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## What Makes Green Parties Successful: A Comparative Analysis of Germany, Austria, and France

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WHAT MAKES GREEN PARTIES SUCCESSFUL:  
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GERMANY, AUSTRIA, AND FRANCE

An Undergraduate Honors Thesis  
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### **Abstract**

Starting in the 1980s, green parties began to make their debut. Their establishment was considered to be largely in response to environmental and anti-nuclear movements. Although their history has been quite brief, these parties have been making waves throughout the world. Throughout this research, a pattern arises between economic stability and quality of life, mainstream party competition, policy positions, and green voters themselves when examining the success of the green parties. In particular, they have demonstrated great success in the European Union. In an attempt to explain this success, this research explores three specific green parties: the German, the Austrian, and the French. Through the lens of these three countries, it eventually becomes clear why some are more successful than others in pushing their environmental agenda. In light of the discoveries of this research, the future of green parties is hopeful and through following the guidelines found, any greens can be successful.

**Key Words:** Green Party, Environmentalism, Economic Stability, Quality of Life, Policy

## **Introduction**

Due to astronomical increases in carbon emissions resulting from the human process of industrialization, climate change has been occurring at alarming rates. Green parties, defined as a political party dedicated to environmentalism, social justice, and non-violence were first established in the 1970s. This party presents an important political move towards addressing the issues associated with climate change and other environmental issues. However, the success of green parties is contingent on the general wealth and stability of a country. This paper examines some of the reasons green parties tend to rise in popularity during times of prosperity. When larger parties are not addressing green issues, they can flourish. My argument will be broken down into establishment of relevance, research design, literature review and theory, case studies, and direct comparison.

## **Relevance for Modern Issues**

The existence of green parties is directly related to large-scale global issues such as climate change as reflected in the 2017 Charter of the Global Greens. This charter represents over 80 green parties worldwide and is therefore a clear indicator of the ideals that unify these parties globally. While green parties have come into existence to combat many issues, their current focus is climate change. This compassion toward the environment is introduced in the opening statements of the Global Greens Charter which states that “United in our awareness that we depend on the Earth’s vitality, diversity and beauty, and that it is our responsibility to pass them on, undiminished or even improved, to the next generation” (“Charter,” 2017, p. 2). Their main goal of fighting climate change is later more explicitly outlined in the Political Action section of the charter where it declares “The climate crisis is both greatest challenge facing the

global community and the greatest opportunity for humanity to rethink how we live, in a way that is socially just and within the Earth's ecological limit" ("Charter," 2017, p. 11). It is the greens goal to find ways to help maintain the earth so that future generations can enjoy it in the same way those before them have.

In addition to having a strong relationship with climate change, the greens can also heavily associate with women's issues and human rights globally. European green parties are more committed to gender equality than their other left-wing party counterparts (Keith & Verge, 2018). This is best observed through an evaluation of inclusion of women in leadership roles, inclusion of women's organizations within parties, the content of party platforms, and more. When Naomi Bick, political science PhD student at Western Michigan University, considered women's representation in European green parties, she found that "due to their unique characteristics, green parties provide new insight into traditional comparative politics literature and our understanding of the role of parties in improving descriptive and substantive representation for women" (Bick, 2019). In other words, the unique perspective green parties take in regards to governance allows for unprecedented advancements for women.

### **Research Design**

In preparing my research, I was quite cautious of where to direct my focus. In determining the relationship between wealth and stability within a country and Green Party popularity, it was a matter of establishing credibility through literature review and theory and applying the findings through case studies. In my literature review and theory, I investigated the relationships between the Green Party and economic stability and quality of life, mainstream party competition, policy positions, and green voters themselves. While my case study selection

sprouted from a personal interest in European nations, having a regional specialization in Europe as part of my degree, the countries selected are prime examples of what green parties in action can look like.

The choice of Germany, France, and Austria for their green parties is a very intentional focus. These countries' parties have some of the highest percentages of secured office seats in the world, and being all Western European countries helps them share similar economic successes. German greens are currently polling at unprecedented levels of 20.50% in the 2019 elections. Austria and France, on the other hand, maintain quite similar cultures to Germany yet their success has been lower with Austria coming in at 14.08% and France at 13.47%. Furthermore, the choice of explicitly European countries can be further reinforced by the success demonstrated by greens of Europe at the regional level where they hold 23.00% of seats in the European Parliament ("Poll of Polls," 2019). It is also worth noting that Germany has one of the most successful green parties in the world. Choosing to focus in on these three countries is a great way to gauge the success of green parties.

## **Literature Review and Theory**

### **Economic Stability and Quality of Life**

Scholarship suggests that the success of green parties is due largely to economic stability and quality of life in the country in which they operate. Zack Grant examines the socioeconomic development of the different regions in which green parties reside. In general, Grant is seeking to answer the question of why European green parties seem to perform so unevenly despite their relative proximity to one another. Ultimately, the point Grant presented was best summarized by Inglehart's theory of post-materialism (Inglehart, 2008) "which predicts inevitable shifts in the

dominant axis of political conflict from class-based to quality-of-life based issues (of which environmentalism is often treated as quintessential) due to rising levels of existential security” (Grant, 2018). Grant concludes that when the basic needs of a nation are met, they can move their efforts into a focus on larger global issues like climate change which is exactly what the Green Party addresses. It is worth noting that the economic standing of European countries varies greatly from one to the next, thus contributing to the uneven performance of green parties among them. Furthermore, there is variation in the human development index, which helps indicate quality of life, among European countries.

In addition to Grant, Ferdinand Müller-Rommel examines the electoral strength of green parties in Europe over the past 20 years. Through his research, Müller-Rommel found that most green parties throughout Europe have made dramatic gains in electoral success. Much of this conclusion came from consideration of the economy of these countries. When considering the economics, the author leaned on two critical points: “first, as welfare states develop more fully and the economy becomes stronger, the public debate shifts from 'old' to 'new' issues which provides a fertile ground for green parties' electoral success. Secondly, the stronger the national economy, the more the traditional class cleavage is undermined, and the greater the chances for green parties to mobilize the newly dealigned voters” (Müller-Rommel, 1998). In other words, as the economy becomes stronger, the public is able to shift its focus to newer political issues which provide the perfect building ground for green parties. When the national economy is stronger, the traditional classes that divide society into groups begin to dissipate giving greens the perfect way to appeal to voters.

The idea of economic stability and quality of life contributing to Green Party success can be brought forth in Germany, for example, which has one of the most successful economies in

the world coming in with a GDP of 3.948 trillion US dollars in 2018 only behind the United States, China, and Japan. (“Rankings,” 2020). Additionally, they have demonstrated high success through their human development index ranking as the fourth highest scoring country in the world with a HDI value of 0.939 (“Human,” 2019). Since Germany is regarded as home to one of the most successful green parties when considering its polling rates and office positions held, it is under no question that the stability of this nation has made way for much of the success the greens have encountered.

On the other hand, a lack of economic stability can also contribute to the failures of a Green Party. This comes to light when considering Austria. While the economic stability of Austria is quite strong, their Green Party has encountered economic problems. While there are many factors that play into the Green Party performance of Austria in 2017, “Many of the immediate challenges facing the party are organizational and relate to the federal party’s accumulated debt from previous campaigns and securing official party funding” (Buzogány, 2018). This debt largely came from a presidential campaign for Alexander Van der Bellen which left them with over €5 million in debt.

### **Mainstream Party Competition**

In addition to economic stability and quality of life, another strong indicator of support for the Green Party can be found when a country is dominated by long-standing political parties. Neil Carter finds that mainstream parties are generally dismissive toward the environment. In general, research indicates that mainstream parties such as the Christian Democratic Union of Germany or Les Républicains in France are generally less appealing to left-wing voters. On the contrary, greens “want to make a difference, hence their willingness to work with both left-wing

and right-wing parties” (Carter, 2013). This, in many ways, makes them an easier choice than mainstream parties because they act more as a neutral ground rather than one extreme over another.

Based on data from 32 countries over the span of 45 years, Tilley and Grant tested theories regarding Green Party success. Their findings suggested that green parties are particularly apt to do well in areas with high wealth or large environmental disputes. They also analyzed the impact that mainstream parties can have on the Green Party’s chosen campaign strategy. In this investigation, they found that while adopting environmental issues works for the short term, eventually once the Green Party has survived a number of elections the mainstream parties no longer have an effect.

Tilley and Grant believe that the success of niche parties like the greens is directly dependent on how mainstream parties choose to address them. While greens could eventually become a mainstream party perhaps, this definition as niche refers to the fact that the party is defined by the niche issue of environmentalism. When addressing a niche party, the larger parties can do one of three things: ignore the competition, oppose their policies, or adopt their policies. A key example of this would be how mainstream parties choose to address the greens’ heavy focus on environmentalism. They can choose to ignore the issue completely, oppose the green perspective, or adopt the exact same policies. This idea is based on suggestions made by Bonnie Meguid, a professor of political science at the University of Rochester. “Meguid’s findings suggest that niche parties benefit when both major parties take adversarial positions on the niche party’s central issue. In effect, this bolsters the salience of the key policy area and increases the distinctiveness of the niche party’s policy position” (Grant & Tilley, 2018). When the

mainstream takes on an opposing position the greens central issue (environmentalism), it increases the greens' ability to stand out among the pack.

Clearly, research indicates that party competition plays a large role in the success of a Green Party. One way to affirm this claim in context is to consider the German greens. The German greens simply keep gaining momentum, so many have been looking to understand why. Outside of their economic stability and high quality of life within the nation, the Green Party offers German voters something the mainstream parties simply do not. The greens work to address problems with real answers by “offering German voters a real alternative after years of coalition government” (Schütz, 2018). This is because over the recent years many have turned away from their home parties out of anger from dissatisfaction.

The German greens, like many others, check all of the boxes. They appeal to a variety of controversial issues in a moderate way rather than leaning to one extreme or another. This take allows German greens to stand out among the pack. In the past, German greens started from a more radical environmentalist perspective, but quickly transitioned into “a broader left-libertarian ‘rainbow catch-all’ position, incorporating issues of feminism and multiculturalism” (Grant & Tilley, 2018) which quickly increased their support. Many German greens are no longer long-standing supporters, but new additions who have found themselves no longer fitting with the mainstream.

### **Policy Positions**

A large portion of green success can also be attributed to policy selection. For example, James Adams, Michael Clark, Lawrence Ezrow, and Garrett Glasgow examine the differences between communist, green, and extreme nationalist policies. They attempt to answer the question

of whether adjusting their policies in light of shifts in public opinion and making changes in this manner has any effect on party support. They find no evidence to support this question.

However, they do find evidence that mainstream parties adjust their policies based on public opinion. Even stranger among their discoveries was the fact that when these niche parties adjust their policy positions, they often suffer at the polls. They believed this to be “a result consistent with the hypothesis that such parties represent extreme or non-centrist ideological clienteles” (Adams et al., 2006). In other words, green voters choose to support the greens because of the strong policy positions they hold, so a switch to appease the general public will only disappoint those who already support them. This is different from what mainstream parties often face because mainstream parties are supported by a larger percentage of the population which therefore makes changes in public opinion more relevant to them.

While the most obvious central issue the greens choose to tackle is environmentalism, they are also known widely for their opposition to nuclear energy. It is this steadfast opposition that has made way for much of their success. Often times, people are confused by the anti-nuclear stance of green parties. This stance can be explained by the fact that there are still not consistently reliable techniques for radioactive waste disposal (Larsen & Gravitz, 2006). Nuclear power can often be considered the lesser of two evils when compared to fossil fuel usage. However, environmentalists would like to see a stop in both. Wolfgang Rüdiger examines the average green voter and what makes them choose to remain loyal year after year. He finds that it has been found that there has been a ‘feminization’ and ‘greying’ among green voters. This being said, in regard to feminization, it is worth noting that research has shown women to be more generally in support of environmentalist ideas and more opposed to all things nuclear than men (cf. McStay & Dunlap 1983; Gwartney-Gibbs & Lach 1991). The greying of voters refers to the

fact that as green voters have continued steadfast in their support of the party, many of the voters have consequently become older members of the population.

Over the years, the green stance on the issues of environmentalism and nuclear power has remained more or less the same. A particular example of this is Rudig's references to the 2009 German election saying that "the continued strong definition of green voters in environmental and anti-nuclear terms, even when such issues were not particularly prominent, as in 2009, suggests that adherence to environmental issues is not something transient or incidental" (Rüdig, 2012). Even though the times have changed, green voters continue to stand by their party for its continued unique policy stance.

For some time, the Austrian Green Party seemed to be on the rise. That is until the 2017 election when the Austrian greens lost all 24 of their seats in the parliament. When considering Austria in the 2017 election and the downfall the greens faced it is important to consider the issues that were at hand at the time. When compared to other European countries, Austria accepted a comparatively large number of refugees during the 2015 crisis. This was not met with open arms by all of the public. On the contrary, many were anti-immigrant and anti-refugee interests. This made way for parties like the Freedom Party which represents more of the far-right perspective. When it came to the greens, on the other hand, they "took strong pro-migrant and refugee positions in response to the migrant crisis but there was disappointment amongst some in the party that the response was insufficient to the scale of the issue" (Bailey, 2017). Unfortunately, this meant that those who were on the pro-migrant side of things struggled to remain supportive of the greens because their suggested policy was not strong enough to combat the issues at hand.

Among the many issues greens tackle, there is consistently one unifying position: opposition to nuclear power. This is a feature that is notably consistent in both Germany and Austria's green parties. It can often even be suggested that green organizations rise as a direct result of anti-nuclear movements. Greens have maintained the relevance of their hold on this issue through high profile international incidents such as the accidents at Chernobyl, Fukushima, and Three Mile Island. There is a large amount of evidence that suggests that these incidents affect Green Party support. An example of this can be found in Germany where "at the subnational level, *Die Grünen* perform better in areas close to nuclear power stations" (Grant & Tilley, 2018). This cornerstone stance on nuclear energy for greens is similar to how far-right parties can be distinguished by their firm stances on immigration issues.

### **The Green Voter**

When considering the many attributes of a Green Party, it is important to consider what the average green voter looks like. Martin Dolezal compared 12 countries within Western European green parties and found that these parties have found their success through targeting groups of voters who share both certain social characteristics and attitudes. According to Dolezal, one of the key characteristics is age. Green voters are, generally speaking, significantly younger than voters for other parties. Additionally, outside of Luxembourg and Ireland, female voters outweigh male voters within the Green Party. On average, when compared to voters of other parties, green voters are notably more educated than their counterparts. For the most part, these voters live in urban areas. With regard to occupation, farmers, employers, workers, and retirees are generally less attached to green parties. The opposite can be said for experts, social-cultural specialists, and students.

With regard to the attitudes of these voters, green voters strongly support the progressive position on the environment, the libertarian-authoritarian divide, and immigration (Dolezal, 2010). Additionally, green voters are notably not pro-European. While not all are particularly pro-European, this is an important point to note because in countries like Sweden and Ireland the green parties used to belong to the Eurosceptic group (i.e. critics of the European Union). In spite of their seemingly liberal-minded positions, strong left-wing voters are only in half of the countries studied. Dolezal attributes many of the opinions held by green voters to be a side effect of globalization. As the world has become more interconnected, greens have reflected this change in their policies. Dolezal goes as far as saying that “green voters are potential winners with respect to new societal divisions caused by globalization processes” (Dolezal, 2010). While all of these attributes can provide a guideline to refer to when considering green voters, it is not a blueprint. It is important to bear in mind that while they share many common characteristics and attitudes, these similarities are not what provide the basis of group identity.

In taking the time to consider economic stability and quality of life, mainstream party competition, policy positions, and the green voter, the factors that determine Green Party success have become evident. That aside, this is simply theory. An investigation of Germany, France, and Austria provide real-world application of the theories presented. Following these research theories, this paper will consider the three countries as case studies. Through careful consideration of each country’s Green Party history, their current success, or lack thereof, will be easily explained through support from the theories that have been presented. In an analysis of the green parties of Germany, Austria, and France, the path between Green Party success in theory and in reality, will become clear.

## Case Studies

### Germany

The German Green Party has a long-standing reputation of success. The German greens were founded back in 1980. Since their rise in the 1980s, the German greens have maintained a steadfast growth. Their support has been generational as “the age cohorts that were the mainstay of green support at its foundation in the early 1980s have continued to support the party as they have grown older” (Rüdig, 2012). Throughout this long history, the German greens have remained more or less the same. They have stood by many of the same ideals that they were established upon. While some voters have become less attached to the group with age, overall the party ‘veterans’ have remained their backbone over the years. Although it has been over 30 years at this point, “with seven years in government, the greens are still predominantly ‘green’, defined by their concern about environmental problems and radical rejection of nuclear power” (Rüdig, 2012).

In addition to successes at the national level German greens have consistently demonstrated success at the regional and local levels. As the greens began to establish themselves in Germany, they had very fertile soil to build upon due to a strong anti-nuclear movement and strong peace movement both starting in the seventies. This allowed the greens to establish an identity very early on that was based on ‘new left’ politics. Historically, the German greens established themselves as a rainbow type Green Party. This means they are a party that attempts “to represent a broad alliance of ecological, youth, feminist, peace, minority, and new left groups” (Kaelberer, 1998). One relevant aspect of the German greens’ ability to establish themselves was that at the time of formation there was a serious lack of left-wing alternatives to

the Social Democrats. This provided an extremely favorable situation for the greens to enter thus making way for the success the party sees today. As the party continues to pull in record results even today, there seems to be no support for it slowing down any time soon. If trends continue, the greens are likely to be a dominating force in German politics moving forward.

### **Austria**

In spite of their recent downfall seen in 2017, the Austrian greens do have a long-standing trend of success. The Austrian greens were established in 1986 as the Alternative greens. Over the years, “it boasted a long uninterrupted parliamentary record and became widely regarded as one of the most electorally successful green parties in the world” (Buzogány, 2018). By the time they hit the year 2017, they had the highest ever subnational government participation ringing in at 13% of the vote. Their most recent success was the election of Van der Bellen for president. Unfortunately, when they hit 2017, there was a large downfall. This downfall was largely attributed to their financial standing at the time as well as a loss of contact with ordinary people and a distracted affiliation with side issues such as banning smoking, LGBT rights, and gender equality. The reason distraction with side issues caused such a dramatic fall in the Green Party support can be attributed to the discoveries made by Adams and his colleagues that when a niche party adjusts its policy positions, they often suffer at the polls.

Oddly enough, the situation the Austrians encountered in 2017 was not the first time they encountered a significant decline. In 1995, the election was also highly disappointing when their share of the vote fell from 7.3% to 4.8%. This decrease was largely characterized by the surfacing of inner-party disputes between modernists and those who considered themselves more closely affiliated with the ‘grassroots’ of the party (Williams, 2000). Since Neil Carter’s findings

demonstrated that green parties typically assuming the role of a neutral ground is often what makes them so appealing, it is no surprise that a potential turn towards modernism turned some voters away. Fortunately, the odds eventually turned back in the Austrians favor in 1999 when they gained 9.2% of the vote and two seats in the European parliament. Back in this more successful time, their results could “not solely come as a result of environmental concern among voters, but rather can be understood as a positive response on the part of the electorate to the greens' positions on a number of additional issues that have been high on the Austrian political agenda” (Williams, 2000). However, it is important to strike a balance when juggling multiple issues as the Austrians quickly learned after the 2017 election.

Although a focus on additional issues helped them gain momentum in 1999, ultimately, the Austrians began to stretch themselves too thin. Perhaps by returning to their grassroots, the present-day greens will no longer struggle with their distracting side issues. This tactic would align well with the suggestions presented by Adams that green voters support their party due to the strong policy positions the party holds. When the core values and positions of the party became unclear, it suffered. While it is certainly going to be an uphill battle for the Austrian greens from here on out, if they start from the ground at the local and regional level, not all hope has been lost. Perhaps then they will be able to return to maintaining parliamentary representation.

## **France**

The French Green Party has had its fair share of both ups and downs. There is a bit of debate surrounding the establishment of the party. Some suggest it was back in 1974 with René Dumont's candidacy. This suggestion would mean that the political movement of ecology was

born in France (Drugan, 2004). It is more commonly agreed upon that the party really established itself in 1984 coinciding with the Joint Declaration of European green parties. When considering the rise of the party, “the anti-nuclear movement in France did play the key role in the eventual formation of a national political party” (Drugan, 2004). In spite of the strides toward success over the years, there is an underlying concern with the French greens that often deters their success. This factor is their affiliation with socialism. It is considered “the persistent fear of Les Verts regarding their past (and probably future) Socialist partners, that they might be seen as the ‘red dragon's green tail’” (Drugan, 2004). This is perhaps a heavy explanation of why French greens have not seen larger success.

Until recently, much of Les Verts lack of success could be attributed to conflicts among their leaders and various tactical and policy issues. This could often be due to the fact that there used to be multiple green parties in existence at the same time. One repeating occurrence was a rivalry between Antonie Waecheter and Brice Lalonde. During this time, their parties competed under the names of *Les Verts: Party Ecologiste–Confederations Ecologiste* and *Entente Radicale Ecologiste*. There were attempts to forge alliances between these competing groups, but these alliances were typically short. Additional confusion was also caused by smaller groups functioning under the ecology label as well. This being said, green parties were historically successful at the regional and local levels, as well as to the EU parliament. For example, “in the 1992 regional elections, the environmental parties gained a combined 14% of the vote and several hundred elected councilors. As a result, ecological groups held the balance of power in a number of important regions” (Kaelberer, 1998). This being said, the success of the greens in France was short-lived. The success they were beginning to experience was not able to be repeated by the time the elections to the European parliament in 1994 rolled around.

French greens historically often take on a ‘purist’ identity. This means trying to avoid affiliation with the ‘new left’ and focusing on the development of a precisely defined ecological identity. They generally ignore the left-right logic seen in most political systems. Instead, they chose to follow in the footsteps of many other greens across Europe. They identify themselves as neither right nor left, and rather consider themselves as the front. That being said, this strategy has often confused voters as it has inhibited the formation of a distinguishable identity. When 1997 came around, however, the prospects for Les Verts began to take a new shape. They had begun to adjust themselves to better align with their party counterparts throughout France. The party began to move toward a more consistently left-wing moderately oriented position. This change marked the start of a new chapter for Les Verts. Indications of this new path toward success are already beginning to show in local 2020 elections where France has been overcome with a green wave. One of the most noteworthy of these victories has been for Parisian mayor Anne Hidalgo, a socialist with heavy backing from Les Verts (Willsher, 2020).

### **Comparative Analysis of Parties**

Among the three parties, the German greens have demonstrated far superior success compared to France and Austria. This is most easily presented through the current polls placing German greens over 5 percentage points above the other two. This can be attributed to a variety of factors. For starters, Germany has the most stable nations among the three. Germany has been seeing a consistent GDP between 3.421 trillion and its current score of 3.948 trillion since 2007. France and Germany have both seen quite similar growth patterns overall, but Germany has been ranking consistently higher. Austria, on the other hand, has been on a much slower and lower increase pattern through the years (“Data,” 2018). While Germany is number 4, France is 7, and

Austria comes in as 28 in terms of GDP rankings (“Ranking,” 2020). A portion of the large difference between Germany and France can be explained by the considerable difference in population between Austria and the other two nations; however, it is worth noting that the overall rate of growth in Austria has also been notably slower by comparison. Additionally, the quality of life has been demonstrated as much higher in Germany through their human development index ranking as number 4 in the world compared with France at 26 and Austria at 20 (“Human,” 2019).

In addition to economic and human development differences, the German greens have been established for a longer period of time. This has allowed them to surpass the challenges affiliated with working with mainstream parties and allows them to be set apart from the crowd. As the theory pointed out, niche parties like the greens are often directly dependent on how mainstream parties address them. Unlike Austria and France, since the German greens have been around for so long, they have begun to be able to overcome this interdependence with mainstream parties. Instead, voters feel more comfortable voting for German greens often even turning away from mainstream party choices.

Furthermore, unlike in Austria and France, Germany does not encounter the same policy-related issues that often can deter voters. For the Austrians, these issues included taking a weak pro-migrant and refugee position during the 2015 migrant crisis and overstressing their scope of issues for the 2017 parliamentary elections. In France, their mixed ties to socialism and historic take on the ‘purist’ identity left voters weary in the past. This being said, Les Verts have changed the orientation of their positions and the results could prove promising, but for the time being the German greens are still miles ahead. Therefore, they are generally a much more well-rounded option among the three.

In spite of their differences, there are some basic attributes that these three parties and their host countries share. At their core, each of the three green parties presented stands behind the same issues. In particular, a core value of environmentalism is demonstrated through dedication towards combating climate change and its effects. Additionally, while the degree to which varies, all three countries are considered economically stable. This stability is what provided green parties the platform to at least establish themselves in each of these countries. However, it is important to note that the variations in stability have heavily influenced the degree of success in each of these countries seeing as Germany has demonstrated both the highest party success and economic stability overall. Most noteworthy is that all three of the countries in question belong to the same larger parent government organization: the European Union. While the three countries maintain their own unique identities within the EU, having this shared component of their infrastructure provides similar groundwork for political success in each of the countries. It is due to these factors that Germany, Austria, and France are so easily comparable.

### **Conclusion**

Green parties are successful when they reside in countries with strong economic stability and quality of life. Additionally, their power stems from how larger parties address green issues and how they choose to address their policies. Between Germany, France, and Austria, there are many different factors that can contribute to their success or lack thereof. That all being said, Germany easily has the best foundational groundwork for success. This is ultimately due to their longstanding rapport with voters, economic stability, ability to beat out the external competition, and to the point policies that matter. It is with these understandings that struggling greens can begin to piece together how to build their own way towards success.

These findings aside, it is equally important to recognize that not all countries are working from the same framework. Therefore, this roadmap to success can only be applied to countries on a similar foundation to the case studies discussed. For example, in a country like the United States, all third parties are generally considered ineffective no matter the platform. This is due in part to the US being a much more conservative country than most and the fact that the American electoral system makes it very difficult for third parties to gain voter attention. In spite of shortcomings, the framework provided can act as a path toward success in many other countries outside of those discussed. As greens continue to rise to power, perhaps there is still hope in the fight against climate change after all.

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