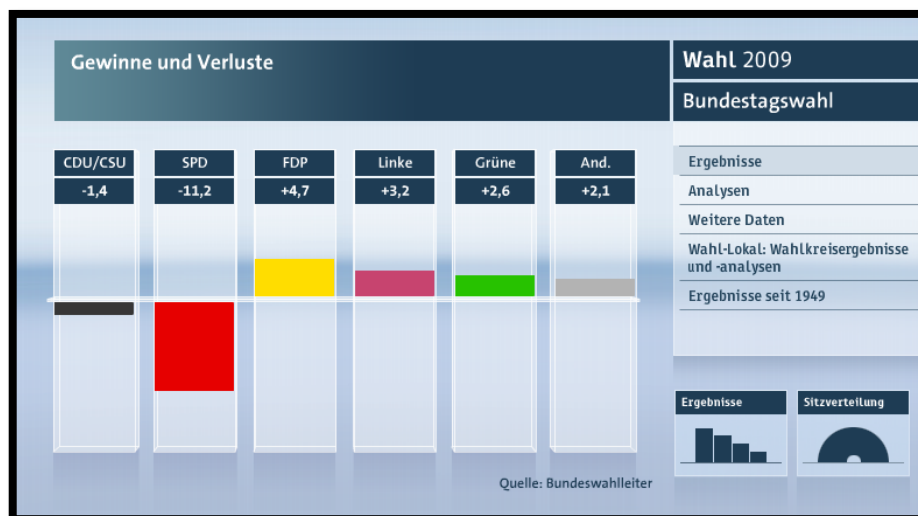


Figure 2: Relative Wins and Losses for Parties in Bundestag 2009
(Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2013)

Clearly, the two major parties lost votes in this election, although the SPD came out the true loser of this election. Bundestag 2009 constituted the SPD's worst election result since the German constitution. It is important to note that, despite the huge losses of their traditional coalition partner, the Greens still managed to increase in votes and actually garner the highest percentage they had ever received in a federal election. The FDP also increased a great deal, and it is perhaps unsurprising that in an election dominated by economic concerns, the two "expert" parties on fiscal policy should enter into a new governing coalition together.

Demographics

The breakdown of voters by age is quite revealing of the Green transformation. While 14% of people under 30 voted Green and 12% of people 30-44 voted Green, the proportion of voters aged 45-59 actually increased to 13%. For the number of voters in the 45-59 age bracket to be so similar to the number of voters under 30 is quite surprising. It certainly suggests a graying in the Green voter

base and helps account for the connection between Green message becoming more moderate and increased votes.

Another demographic aspect of this election worth noting is voter turnout. The voter turnout for Bundestag 2009 hit an all time low in German history. Turnout was down from nearly 78% participation in 2005 to 70.8% in 2009. This could certainly be a result of the voter fatigue and overall disinterest associated with the super election year and the grand coalition. It is also important to note that turnout was lower in East Germany than West. While not necessarily noteworthy in itself, it does represent a slight edge for the Greens, since they traditionally perform much better in West German regions, leaving East Germany a stronghold for the Left.

Finally, the demographic results of the 2009 Bundestag election show a strong correlation between a voter's education and their tendency to vote Green. In fact, the percentage actually doubles between those of "middle maturity" (somewhere between the equivalent of American middle school and high school graduation) and those with college degrees (9% to 18%, respectively). All of these statistics can be found Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (2013).

Importance of Other Parties

In studying Green performance in Bundestag 2009, the performance of other parties can influence Green results a great deal. The fact that the CDU, for instance, enjoyed high public approval going into the election, left less room for a smaller party to move in. However, the political structure pre-2009 created some possibilities for the Greens. The grand coalition made it very difficult for the

conventional parties (CDU and SPD) to oppose one another during campaign time given that they had been working so closely. The economic crisis only necessitated that the CDU and SPD work even closer together. This opened the door for smaller parties to take up the opposition and create interest in their policies.

The SPD's continuing downward trend also impacted the Greens. As the traditional coalition partner for the Greens, it became clear that the SPD could no longer be a viable asset to Green performance. In preparation for 2009, the Greens had to emancipate themselves from the SPD and make it known that they were open to other coalition possibilities. As reported by Gathmann (2009), the Greens announced that independence was their main goal for Bundestag 2009. They no longer wanted to be packed in to the "traditional left" with the SPD and The Left. Although perhaps necessitated by the failing SPD, this move, which inherently says "We are open to work with parties in the ideological right.", is a huge shift in Green thinking. Whereas simply entering into a coalition with the SPD would have been a major deviation from the 1980s anti-government Greens, they have publicly stated that they would work with any party in order to get their goals accomplished. This demonstrates a clear graying of the party as they consciously move closer and closer to the mainstream and the conventional.

Finally, the performance of the FDP and The Left must also be considered relative to Green performance. The FDP and CDU had made public their intention to form a governing coalition if possible. Additionally, due to the FDP's emphasis on issues like taxation, they had a clear and relevant political profile going into the election. These factors helped them increase in votes more than any other party. The

Left took a slightly different angle. With their historic concentration on social issues, they made sure to be the only party which concretely opposed the war in Afghanistan, allowing them to mobilize voters on a different issue than the pervasive economic crisis. Both of these strategies worked for the other two minor parties, and likely helped them to keep the Greens as the smallest party represented in government.

Analysis of Factors Present

With all of the different, conflicting, and complex political forces taking place in Bundestag 2009, several of the factors that facilitate Green success purported in this study were present. First, and most importantly, the expansion of the Green agenda was a major factor in bringing about an increase in Green votes. The Greens made a concerted effort to revamp their platform and discuss issues relevant to the average voter, not just relevant to the Greens' core principles. By bringing in economics, taxation, fiscal policy, business, etc., into the "green" way of thinking, the Greens were able to become much more competitive overall. They began to make the move out of their "niche" of environmental politics and into a more mainstream and all-encompassing party. Klaver and Markovits (2012) note that the Greens' self-branding endeavors to create a kind of "green capitalism" in Germany, described by Markovits as "ecological, peaceful, inclusive, moderate, considerate – in short a greenish kind of capitalism, a capitalism with a human touch and face...", have been immensely successful for the Greens. (9) The fact that the Greens' campaign was ideologically more similar to the CDU than the SPD was to the CDU is an immense indicator of the evolution in the Greens' agenda.

The graying of the Green Party is the second most important factor in helping the Greens to gain votes in Bundestag 2009. Their professionalization methods allowed them to campaign and accrue votes more like the established parties. In perhaps the most ironic way of looking at this shift, in The Greens' shift to inter-party centralized leadership they have effectively mimicked the leadership structure of the German government, which is something they were foundationally against at their creation in the 1980's. In other words, in their effort to become more electorally competitive, the Greens' have come to resemble that which they were created to fundamentally oppose.

The generational forces acting upon the Greens are also an important component of the graying of the party. The Green Party is a very unique study in the sense that its evolution has occurred in one generation. Many of the party leaders now were members at its beginnings in the 1980s. Thus, not only is the party graying, but many of its individual members have grayed along with it. This fact is exhibited in the demographics of an age bracket's likelihood to vote Green. Those young and radical activists who once attended functions in blue jeans and sneakers are now in their 50's, with families, homes, careers, and mortgages. This has inevitably been a driving force in the mainstreaming of the party. Klaver and Markovits (2012) posit that it is merely an empirical reality that young people in industrialized democracies tend to be attracted further to the left, and become more conservative as they age. In fact, a *Spiegel* article written shortly after the 2009 election describes tensions between the youth and the elders of the party; the young members are angry that they are kept out of leadership positions, left to follow the

lead of more “established” senior leaders (Gathmann 2009). For a party literally founded by the youth, this is quite a revealing transformation.

Interestingly, even though the Greens in Germany are equated with ecology, environmental concerns seemed to play a much smaller role in helping the Greens succeed in 2009. Though many people may have voted Green based on local environmental problems, nationally the environment was not a public concern. Despite the absence of their core interest in public sentiment, the Greens succeeded heartily. Thus, other factors (such as the expansion of the agenda or the graying of the party) must have played a much stronger role in creating Green success.

A number of other factors were naturally at play in Bundestag 2009. The performance of other parties created a unique environment in which the Greens competed. The political atmosphere in which the governing coalition, the economic crisis, and fatigue associated with the super election year all played a role was also a key determinant. Finally, demographics like voter turnout may have effected the voting results as well. Ultimately, however, in terms of the factors considered in this study, the expansion of the Green agenda and the graying of the party were the major contributors to Green success.

CASE STUDY: BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG STATE ELECTION 2011

Baden-Württemberg Background

Baden Württemberg is the third largest state in Germany in terms of both population and territorial area. Due to heavy industry, manufacturing, and a thriving wine production sector, Baden-Württemberg is one of the most economically prosperous regions in the entire European Union. In 2011, it boasted 5.5%

unemployment, while Germany's overall unemployment was 9% (Baden-Württemberg Statistisches Landesamt).

Prior to 2011, Baden-Württemberg had long been a conservative stronghold; the CDU had governed the state for 58 consecutive years. Additionally, the FDP, which firmly advocates for economic liberalization, had traditionally performed very well in the state. This might seem like an odd political setting for the Green Party to jump from 17 to 36 seats since the 2006 state election, earn over 24% of the vote, and become the senior member of a new governing coalition. However, there are other aspects of Baden-Württemberg's history that could make it receptive to the Green Party's ideals.

Baden-Württemberg is one of the very first sites of anti-nuclear activism in Germany (Creating Participatory Democracy: Green Politics in Germany Since 1983). Because of its location on the Rhine, where Germany had proposed to set up a number of nuclear reactors in the 1970s, the people of Baden-Württemberg became starkly opposed to nuclear energy. These reactors were perceived as a threat to Baden-Württemberg's beloved wine culture. Baden-Württemberg also has the most institutes of higher education than any other German state; universities and urban areas have generally been particularly supportive of the Green movement.

Political Atmosphere

The political atmosphere before the 2011 election in Baden-Württemberg was especially tumultuous. First, "Stuttgart 21" became a major factor in the election. Stuttgart 21 refers to a building project that would convert the Stuttgart

train station from a dead end station to a through station for high speed transit. The CDU, FDP, and SPD all supported the project both on the state and parliamentary level. The Greens took up the opposition, claiming that this construction would jeopardize natural resources and cause pollution, traffic, noise, and danger to the local population. This opposition politically mobilized preexisting grassroots concern over the proposal.

Another hot debate in Baden-Württemberg was nuclear energy.

Approximately one year before the election, the federal government (CDU-FDP) fell through on their previous agreement with the SPD and the Greens to phase out the usage of nuclear energy by 2034. The prime minister of Baden-Württemberg, Stephan Mappus (CDU), stood behind this cancellation. This was an affront to the political left, and unpopular with the longstanding antinuclear movement in the state. Thus, the question of nuclear energy had been an important issue even before the events of Fukushima, which occurred barely two weeks before the scheduled election and utterly sensationalized the topic. The overwhelming media attention and widespread global scrutiny of nuclear power following this disaster played directly into one of the Greens' core platform goals since the 1980s, and proved a notable electoral setback for long term nuclear defenders like the CDU and FDP.

According to Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (2013), the most important factors motivating individual voters going into the 2011 election were nuclear energy, Stuttgart 21, education, jobs, and political dissatisfaction. Perhaps because of Baden-Württemberg's relative economic prowess, issues like economy, taxation, unemployment, etc. on which the CDU and FDP traditionally perform very well,

ranked low on the average voter's agenda. All of the most important issues with the exception of job creation encompass values the Greens have strongly promoted for years. National issues were also clearly a concern in this election, as political dissatisfaction and the perceived poor performance of the federal government placed in the top five issues driving voter selection.

Because of such salient issues as nuclear energy and Stuttgart 21, this election was highly polarized, and voter turnout hit a record high (66%). Keil and Gabriel (2012) suggest that the Greens did the best job of motivating voters, and thus benefitted more from this increased voter turnout than other parties. Overall, the political atmosphere was one fraught with political tensions. In personal correspondence with Schwalba-Hoth in January 2013, he notes that this election is an indication that the people of Baden-Württemberg were fed up with CDU dominance, and ready for a change in government, and the emergence of traditional Green issues like the environment only further set up the Greens for an electoral victory.

The Campaign

The Greens had campaigned against Stuttgart 21 in Stuttgart's municipal election in 2010 and found it to be very effective. In the 2011 state election, the Greens took their anti-Stuttgart 21 stance and expanded it to become a symbol for the rejection of overall government performance. Stuttgart 21 became a call for broad political change. The Greens did more than just speak out against Stuttgart 21, though, they organized and supported several mass demonstrations against the

project. This served to mobilize their grassroots base and draw even more attention to the cause.

In terms of nuclear energy, the Greens barely had to campaign after Fukushima. Since their creation in the 1980s the Greens have been mainly associated with two issues: the environment and nuclear energy. Because the Green stance against nuclear energy has been a staple in their platform for over twenty years, the public knew who to look to after the events of Fukushima. The Greens were able to effectively say “I told you so.” and watch the other parties scramble to regain credibility.

Another very important factor in the state election campaign was the reputation of individual candidates. The CDU’s candidate was Stephan Mappus, the incumbent governor. He was significantly better known to the general public, but this could have hurt him electorally. In pre-election polls, Mappus was evaluated as worse than his competitors in nearly every category of the poll, namely in terms of being credible, sympathetic, and in touch with the average voter. In fact, according to Keil and Gabriel (2012), he was given the worst evaluation of any Baden-Württemberg prime minister before an election. Although the SPD’s candidate, Nils Schmid, and the Green candidate Winfried Kretschmann were significantly less well-known than Mappus, the public’s assessment of Mappus did not work in the CDU’s favor. Additionally, Mappus was a major supporter of the federal government’s defense of nuclear power, which after Fukushima only hurt his credibility even more.

Before the election, the campaigns were mainly centered upon the most salient concerns like Stuttgart 21 and nuclear energy. The public's perception of CDU's failure federally and the apparent shortcomings of their candidate Stephan Mappus served to further weaken the CDU's stance going into the election. The main issues in the election and the usage of Stuttgart 21 to signify the public's readiness for change in government played in the Green's favor, which was boosted even more by Fukushima mere days before voting.

Election Results

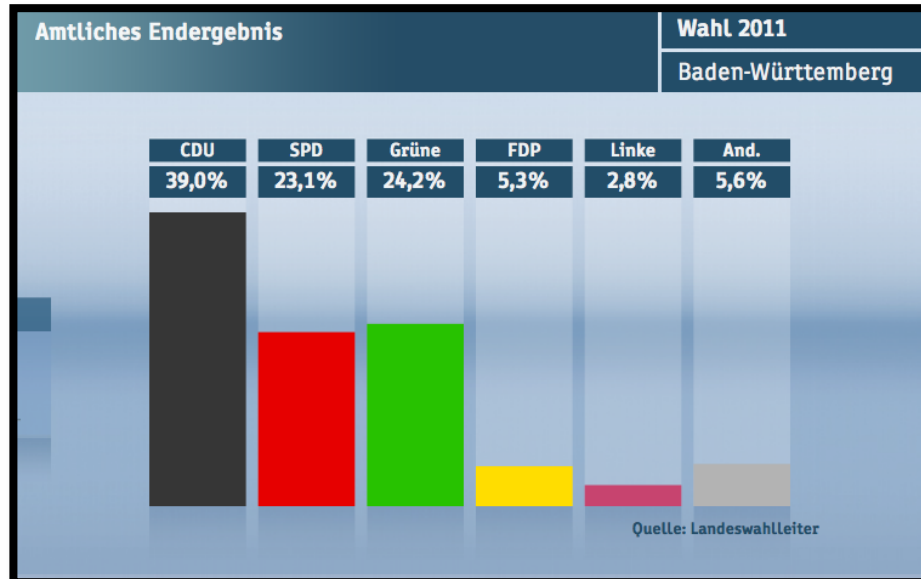


Figure 3: Election Results, Baden-Württemberg 2011
(Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2013)

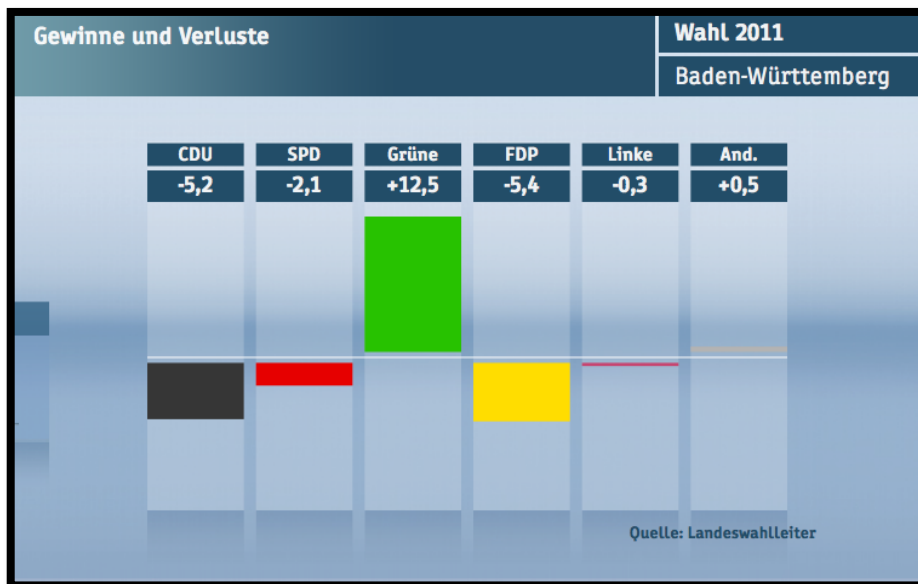


Figure 4: Relative Wins and Losses for Parties in Baden-Württemberg 2011 (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2013)

Although the CDU continued to garner the highest percentage of votes, they fell out of coalition viability and the Greens and SPD together constituted the majority of seats in the state parliament. In fact, the Greens were the only party to improve their election performance since the 2006 election, and by an incredible 12.9%. The CDU's votes fell 5.2%, the SPD fell 2.1%, and the FDP went from 10.7% of the total vote in 2006 to barely clearing the 5% hurdle with 5.3% in 2011.

Demographics

The most important demographic concerns in this case study are the correlation between education and voting Green, and the average age of Green supporters. In Baden-Württemberg, there is a strong connection between a voter's educational level and their likelihood to vote Green. According to Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (2013), only 13% of those with an education through grade 9 voted green, but the percentage climbs steadily and eventually reaches 36% for those with

college degrees. Because Baden-Württemberg boasts the most higher education institutions of any other German state, this certainly benefitted the Greens electorally (DC Network 2013).

Age is also a very important piece of information to consider. The breakdown Green votes into age brackets is especially interesting. While 26% of people under 30 voted Green, that number grew to 32% of those age 30-44, and, even more surprisingly, remained relatively stable at 31% for voters age 45-59. Above 60 the percentage drops to 15%. Such numbers of older voters would have been virtually unheard of in the earlier days of the Green Party. This information is key in demonstrating the graying of the Green Party. In fact, Winfried Kretschmann, the Green's candidate, is 64 years old. Clearly, the Green Party now includes and attracts much older supporters.

Importance of Other Parties

The performance of other parties relative to the Green success is also important to note. The CDU's performance, as previously mentioned, particularly suffered because most of the main issues in the election played out of their policy strengths and into the Green wheelhouse. Public disapproval of the federal government and fatigue from nearly 60 years of CDU domination also drew away traditional CDU voters. Finally, Stephan Mappus' declining popularity further harmed CDU's performance.

The FDP was perhaps the biggest loser of this election. Keil and Gabriel (2012) assert that nearly 75% of their former supporters gave their votes to other parties in 2011. While Baden-Württemberg was once considered an FDP stronghold

– it had governed in a coalition with the CDU for several years – the party has now barely met the 5% threshold for representation.

This election also constitutes the SPD's worst result in Baden-Württemberg state election history. This is partially due to an overall trend of decline in the SPD's electoral performance since 2002. Additionally, even though the main issues of the election were especially suited for the political left, the SPD could not take advantage of the atmosphere as well as the Greens could, because they had also been supportive of Stuttgart 21 and the continuation of nuclear power. Thus, the Greens benefitted from SPD's inability to capture the votes lost by the CDU or FDP.

Analysis of Factors Present

Environmental issues were extremely important in contributing to the Greens' success in Baden-Württemberg 2011. Because Stuttgart 21 and nuclear energy were the two most important issues for voters, the Green Party was in the perfect position to mobilize support. Many media outlets even ascribed the entire election result to simply those two issues, some went even further and claimed that Fukushima was the only factor driving the results of this election. The salience of these issues combined with Greens' overwhelming success makes a strong case for environmental issues as a major factor contributing to Green electoral success.

Whether or not the Greens expanded their agenda in this election is a tricky question. In many ways, the Green Party didn't have to truly expand their agenda, because the major issues of this election fell directly into their traditional platform. *Der Spiegel* (2011) reports *Die Berliner Zeitung's* very strong assertion that, in the new Green-SPD government:

"(The Greens) will control the ministries of environment, transportation, science, rural space, consumer protection, and a ministry for civil society. All the classic portfolios have gone to the SPD -- economy, finance, justice, labour, schools, welfare, and the interior ministry. The Greens have asserted power only in those areas dealing with their original concerns. Thirty years after their foundation, and near the pinnacle of their power (all they need now is a federal chancellor), the party has returned to its roots, pulled back to its original niche."

Although this is certainly an intriguing argument, many components of the Green performance in Baden-Württemberg deviate from the original Green platform. The Greens certainly took stances on all of the major issues in the election, including education and jobs, which were not core components of the early Greens. Also, the Greens' willingness to enter government and work in a coalition with a major party such as the SPD is a far cry from the anti-government and oppositional stance of the early Green Party. Finally, the overall Green behavior in this election is a reflection of the national agenda changes made by the party in preparation for the 2009 Bundestag election. Ultimately, the expansion of the Green agenda was present in this election and contributed to the Greens' ability to gain votes.

The graying of the party was also present in this election, as demonstrated by the ages of Green voters. The ability of the Greens to capture votes from higher age brackets influenced their overall increase in votes. Also, even though the Greens did

use some activist means to mobilize votes, such as supporting demonstrations, the Greens also demonstrated a professionalism reflective of national party changes.

Other unexpected factors also contributed to the results of this election. Most notably, the decline in other parties' popularity and the reputation of candidates. Because the CDU, FDP, and SPD all suffered great losses, the Greens were set up to recover some errant votes. Also, the relative unpopularity of Mappus proved a setback for the CDU campaign. Both of these factors played a role in the outcome of the 2011 election.

Overall, environmental concerns were the major factor contributing to Green success. The expansion of the agenda as a continuation of national party initiatives also opened the doors for the Greens to enact "green thinking" in all realms of politics and enter into their first governing coalition as the senior member. The graying of the party proved an interesting evolution from early Green politics, but likely wasn't a major contributing factor to the results. Other noteworthy factors also helped influence the election outcome.

CASE STUDY: MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN STATE ELECTION 2011

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Background

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is perhaps a less obvious state in which to study the Green Party's electoral performance. As a former East German state, it has quite a different history and voting pattern than Baden-Württemberg. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is the sixth largest German state in terms of territory, but only the fourteenth largest in terms of population (out of sixteen German states). It is very sparsely populated, very poor, and the least industrial state in Germany. Meanwhile,

however, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern boasts the most national parks in Germany, an extensive shoreline, and abundant natural resources.

One important consideration in terms of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is its internal division. While the region of Mecklenburg traditionally votes along left wing party lines, Vorpommern was a Nazi stronghold during World War II. The SPD has been in government in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern since 1998, and enjoys relatively high popularity, even though Angela Merkel, Germany's Chancellor originally hails from the state.

Historically the Greens have been very weak in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. In fact, 2011 represents the first time the Greens have ever exceeded the 5% hurdle and gained entrance into state parliament. Although clearly a meager success, it is perhaps more important to understand how the Greens increased their votes in this election than in a state more historically predisposed to Green thinking.

Political Atmosphere

The political atmosphere going into the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011 state election was dominated by state interests. In fact, Dieter Roth (2011) states that 59% of voters said their votes were determined solely by state-specific politics. The top issues according to Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (2013) were: jobs, wages, exodus (out of the state), and education. As one of the poorest states in Germany, and given that 53% of residents believed that Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's economy was worse than the other East German states, it is understandable that improving the financial situation of the state would be the major concern of most voters. This is an entirely different atmosphere from that of Baden-Württemberg in the same year;

Baden-Württemberg's relative economic prowess allowed its voters to focus on other concerns. However, as evidenced in the Bundestag 2009 election, the presence economic crisis can tend to dominate any given election.

Although state interests were very important in this election, Roth (2011) also notes a clear trend in public opinion against the governing parties in Berlin (CDU and FDP). Additionally, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's SPD prime minister Erwin Sellering had very high approval ratings and regularly surpassed other parties' candidates in pre-election polls. The combined disapproval of federal government and approval of state government created a very left-leaning political atmosphere, despite the economic concerns that might lead one to believe that more fiscal-oriented parties like the CDU or FDP could gain ground.

A final key component of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's political atmosphere before the 2011 state election is the rise of the radical right wing. During personal correspondence in January 2013, Schwalba-Hoth asserted that this phenomenon is a key determinant in the results of the election. The NPD – the National Democratic Party of Germany – is a far right wing nationalist party normally described as a neo-Nazi organization. The NPD tends to perform very well among young voters with relatively low educational attainment. This party has continued to resonate in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern as a purported protector of social equality and the rights of the underprivileged. Roth (2011) describes the public's reaction to the rise of this party with the results of a pre-election day poll: one in every three people agreed with the statement "The NPD says what a lot of other people think." and nearly 17% of people stated that they would not care if the NPD entered state government.

Germany, perhaps more so than other nations, is extremely cautious with nationalist parties such as the NPD, and their presence and support certainly has a disconcerting effect on many voters. In demonstration of public concern, when the NPD crossed the 5% hurdle in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's 2006 state election, the established parties took unilateral action to reject the NPD's influence in state parliament. This issue, combined with widespread economic concerns, created a unique environment for the Greens in which to operate.

Campaign

There are two main elements of the Green campaign in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern that need to be considered. First, the Greens took an active stance against NPD entrance into the state parliament in their campaign. Though opposing an organization that may approve of curtailing the Green core virtues of human rights, pacifism, equality, among others, would be within the original Green interest, this departure from standard campaigning on ecological grounds represents a significant expansion of the Green agenda. The Greens knew that the NPD was a major public concern, and seized the opportunity to acquire votes in sheer opposition to the NPD. A common Green campaign poster, featured in a *Spiegel* (2011) article during election time, is an important visualization of this campaign tactic:



Figure 5: Green Campaign Poster in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011 (Green In Brown Out) (Der Spiegel 2011)

Literally translated, this publication says “Green In, Brown Out!” (brown referring to the NPD). Essentially the Greens were trying to gain votes by entreating voters to keep the NPD from winning parliamentary seats.

Another interesting fact is that the popular German band Rammstein wrote a song in 2001 entitled “Rein, Raus” (In, Out). It is reasonable to speculate that, upon reading this poster, many Germans would make the connection to one of Germany’s most beloved bands. By campaigning based on opposition to another party and by alluding to popular culture, the Greens are appealing to the mainstream in order to solicit votes. This strategy, which hardly discusses any Green policy interests in terms of ecologically sustainable politics, signifies a shift in agenda as well as a shift in objective for the Greens in this election.

A second important campaign element is an outgrowth of Green national policy. Because, in preparation for the 2009 Bundestag, the Greens had for the first time truly addressed their approach to economic policy, the party now had a

national platform for green economics. This was undoubtedly a strength for the Greens in an election dominated by fiscal concerns. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is a very poor state seeking to improve its condition, but it also boasts extensive natural resources, which could make the Greens notion of economic growth with ecologically sustainable values especially pertinent to the people of this state. As stated in the case study on Bundestag 2009, the Green interest in fiscal policy denotes a considerable expansion in agenda, and effectively made this very weak party a more relevant player in the particular political atmosphere of the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011 state election.

Election Results

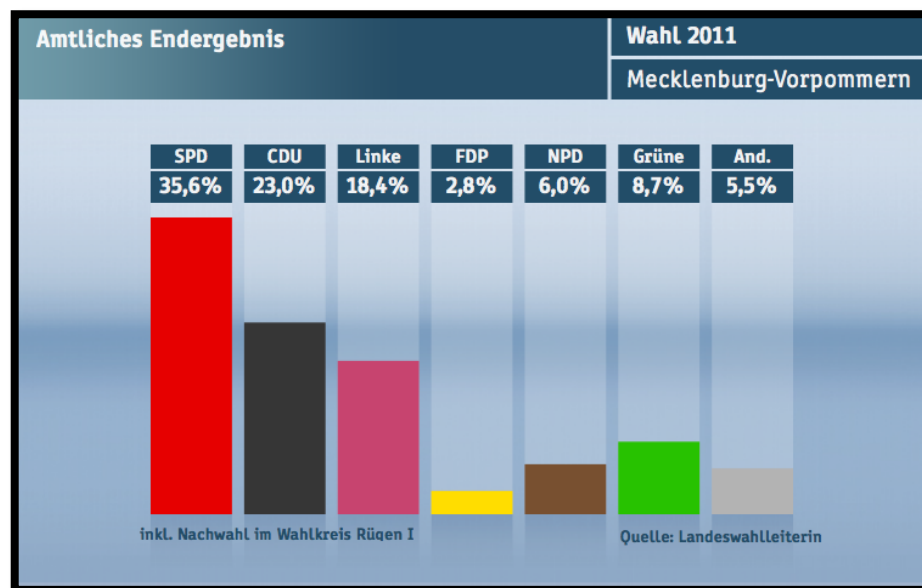


Figure 6: Election Results, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011
(Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2013)

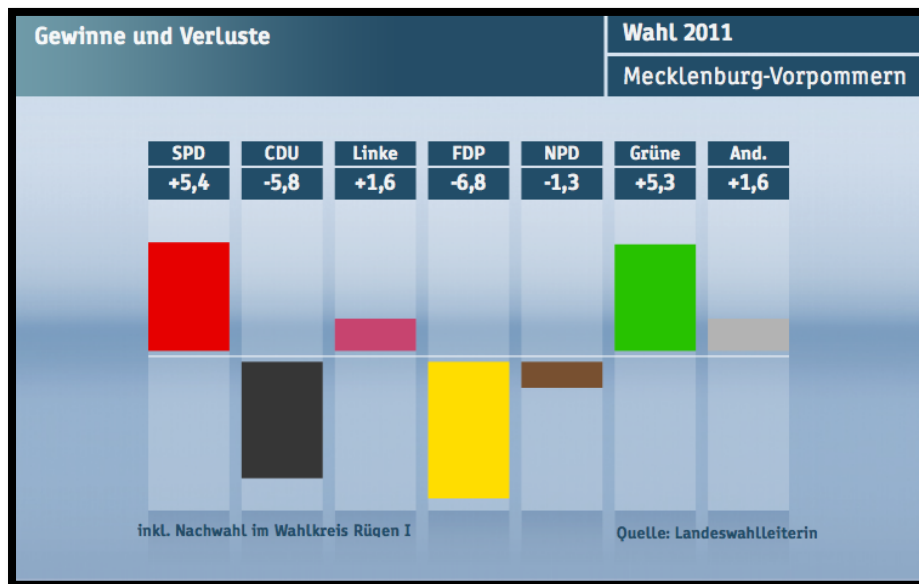


Figure 7: Relative Wins and Losses For Parties in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011 (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen 2013)

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011 is a significant election for the Greens because, as of their ascension into parliament in 2011 with 8.7% of the vote, the Green Party is now represented in the state parliaments of all 16 German states.

The trend against the governing parties, the CDU and the FDP, is clear in the chart representing relative wins and losses. Both parties decreased in votes by huge margins and opened the door for parties further to the left to grow. The fact that the Greens boosted their votes by nearly the same percentage as the dominant SPD is an indication of this state's tendency toward the left in this election.

Demographics

The percentage of Green voters by age bracket follows a similar pattern as the Bundestag 2009 election and the Baden-Württemberg 2011 state election. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (2013) reports that 13% of those under 30 voted Green, and 12% 30-44 voted Green. This percentage drops to 8% for those 45-59. Although

the percentage of voters in the 45-59 age bracket was much closer to the 30-44 age bracket in the other two elections, the consistency of above 30 voters voting at a similar rate to younger voters displayed across these three elections is an important gauge of the graying of the Green Party.

Another potentially important demographic concern is that of education and occupation. Although the strong correlation between educational level is present in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the state possesses far fewer educational institutions than Baden-Württemberg, suggesting a disadvantage for the Greens to pull support from a traditional demographic base. Also, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has more blue collar workers than Baden-Württemberg, another demographic group that tends to be less receptive to Green policy.

Importance of Other Parties

Other parties certainly played a role in the outcome of this election for the Greens. First, and most notably, the NPD's presence in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern created a rather contentious electoral environment. The fact that the Greens took up a campaign stance in order to block the NPD from entering the state parliament demonstrates the importance of the NPD in the election. In fact, the NPD beat out the FDP in crossing the 5% threshold. In an election dominated by economics, it is interesting that the FDP, one of the fiscal "experts" of the German party system, would perform so poorly in relation to a neo-Nazi organization. However, the NPD provided an opportunity for the Greens to expand their agenda.

The public discontent with the CDU and FDP's national performance is also important in relation to this election. With economic issues pervading public

discourse, but a simultaneous trend against the two economically-minded parties, this produced a window for other parties to have their economic policies truly considered. The Green's recent focus on this new agenda issue helped them move in to this open space.

The roles of the SPD and the Left are also important in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Unlike other areas of Germany, the SPD continued to perform very well. While this was somewhat of an advantage for the Greens, demonstrating the public's leftward leaning voting tendencies, it also likely hindered the Greens from competing with this more established party like it has in areas where the SPD decline is more pronounced. It is also crucial to note that the Left Party has traditionally had a stronghold in former East Germany. Its long-term popularity has been an impediment to the Greens' ability to gain ground in these regions, as voters generally choose the SPD or the Left when inclined to vote left.

Analysis of Factors Present

The expansion of the Green agenda is, once again, an important factor in contributing to success. The Greens' willingness to campaign on issues like problematic parties and the economy is a marked shift from Green foundational values. As these issues drove individual voters much more than traditional Green subjects, this expansion into new policy realms helped the Green Party appeal to more voters than they could have with their original platform.

The graying of the Green Party is also a key factor in this election. The ages of Green voters demonstrates the aging of Green support. The campaign methodology used by the Greens in this election is also a noteworthy indicator of graying. By

gearing their marketing toward the mainstream issues of this particular political environment, the Greens showed a political pragmatism that has not always been a component of Green strategy. Early Greens would have scoffed at the idea of using issues outside of their main objectives simply to gain decision-making status in government. This new attitude is a move toward more conventional party politics, illustrating a clear aging of Green beliefs, activities, and goals.

Finally, the environment played a surprisingly small role in the 2011 Mecklenburg-Vorpommern state election. This is surprising given the many environmental factors in the state which seemingly should make it more receptive to Green governance. The vast natural resources, protected land, shoreline, and tourism industry dependent on those elements would lead one to believe that sustainability and conservation would be major factors in state politics. Additionally, the presence of Gorleben, a major nuclear waste dump site immediately across the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern border with Niedersachsen, might be predicted to play a greater role than it did in this election. This nuclear waste depository has been a major site of protest over the years among all neighboring regions. The apparent absence of this issue in the Green's central campaign platform is certainly a surprise. It must be thus inferred that the depth of the economic struggles of this state outweighed environmental concerns for the average voter.

DISCUSSION

Implications

My research indicates that the factors of agenda expansion, environmental concerns, and party graying can play a significant role in influencing the Green Party's electoral performance in Germany. The case studies of Bundestag 2009, Baden-Württemberg 2011, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011 cover a broad cross section of Germany, from federal to state level, former East to former West, urban to rural, and large to small. Because of this, I have concluded that the factors analyzed in this study can be applied to any German election as possible explanations for Green success. The presence or absence of these factors can be a telling sign of the campaign atmosphere in which the Greens must function and strive for representation, and how the Green strategy in response to atmospheric conditions affected election results.

In the Bundestag 2009 election, the Greens' newly expanded agenda was the most important factor contributing to their improved performance since Bundestag 2005. Because this new platform covered campaign issues the Greens had entirely rejected at their founding, such as the economy, business, and job creation, the Greens were effectively able to appeal to a larger proportion of voters. Since this particular election was dominated by economic concerns, this was a major advantage for the Greens. A very close second contributing factor to Green performance in Bundestag 2009 was the graying of the party. The professionalization measures undertaken by the party after 2005 were very beneficial to the Green campaign. The structural reorganization made the Greens

more mainstream, and the conscious movement away from radical campaign marketing appealed to moderate voters. This reveals a new and effective pragmatism that certainly influenced Green performance. The generational forces present in the Green Party in 2009 also demonstrate the marked graying in the Green voting base and leadership since the 1980s. The environment was the third most important factor for the Greens in Bundestag 2009. Because the environment ranked low on national voting concerns, the Greens were not able to use environmental factors to mobilize votes. It is perhaps even more telling of Green agenda expansion and graying that the party strayed from environmental concerns in order to fit the concerns of the average voter, when a younger Green Party would have simply stuck with their ecological platform no matter what.

In the Baden-Württemberg 2011 election, the environment played the largest role influencing Green electoral success. The salience of environmental factors such as Stuttgart 21 and nuclear energy (both before and even more so after the Fukushima disaster) provided the perfect opportunity for the Green Party to campaign on its original platform. The fact that the Greens have historically been equated with the environment made them the most credible party to handle such issues. The graying of the party is the second most important contributor to Green success in Baden-Württemberg 2011. The ability of the Greens to gain votes from older age groups helped them garner an increasing percentage of votes. Also the relative professionalism in campaign methodology despite ample opportunity for extreme environmental marketing shows a maturation of the party. Finally, the simple fact that the Greens entered government as the senior member of a

governing coalition establishes the shift from radical to practical present in the modern Green Party. Expansion of the Green agenda was the least important factor in the Greens' performance, because the Greens were not required to greatly change their original platform in order to succeed. However, slight expansions in agenda did occur in terms of the party taking stances on non-traditional Green issues as a manifestation of national party changes pre-2009. The desire to join in a coalition with the SPD stated during campaign time is also an indication of agenda expansion.

In the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011 election, the Green expansion of agenda influenced their ability to finally enter into the state parliament most. The Greens campaigned most *against* the NPD, instead of *for* their fundamental values, signifying a major shift in campaign agenda. The Greens also benefitted from their new national platform which allowed them to better address economic policies. The graying of the party was present and constitutes the second most influential factor in Green success in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. First, the aging of the Green voter base shows older voters increasingly voting Green. Second, the fact that the Greens used the NPD and mainstream political issues as central parts of their campaign strategy demonstrates a pragmatism in the Green Party to simply get elected. This objective, though fundamental for any political party, has not always been such a simple component of Green campaign strategy. The environment played a small role in determining the results of this election. Despite some aspects of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern's landscape that might lead one to believe that environmental conservation would be important to voters, this issue ranked low for the average voter and thus did not significantly help the Greens attain parliamentary seats.

With all of this in mind, the expansion of the Green agenda is the most important factor affecting the Green Party's success in German politics. The graying of the party has also played a significant role in helping the Greens become more professional, conventional, and effective electorally. Though the environment only played a considerable role in Baden-Württemberg, the extreme degree to which this factor swayed the results of this election demonstrates that environmental concerns, when present, hold major potential to influence Green success. Because the Greens are "the environmental party", when the populace has environmental concerns, they will invariably look to the Greens for answers. Thus, all three factors in this study hold importance in determining the potential for Green success in election, though environmental concerns can only play a major role in specific situations.

Limitations

There are several limitations in a study of this nature, the first being that a qualitative study naturally lends itself to subjectivity. It can be difficult to ensure that one has examined all aspects of a given election thoroughly and compiled a comprehensive list of contributing factors. Other limitations come in the form of data procurement. Most scholarly sources on the subject of German state elections especially are written in very dense academic German that can be complicated for the average reader to decipher. There is also a good deal of discrepancy in the amount of material on Green performance in these elections. Because Baden-Württemberg 2011 was such a sensational election for the Green Party, many have hoped to identify how exactly these results came about for the Greens, the clear

winner of the election. However, because the Greens performed quite well relatively but overall modestly in Bundestag 2009 and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011, there is less information available relating specifically to the Green Party. A final problematic element of this study has to do with journalistic sources. The media tends to give more attention to sensational issues, such as the Fukushima disaster. Many journalists are quick to denote such a factor's importance, but it can be hard to tell if this is really as explanatory as the media suggests, or if its popularity is merely stifling the discussion of perhaps less scintillating contributing factors.

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the German Green Party has seen some incredible success. The purpose of this study is to examine which factors contribute most to Green electoral success in any German election. Through detailed case studies of the most recent federal parliamentary election, Bundestag 2009, and two state parliament elections, Baden-Württemberg 2011 and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2011, one can gain a picture of the Green Party's performance in a broad cross-section of German elections. Within each case study, I thoroughly analyze the presence or absence of a set of factors that literature on the subject suggests could contribute to Green success. These factors are: the presence of widespread environmental concerns, the expansion of the Green Party's agenda, and the graying of the party. Ultimately, the expansion of the agenda and the graying of the party are found to be the most influential factors in the case studies. However, environmental concerns can play an overwhelming role in contributing to Green success when present, making each of these factors important considerations. Because of the broad scope of these case studies, it is proposed that these factors can be generalized as contributors to Green success in any German election.