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CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY: WHY GERMANY LEADS AND THE UNITED
STATES LAGS

BY

KRISTIN KESLING

BA, Wheaton College, 2005

THESIS

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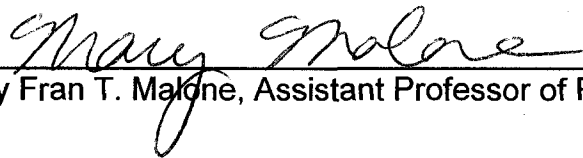
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April 24, 2008

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mom, Karen K. Kesling, for all her love and support,
and in loving memory of my grandma, Blanche Kirk Keller.

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ABSTRACT

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY: WHY GERMANY LEADS AND THE UNITED
STATES LAGS

By

Kristin Kesling

University of New Hampshire, May 2008

Thesis Director: Professor Aline Kuntz

Why is climate change a top priority on the political agenda in Germany and not a top priority on the political agenda in the United States? This study seeks to answer this question by examining the evolution of climate change policy in both countries. Analyzing Germany's and America's environmental movement, the thesis points to several theories which include the European Union and cultural values. However, it is the nations' political structures/institutions and their post WWII foreign policy views that most determine where climate change policy stands on each country's political agenda. The analysis concludes with a possible outlook on America's environmental leadership.

INTRODUCTION

“If we are to leave our children a world that resembles the earth we inherited, we must act now,” wrote Democratic Senators Barbara Boxer, Joseph Liberman, and Jeff Bingaman in a November 15th, 2006 letter to President George W. Bush. ⁱ While mounting scientific evidence is revealing climate change with each passing year (the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, just released its most adamant report citing 99 percent certainty that climate change is occurring because of human activity) ⁱⁱ the federal government stubbornly clings to scientific uncertainty, industry-friendly technological solutions, and is unwilling to implement concrete political actions to combat climate change and uphold its international obligations.

Meanwhile, across the pond in Germany, climate change is nationally recognized with concrete political action. As Hans von Storch and Werner Krauss note in their article, “In Germany, all disastrous weather events are interpreted as consequences of climate change.” ⁱⁱⁱ Why is this so? Tracing the evolution of the environmental movements in both countries, this study concludes that post WWII foreign policy views and differences in political structure and party systems are the key variables in explaining why climate change is a major issue on Germany’s political agenda and not on the U.S. agenda.

The American and European models of government vary in its’ distribution of power. The United States runs on the basis of separation of

powers, where authority is divided between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. This allows each arm of government to block initiatives of the other branches if a policy is found unsatisfactory. This results in a slow but transparent policy process.

In Europe, parliamentary systems are the favored form of government where political power is more concentrated. While Germany's upper house, the Bundesrat, can veto laws that it finds unsatisfactory, the power of the executive branch is vastly different. Whereas in the United States the President is both the Head of State and the Head of Government, in Germany the President merely is a symbolic figure that opens parliament and has no real political force. Rather it is the Chancellor that determines which policies will be on the federal agenda while maintaining strict control of party members. As a result, if climate change is on the agenda, they will pass much easier under a parliamentary system than under a separation of powers system.

In addition, interest groups often have incentives and the political clout to block/delay climate change policies in America. The two party system in America pushes out third party influence in Congress, whereas in Germany, under its multi-party system, a 5 percent electoral threshold allows smaller parties such as the Greens to enter the Bundestag. While this threshold does filter out more extreme parties from sitting in Germany's lower house, the presence of the Green party promotes the other major German party (the SPD) to "green" its platform by forming coalitions with the Greens to successfully compete for power against the other big German party—the Christian Democrats.^{iv} Table 1-1, found

at the end of this section, compares the American and the German form of government.

This paper focuses on Germany and the United States because both are first world nations with federal systems (although these systems are structurally different), that must deal with many similar issues. There is also a rich level of detail that emerges in comparing these countries, whose governments have gone down opposite paths when it comes to climate change.

Climate change policy approaches are increasingly driving the two nations apart due to a variety of factors. While cultural values contribute to present day opposing views on climate change policy, it is diverging foreign policy stances in the post WWII era, national social and party movements, and the institutional political structures and party systems that allow climate change to remain on Germany's political agenda while in the United States climate change has yet to make it onto the national checklist.

This paper presents a literature review of climate change environmental policy, which states four strong reasons for the diverging approach to climate change action in Germany and in the United States: post World War II foreign policy views, social and party movements, the movements' influence on political structure, and post-materialist cultural values. After analyzing the scholarly research on climate change policy, the paper discusses the evolution of the U.S. environmental movement and then outlines the same movement in Germany. It continues to argue that it is Germany's multi-party system that evolved out of its social movements and the nation's post WWII foreign policy views that place

climate change policy at the forefront of the state's political agenda. The study concludes that despite these differences, the United States may still have the potential to become an environmental leader in the near future.

Table 1-1: A Comparison of U.S. and German Democracies

Country	Form of Government	Separation of Powers	Head of State	Head of Government	Legislative Setup	Judicial Review	Electoral System	Party System
United States	Federal; 50 states	Yes; power divided equally between 3 branches	President elected by Electoral College based on popular vote	President	Symmetric, bicameral; both elected by popular vote	All courts including Supreme Court	Single member plurality; a winner takes all system	Two party; Democrats and Republicans
Germany	Federal; 16 Lander	Partial; Bundesrat (upper house) can veto legislation regarding the Lander	President; symbolic figure elected by Parliament and Lander	Chancellor; elected via Bundestag (lower house)	Asymmetric, bicameral; Bundestag elected via popular vote, Bundesrat appointed by Lander	Constitutional Court	Single member plurality & proportional representation	Multi-party; Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Green Party, & Free Democratic Party

*This table was largely based on tables found in Raymond A. Smith's The American Anomaly.

CHAPTER I

WHY DO NATIONS HAVE DIFFERENT CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES? FOUR PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

The literature on climate change is vast due to the raging debate over the scientific ramifications of an altering climate, and stark differences in the European and United States level of international commitment emerge. This is especially so since the United States pulled out of the Kyoto Protocol in 2001. As a result, the author selects only several key theories toward explaining the political emphasis of climate change policy in Germany and the United States: foreign policy views, the evolution of climate change policy during the environmental movements in each state, the political structures and institutions that shape policy priorities, and the cultural mindsets of German and American citizens.

Germany and the United States diverge sharply when it comes to climate change policy. While many scholars in the field examine these four factors separately or collectively in groups, they fail in fully integrating these theories to analyze solutions to bring the United States back to the negotiating table to address this global issue. The thesis attempts this approach.

Foreign Policy Views

Foreign policy views play vital roles in shaping climate change policy. This paper defines “foreign policy views” as ‘the position a state takes based on patterns of behavior concerning international and national interests, a state’s power status, and national perceptions’ (K.J. Holsti 1970: 233-309). Robert M. Berdahl (2006) captures the essence of these components of foreign policy in *German Reunification in Historical Perspective*.

Loren R. Cass’s The Failures of American and European Climate Policy compares the United States and Germany on the evolution of and the response to climate change. Cass focuses on the international norms that permeate domestic politics, pointing to numerous obstacles that result, examines the role of the European Union, and analyzes how national foreign policy views play out in each state.^v

Steven W. Hook and John Spanier’s book American Foreign Policy Since World War II is also an essential source. The authors devote their entire work to the evolution of American unilateralism since 1945 and how the country’s foreign policy views are increasingly putting the nation at odds with the rest of the world. This work provides one of the key differences to American and German views on climate change and gives meat to one of this thesis’s main arguments: that climate change policy is stronger in Germany because of that nation’s multilateral foreign policy views since the end of WWII championed by that nation’s political elites.^{vi}

The Evolution of Climate Change Policy

How climate change was placed on the political agenda in Germany and not in the United States is a key aspect to understanding current climate change policy. A major player in the evolution of climate change policy in Germany is the Green party. Other publications also analyze the role of the Greens in environmental policy, such as Andrei S. Markovits and P. S. Gorski's The German Left Red, Green and Beyond. They list many variables that led to the rise of the Greens, such as the formation of a new German class structure, German post materialism, German nationalism, and many others that made the Green party so potent. Markovits & Gorski (1993) also examine the Greens philosophical approach to politics, basing their ethical reasoning on ecology and nature that led to many industrial chemical bans and an outcry against nuclear energy.

Andrew Jordan (2005) examines another influential factor contributing to the rise of climate change policy within Germany that is extending to the rest of Europe: The European Union (EU).^{vii} He investigates the different roles that member states take within the EU in promoting environmental legislation (whether the states are either "leaders or laggards") as the EU simultaneously polishes its institutions, rules, and regulations as a functioning entity to include new members from Eastern Europe. Jordan gives context to the role Germany plays within a growing "club" that influence national laws and regulations concerning the environment.

Due to the lack of national response to climate change in the U.S., individual states are taking action to mitigate global warming. Barry Rabe (2004) provides key examples of smaller, but no less important, steps that American states are pursuing to regulate the environment. Henrik Selin and Stacy D. VanDeveer (2007) also point to the workings of powerful networks that are raising public awareness in American states and are slowly forcing a reluctant U.S. federal government to address climate change.^{viii} These sources only further highlight the differences between Germany and the United States in the second theory of the literature review: the political structures and institutions that shape policy priorities.

The Political Structures and Institutions that Shape Policy Priorities

Miranda A. Schreurs's *Environmental Politics in Japan, Germany, and the United States* is one of the key works in the field describing the differences in environmental policy outputs in all three states. While there are many factors influencing policy decisions, Schreurs points to political structures as the main reason why policies are so different. Outlining the origins of each state's environmental movements and consciousness, Schreurs examines the role of interest groups, political parties, domestic politics, and international cooperation within each state, emphasizing the role international and domestic pressures played in leading Japan to make the crucial decision to side with Europe and not the United States when it signed the Kyoto Protocol.

Another of Schreurs's work discusses climate change politics not only at the state level, but also at the international level with the European Union. Her

article entitled *Environmental Federalism in the United States and the European Union*^{ix} expands on the legal powers of the EU, of which Germany is a member. Schreurs also examines the legal channels through which environmental groups and federal governments use to halt or catalyze environmental action. She provides key comparisons between the EU and the U.S. federal government in this work that nicely compliments Jordan's analysis of the EU.

Lyle Scruggs also centers on the role political structures and institutions play in shaping environmental policy. While Scruggs work is more quantitative rather than qualitative, he provides definitions of key terms and gives detailed comparisons of various institutional aspects that are vital to this study, such as the comparison between pluralist versus corporatist governments, single versus coalition parties, and the pros and cons of a unified government versus one with separation of powers.^x

In addition, Mancur Olson analyzes the incentives built into the party system that a pluralist and neo-corporatist states face when trying to win elections. He compares and contrasts the characteristics of a "winner takes all" system versus a "narrow distributional coalition" system and how both influence a nation's economy and its politicians political behavior, providing detail necessary to understanding how political institutions and party systems work.^{xi}

Finally, Peter Pulzer examines Germany's political structure after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and how the Green Party evolved from its local roots to the German parliament, taking necessary votes away from Germany's main party—the SPD.

The Cultural Attitudes of German and American Citizens

Cultural values are the third vital factor that influence citizen thought processes on climate change policy in Germany and the United States. While cultural values are not as quantifiable as political structure analysis or analysis of the evolution of climate change policy, culture permeates all aspects of policymaking through various means.

One cannot analyze climate change policy within Germany without looking at the cultural and psychological impact of Hitler's Third Reich. Wulf Kansteiner's book In Pursuit of German Memory^{xii} looks at how Nazism influenced all areas of German life. While this work is not specifically about the environment and climate change policy, Kansteiner contributes a key angle to this literature review by looking at a segment of German history that influences the way German citizens think about world issues today.

Cultural mindsets both in Europe and in America are also shifting due to the rise of postmaterialism. Paul R. Abramson and Ronald Inglehart present several quantitative analyses of how generational replacement is influencing social and party movements. They discover that younger Europeans value issues such as women's rights, self-expression, and environmentalism over national order and rising inflation—ones favored by older generations of Europeans. It is issues like these that parties such as the Greens are championing, and the rising power of its postmaterialist voters is the key reason why the Greens remain in power today.^{xiii}

Conclusion

As a result, while the United States pays lip service to climate change policy and to implementing more efficient energy sources^{xiv}, these works all illustrate that strong foreign, political, and cultural obstacles are interacting to make climate change either a top or a bottom priority on the political agenda within Germany and the United States. As environmental policy evolved differently in both nations, so too did state policies concerning future climate change. The following two chapters will analyze this evolution in detail.

CHAPTER II

A TIME CAPSULE OF THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Introduction

The United States environmental movement in the 1960's and 1970's was a powerful wave that instigated numerous changes throughout the country and in the federal government. Laws such as the Clean Air and Clean Water Act are the result of the movement's cognitive and environmental impact on the nation, and large public memberships in environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club prove that the movement has left their mark on the U.S. citizenry. Today politicians cannot campaign openly against the environment without losing credibility and alienating voters. Yet, this revolutionary social movement has lost much of its momentum since the 1970's, and the U.S. has fallen behind its European counterparts in implementing environmental legislation. Why is this so and how does it influence the way climate change is perceived by today's public?

This paper defines climate change as 'the alteration in the composition of the atmosphere due to the direct or indirect influences of human activity in addition to the natural variability that occurs over the entire planetary surface over time' (Catrinus J. Jempa, Mohan Munasinghe 1998: 2). Historical records link the human burning of fossil fuels that emits carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere, and the gradual warming of the Earth, as early as 1896. Swedish

chemist Svante Arrhenius calculated within a few degrees of modern day technology the doubling of CO₂ and the rise in temperature of around 4 to 6 degrees (Donald A Brown 2002: 14). Since then, mounting evidence strongly correlates the rise of CO₂ in the atmosphere to increased human activity and consequently, the rapid climb in Earth's temperatures. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states a 99 percent certainty that climate change is occurring due to human activity.^{xv}

The United States is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, of which carbon dioxide is the most common. Since 1990 CO₂ emissions increased 18 percent,^{xvi} with the United States emitting 1,526.1 million metric tons in 1999^{xvii} and which by 2030 are expected to rise another 37 percent. With these alarming statistics, one would think that climate change would capture immediate public attention in America. Yet, it wasn't until 1958 that the world began taking notice of the strong scientific correlations between global warming and increased human activity.

The Spread of Environmentalism

Until the late 1950's, only a small, highly educated segment of the American population advocated "environmentalism."^{xviii} It was not until the 1970s that concern for the environment as a whole spread to the general public (Brown 2002: 15). Although philosophical works from those like Henry David Thoreau and John Muir expressed the importance of humans' connection with nature long before the U.S. environmental movement began, it was only when people commenced experiencing health problems from environmental pollution such as

lead poisoning that prompted a rise in public awareness and concern to soar (Samuel P. Hays 2000: 25, 53).

The U.S. environmental movement began transforming all aspects of American society. Cary Coglianese defines social movements as “a broad set of sustained organizational efforts to change the structure of society or the distribution of society’s resources” (Cary Coglianese 2001: 85). The environmental movement did just that as strong grassroots organizations began winning lawsuits in U.S. courts^{xix}, and the public began demanding cleaner air and water. Citizens also lashed out against unhealthy industrial practices in the aftermath of Rachel Carson’s publication of Silent Spring in 1962 (Hays 2000: 56-58). The 1970s saw an increase in lead found in the human body all over the world, and most especially concentrated in first World nations. In addition, as the amount of toxic waste in U.S. rivers rose, many areas banned swimming and drinking to curb human health problems (Hays 2000: 53-54). As environmental concern grew along with the size in membership of environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club (there were 346,000 members by 1983) and leading to the creation of new ones like Greenpeace (Coglianese 2001: 93, 104), the environment was permanently placed on the political agenda and began to transform the U.S. legal system.

By the time Richard Nixon was President, the U.S. environmental movement was in full swing, leading Nixon to proclaim 1970-1980 to be the “environmental decade” the day he was officially sworn in (Coglianese 2001: 95). By 1971, 25 percent of respondents participating in a private White House survey

placed the environment at the top of their political issue list (Tarla Rai Peterson 2004: 119). Coinciding concern over wetlands, parks, and other forms of environmental recreation during the previous eight years, 1957-1965, began to shift toward the negative influences of environmental pollution on human health. Under strong public demands for federal action to improve the quality of the nation's air and water since the individual states remained inactive, politicians began implementing various concrete initiatives^{xx}, agencies, and departments, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)^{xxi} and signing into law the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).^{xxii}

The environmental movement itself underwent significant changes. It went from an essentially grassroots based organization to one rooted in Washington D.C., lobbying Congress and overseeing the successful legal implementation of numerous environmental laws (Coglianese 2001: 100). Thus, the movement commenced becoming a part of the traditional American political scene in the nation's capital with expanding staffs, budgets, and political networks. Some environmentalists even secured positions in President Carter's cabinet working for the EPA and the Department of Justice, and they began using the three branches of government to achieve their goals. Those opposing stricter environmental regulations, however, also took advantage of the separation of powers within the government. The "separate but equal" power of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the U.S. government allows each one to block the other's initiatives and forces them to work together to accomplish goals. This setup deliberately increases tensions and influences what is at stake for the

nation's interests^{xxiii} An environmental lawyer summed up the transformation of the environmental movement the best when he said, "Before, we filed lawsuits and held press conferences. Now we have lunch with the assistant secretary to discuss a program" (Coglianese 2001: 100-102).

Throughout the decade the environmental movement gained momentum and became more "professional" with its physical presence in Washington, and national and international concern over climate change began to rise. The Greenhouse Effect was one of five areas of environmental concern by the 1980's (D.T. Kuzmiak 1991: 273). Higher quality scientific models predicted dire consequences for the Earth's population if climate change policy did not take effect. As U.S. President Jimmy Carter's term came to a close in 1980, a report issued by the President's Council on Environmental Quality stated that "the responsibility of the carbon dioxide problem is ours and we should accept it and act in a way that recognizes our role as trustees for future generations" (Brown 2002: 15-16). However, the wave of federal environmental legislation within the United States came to an abrupt halt with the swearing in of President Ronald Reagan in 1981. A review was made of all existing environmental laws amid scandals at the EPA and Reagan's wish to scale back the size of government—a major part of his cabinet's political agenda (Kuzmiak 1991: 273).

While Democrats and more moderate Republicans prevented the new government from repealing existing environmental legislation, President Reagan cut crucial monetary funds for state environmental programs. This signaled a major shift in the momentum of the movement, and Reagan's decision made it

more difficult for states to put these programs into action successfully (Norman J. Vig, Michael G. Faure 2004: 116-117). The President emphasized scientific uncertainty to delay any serious political action on climate change despite the severe drought in the summer of 1988 that renewed national fears surrounding climate change and ozone depletion.^{xxiv} While in office, Reagan stressed U.S. economic prosperity over environmental protection, whose measures may be harmful to industrial production if the environmental dangers were not empirically well founded.

An Ironic Revitalization

While the Reagan administration sided with the powerful industrial lobbies throughout the 1980s, more climate change science was emerging to lend increasingly stronger support that the phenomenon was occurring. On June 23, 1988, U.S. government scientist James Hansen stated with a 99 percent confidence level that climate change was happening:

Global warming is now sufficiently large that we can ascribe with a high degree of confidence a cause and effect relationship to the greenhouse effect...Extreme events such as summer heat waves and heat wave/drought occurrences in the Southeast and Midwest United States may be more frequent in the next decade (Brown 2002: 17).

This claim is supported by the IPCC's fourth report in 2007 as well as recent newspaper articles such as one published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, stating that 2006 was the warmest in the United States in 112 years—part of a nine year trend of some of the hottest in the last quarter century.^{xxv}

Reagan's indifferent response to the environment throughout his eight-year term actually did much to unify the environmental movement. The bureaucratization of the movement throughout the 1970s made some grassroots members break away, forming their own environmental causes such as environmental justice.^{xxvi} Environmental justice centers round the tendency for waste to be dumped in poor areas of the United States where civil resistance would be low rather than in wealthy neighborhoods where protest would be more likely to occur. Over time, people living in poor areas are exposed to higher levels of pollution and potential disease than those citizens residing in richer communities.

Due to specific causes like these, the movement was very fragmented by the 1980s. Yet, concern for environmental issues like climate change and toxic pollution persisted and prompted George H. W. Bush to declare himself the "environmental president" during his campaign for the White House. Kuzmiak (1991) catches this sentiment clearly:

Reagan's anti-environmentalism roused environmentalists from the lethargy they had lapsed into during many of the Carter years and stimulated renewed citizen environmental activity. The vigor and determination, which the administration sought to reverse a host of policies and its open anti-environmental pronouncement, galvanized the environmental movement into renewed action" (p. 273-274).

Thus, Brown (2002) captures Bush saying:

Those who think we are powerless to do anything about the greenhouse effect are forgetting about the White House effect. As president I intend to do something about it” (p. 17).

President Bush made good on his promise at the beginning. He put acid rain on the agenda, more environmental restrictions on the Clean Air Act, which he signed into law in 1990, acquired more land for national parks, and banned dumping toxic waste into the oceans.^{xxvii} The environmental movement seemed able to force the federal government to take action, especially with the much-publicized Earth Day event in 1990 and its emphasis on anti-waste practices.^{xxviii}

The Environment Becomes a Failed Policy

While public support for the environment experienced resurgence at the grassroots level during the 1990's, the response at the federal level lapsed again. Bush's environmental pledge ended two years later in 1992, when he declared that “the U.S. lifestyle was not negotiable” at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The U.S. economy was also in a recession, leading Bush to focus more on balancing the economy rather than on protecting the environment. Peterson (2004) clearly describes Bush's altered view at an agricultural meeting in California:

We cannot permit the extremes in the environmental movement to shut down the United States on science that may be as perfected as we in the United States should have it...[We] cannot shut down the lives of many Americans because of going to extremes on the environment. So that's my philosophy, and that's what we're trying to do...But we can't do it and

throw an awful lot of people out of work, especially when it's not based on sound science (p. 266).

Thus, while President Bush called for increased monetary funds to go toward more scientific research on climate change,^{xxix} his political strategies to curb CO2 emissions failed to materialize. At that time, an overwhelming 81 percent of the American public sympathized with or were actively involved in the environmental movement.^{xxx}

By 1992, President Bush was out of office, and in his place newly elected President Bill Clinton and his Vice President Al Gore stepped into the spotlight for the next eight years. They had learned that no aspiring U.S. presidential candidate can explicitly be against environmental protection.^{xxxi} Al Gore, author of Earth in the Balance^{xxxii} and a reputed environmentalist in Washington, along with President Clinton's explicit acknowledgement of the climate change issue, made many environmentalists hopeful that the movement would regain some of its 1970 momentum. President Clinton made a strong environmental stand at the beginning of his presidency, stating at the Kyoto Conference in 1997 that while the United States made up only 4 percent of the world population, the country emitted more than 20 percent of global greenhouse gases. Clinton also conceded that climate change was a real issue that must be dealt with at the international level with the United States leading the way, and that the nations of the world no longer could hide behind the excuse of scientific uncertainty.^{xxxiii} These statements went far beyond his predecessor's, and Clinton even devoted more attention to climate change in his second State of the Union Address.^{xxxiv}

Yet, while the Clinton Presidency paid more lip service to the environment and global warming, when it came time to commit to concrete action, Clinton backed down in the face of conservative opposition in Congress.

The Hagel-Byrd Resolution of 1997 passed in the Senate with a 95 to 0 vote, rejecting any commitment on the part of the U.S. to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions without Third World nations committed to doing the same. This made Clinton unwilling to make stronger statements at Kyoto than reductions already stated in the previous UNFCCC ratified environmental treaty.^{xxxv} Just a little over 20 years before, Congress was pressured into creating numerous environmental agencies. Now the conservative nature in Congress returned as powerful industries mounted expensive anti-environmental campaigns to convince the American public that U.S. commitments to reducing emissions would gravely hurt the U.S. economy.^{xxxvi}

There were other signs that environmental attitudes in Washington were shifting. After the Kyoto Protocol meeting, where the U.S. committed to a 7 percent reduction in emissions, Congress saw any excuse to discuss the Kyoto agreement as a threat. The EPA, the chief environmental agency created at the height of the movement in the 1970s, was prohibited from spending federal dollars to educate the American public about climate change, and virtually nothing was done to reduce U.S. emissions, which actually rose during this period (Brown 2002: 37-38). As a result, it is no wonder that, while President Clinton signed the Kyoto Protocol, the Congressional hostility the President faced made U.S. ratification of the treaty all but impossible.

The Environment on the Backburner

Thus was the political environment when the 2000 Presidential campaign began, and while George W. Bush pledged to reduce power plant CO₂ emissions, he clearly echoed Congress's view toward the Kyoto Protocol, and when Bush became President, climate change was not on the political agenda. Even public opinion polls reflected the fact that the environment was not a top political issue, but rather that health care and education had become the primary concerns. By 2001, the U.S. environmental movement lost much of its momentum even though 68 percent of the U.S. public still sympathized or were involved in the movement (Coglianese 2001: 109).

Even the slight verbal commitment President Bush made during his campaign to reduce CO₂ emissions quickly melted away (Brown 2002: 40). His new energy policy was also in direct opposition to combating climate change, predicting a 33 percent rise in oil consumption that would lead to more burning of fossil fuels. In the words of the President's Energy Secretary "No nation will mortgage its growth and prosperity to cut greenhouse-gas emissions" (John Carey, Sarah R. Shapiro 2004: 7). This came in the face of new scientific evidence from the Academy of Sciences declaring that the climate change problem would only increase if action did not take place immediately. Although this elicited more research funds directed toward global warming programs, President Bush condemned the Kyoto Protocol despite the fact that 61 percent of Americans surveyed were in favor of the Protocol's ratification^{xxxvii}. The administration finally withdrew the United States from the treaty all together in

2001, reflecting the government's long standing unilateral approach in foreign policy matters (Brown 2002: 41).

Conclusion

Today the environmental movement in the United States, while still strong at the grassroots level, has failed to initiate aggressive governmental responses that were observed in the 1970s. While environmental action is increasingly lagging at the federal level despite politicians paying more positive lip service to the environment, it is now various American states that are taking up the torch. While some U.S. states in the Midwestern and Southern regions of the country are still culturally engrained in environmentally unfriendly practices, states like California, New York, New Jersey, Minnesota, and the New England region are quickly becoming the country's environmental leaders (Hays 2000: 25). These same states, whose inactivity prompted federal environmental action in the 1970s, are now the ones purposely engaged in reducing CO2 emissions across the nation, and who may hold the key to reawakening the environmental movement within America, prompting the federal government to action. ^{xxxiii}

CHAPTER III

A TIME CAPSULE OF GERMANY'S ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Introduction

Germany is one of Europe's foremost environmental leaders. In 1995, the nation committed to cutting down its CO₂ emissions by 25 percent by 2005, and by 2000 had already lowered its greenhouse gas emissions by 18.9 percent (Rie Watanabe, Lutz Mez 2004: 110). Yet the country was not always so environmentally conscious. Before 1986, the German public paid little attention to the greenhouse effect, and serious government research on climate change did not commence until the 1980s.^{xxxix} Even in 1990, Germany emitted the fourth largest amount of CO₂ and was one of the most polluting nations in Western Europe (Watanabe, Mez 2004: 109, Cavender, Jager 1993: 3). Change was underway, however, during the 1970s when the environmental movement was at its peak in the United States. This section traces Germany's historical relationship with the environment and most recently with climate change, and explores the forces that led the environment to become a top issue in the country.

An Attitudinal Shift

Although the media published occasional articles linking the burning of fossil fuels to climate change, the 1960s demonstrated relatively little concern

with the issue in Germany (Jeannine Cavender, Jill Jager 1993: 6). Several environmental conservation groups had sprung up after WWII and established branches in the nation, such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 1961. These groups, however, did not have much political clout in getting the environment onto Germany's public agenda during this time period (Miranda Schreurs 2002: 37). It was not until the 1970s that these groups grew in influence and political power as environmental issues flourished alongside the German citizenry protest against nuclear energy. By 1971, under Chancellor Willy Brandt, Germany created its first environmental program in the government, where the precautionary principle (also known as *Vorsorge*) took root (Cavender, Jager 1993: 7). The precautionary principle allows nations to proceed with implementing environmental regulations in the face of scientific uncertainty. Germany legitimizes many of its environmental security approaches using the precautionary principle along with other state norms, especially strategies focusing on crisis prevention.^{x1} The precautionary principle allows nations to implement more aggressive actions to combat climate change—a concept that the United States has yet to embrace.

Along with the precautionary principle, the energy crises of 1973-1974, and again in 1978-1979, also forced the German public to consider alternative forms of energy, and the crises got the coal industry thinking about possible solutions to curb greenhouse gas emissions early. In addition, more science was surfacing about global warming amid mass demonstrations for peace and anti-nuclear protests throughout the 1980's. CO2 emissions were rising and

essentially “woke up” the German public to the harmful acts they were committing to the environment when, in 1981, more than half of Germany’s forests were pronounced dead or dying. The death of one of Germany’s national symbols struck a sensitive cultural chord with the people. Three years later, Germany established a research program to deal specifically with climate change as the public became environmentally conscious simultaneously as the peace movement swept the nation (Cavender, Jager 1993: 9), bringing the Green Party to power (Schreurs 2002: 108-112, 245), in 1983.^{xii}

The Entrance of the Greens

The Green Party is an essential part of Germany’s environmental history. Today the 27 year-old German Green Party is the strongest of its kind in the world, yet it has undergone numerous transformations to attain its current status. The Green Party grew out of the wave of environmentalism in the 1960s when grassroots protests prompted environmental concern at the federal level in both Germany and in the United States. By 1979, 50,000 citizen environmental groups existed with membership numbering in the millions, overwhelming Chancellor Willy Brandt’s government (Horst Mewes 1983: 53-55). Amid the fervor, 16 citizen groups came together to form the Federal Association of Environmental Citizen-Initiatives, or the BBU, in 1972. By June 20th, 1981, the BBU had obtained half a million members and was taking a very active role in the anti-nuclear protests that raged throughout Germany’s major cities, such as Bonn. Meanwhile, some of the BBU’s founders began discussing the possibility of a “protest party” that would literally grow out of this huge environmental grassroots

initiative. By 1977, local German “green party lists” began appearing in the various regions of the country, such as in Bremen, where in 1979, the Green Party won over 5 percent of the vote for the first time (Mewes 1983: 57). Although the Greens soon split after their electoral victory, it was a milestone nonetheless. These different green state parties eventually came together, and after a series of meetings to iron out ideological conflict, the federal Green Party was born on January 13th, 1980.^{xiii}

Building on its anti-nuclear and ecological foundations, the Green party championed alternate and environmentally friendly forms of energy. The Greens not only worked to change the nation’s energy policy, but also to reinvent the country’s social programs, such as a shorter work week, and more pay.^{xliii} The Greens emphasized global warming as their primary concern during their electoral platform in 1990, as well as eliminating any products that harm the ozone layer. These topics were at the center of the environmental movement within Germany at the time, as the public began to fear the consequences of ozone depletion when a hole was discovered five years earlier, and the media commenced printing articles predicting doomsday unless the state took immediate action.^{xliv}

This fear was reinforced when the nuclear accident at Chernobyl occurred in April 1986, leading to the creation of the Enquete Commission a year later on October 16, 1987.^{xlv} Made up of scientists and politicians, the commission released its first report in 1988 warning of the grave dangers of ozone depletion and the greenhouse effect. The government unanimously voted in favor of the

report, becoming the first industrialized nation to fully recognize climate change (Cavender, Jager 1993: 10). Germany also put ozone depletion on the European Union political agenda when the country assumed its turn at the six-month presidency (Watanabe, Mez 2004: 111).^{xlvi} The importance of the EU will be discussed later.

Despite growing public environmental awareness, the Green party's primary issues contrasted sharply with the other political platforms echoing the historical events of German reunification on October 3, 1990, and the fall of communism in the USSR with the collapse of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 (Markovits, Gorski 1993: 175-176). Instead, the Greens stressed their party's belief in a return to nature in the form of an Ecotopia^{xlvii} in the face of an "apocalypse" of which the nuclear bomb was just one piece supporting the view that technology was eroding ethical and moral values of the German population (Markovits, Gorski 1993: 135). The party also emphasized that government institutional policies and structures reflect more environmentally sound policies. The results of the 1990 election allowed the Greens to enter the German Bundestag with 5.1 percent of the vote, giving them eight seats in the government (Markovits, Gorski 1993: 233). Four years later that percentage rose to 7.3 percent^{xlviii} and from 1998 to 2005, the party increased their electoral vote from 6.7 percent to 8.1 percent.^{xlix}

As the party began winning federal elections and transforming German governmental responses to the environment, the Greens have had to equally evolve themselves. Although the party continually stresses the importance of

their spokesmen staying in close contact with the grassroots environmental movement and rebelling against formal party norms with frequent seat rotations in party leadership, no recruitment, and numerous written requests about government policies, the Greens have had to adapt to the firmly established political channels through which German politicians operate (E. Gene Frankland 1989: 400, 402). In short, the Greens have had to “professionalize” by creating more permanent government staffs and executive departments (Frankland 1989: 407). They have also dropped many of their former aspects of earlier platforms, such as withdrawing from NATO, and now lend their support for military missions abroad, such as in Kosovo. Today the Greens boast as their leader Joschka Fischer, the most popular politician within Germany and one of the most liked throughout Europe (Claus Christian Malzahn 2005: 1-3).

The Greens still hold firm to their anti-nuclear views, however, as negotiations over the role of nuclear energy in CO₂ reductions demonstrated in 1995 (Cass 2007: 141), as well as equal representation of men and women within the party. The future of the Green party, however, depends on its leaders' ability to demonstrate that their issues are not just all about the environment, as the other parties “green” their platforms in efforts to win back voters.¹ Yet it is clear that the Green Party has made its mark on German politics, transforming the government's aggressive response to environmental issues like climate change and its ability to influence public opinion.

The German Citizenry Join In

The Green party did much to educate the German public about the environment in the 1990s, and with the publication of the Enquete Commission reports, many German environmental groups such as German Greenpeace began to join in the fray.ⁱⁱ In 1992, Germany adopted the strictest environmental laws in Europe under the influence of the Greens (Markovits, Gorski 1993: 176), reunification, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government, which negotiated with major German industries to implement numerous voluntary actions to reduce CO2 emissions.ⁱⁱⁱ By that time, the nation was increasing its use of renewable energy under the Electricity Feed-in Act that would continue for eight years.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ In 1998, the Green Party again influenced the German environmental movement under a new governing coalition that would implement a green tax, a gradual phase out of nuclear energy, and increase the country's use of renewable energy sources (Watanabe, Mez 2004: 117).

By 2000, public opinion polls throughout Germany in June of that year indicated that 98 percent of respondents thought climate change was a serious problem, with 58 percent expressing more government action to address it (Cass 2007: 192). The National Climate Policy Programme was created to reduce Germany's CO2 emissions by 50 to 70 tonnes in five years (Watanabe, Mez 2004: 118). Two years later in October, amid massive flooding, the Greens received the largest number of votes ever in its history, making it the third largest party in Germany (Watanabe, Mez 2004: 120). With this great political boost, the Greens have been able to lend support for greenhouse gas legislation at the EU

level and strengthen the nation's resolve to rely more heavily on renewable sources. Today Germany is the only country to successfully meet its greenhouse gas emissions target under the UNFCCC agreement and that is still working with industry on environmentally friendly legislation. ^{liv}

Conclusion

In the end, Germany has come a long way in its environmental history. Going from a country whose public was indifferent to the environment, today German citizens are one of the most highly educated and environmentally concerned. Due to the influence of the Green party, a string of natural disasters, and German NGOs involved in environmental legislation at all levels of government and at the European Union, Germany has become one of the world's most environmentally friendly nations.^{lv}

CHAPTER IV

WHY IS CLIMATE CHANGE A KEY ISSUE IN GERMANY AND NOT IN THE UNITED STATES?

Climate change policy development, which here is defined as the evolution of concrete action proposals to mitigate the speed at which climate change is occurring^{vi}, has gone down different paths in the United States and in Germany. The research question that this thesis seeks to answer is 'why is climate change a top priority on Germany's national political agenda and not a top priority on America's national political agenda?' As discussed in the literature, there are complex reasons why this is the case ranging from varying cultural perceptions to economic priorities to foreign policy views. Yet, three variables take precedence over all others because they have the largest influence on climate change policy. These variables are: 1) Germany and America's foreign policy views in the post World War II era 2) the social and political imprint that the evolution of the environmental movement left on Germany after WWII, and 3) the working dynamics behind a two party versus a multiparty system as well as a state's political institutions. These three variables shape the national influence of climate change policy in Germany and the United States and explain why climate change policy is a number one issue on the political agenda in Germany and not a primary concern on the political agenda in the United States.

The three hypotheses are:

- Climate change policy is stronger in Germany because of the nation's foreign policy views since World War II.
- Climate change is a top political priority in Germany and not a top priority in the United States because of the social and political imprint the evolution of the environmental movement left on Germany after WWII.
- Climate change is on Germany's political agenda and not on the U.S. political agenda because Germany has a multiparty system and America has a two party system.

World War II shaped Germany in ways that resonate today. As Kansteiner illustrates In Pursuit of German Memory, the country struggled with feelings of moral guilt, shame and responsibility since 1945. This burden essentially redefined their sense of national identity, and nowhere is it more apparent than in foreign policy matters. Since the end of WWII, Germany is on a perpetual path to "normalize" its state through multilateral actions championed by the nation's political elites. For instance, Germany was soon declaring anti-totalitarianism during the Cold War (Wulf Kansteiner 2006: 184, 206), and the rise of the German Greens, the most powerful party of its kind in Europe, was due to its

emphasis on humanitarian and social issues along with their anti-fascism stance (Kansteiner 2006: 315). Even after Germany was physically reunited after the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, and then governmentally on October 3, 1990, historians fiercely debated the role Germany played in WWII. Suspicions rose as to what a reunified Germany would mean militarily for the rest of Europe (Robert M. Berdahl 2006: 499-500). Berdahl (2006) captures the sentiment in a quote by a French observer:

Germany, a big nation, is again becoming a great nation....[A]ll it lacks is the military arm. From the height of its power, its industrialists and merchants are looking far beyond the West, at the wide world. And France looks at Germany. It is the season of suspicion—thoroughly foreseeable after all (p. 499).

Indeed, the “collective shame” that WWII cast upon Germany made the nation advocate collective security foreign policy views that are reinforced at the EU level, but are increasingly at odds with America’s unilateralist approach.^{lvii}

Until WWII, the United States was reluctant to entangle itself in foreign affairs (Steven W. Hook, John Spanier 2007: 57). However, this began to alter after 1945, with the foreign policy stance favoring unilateralism clearly stated in the Bush Doctrine formed in September 2002. It stresses American hegemony and any challenge against the status quo as futile and self-defeating. The doctrine also emphasizes the idea of preemptive war against terrorism using nuclear weapons, if necessary, abandoning previous U.S. positions on containment and deterrence (Hook, Spanier 2007: 326-327). This grand strategy

made the bold assumption that other European nations would gladly welcome America's foreign policy view. They have not, and climate change policy only magnifies the foreign policy tensions between Europe and the United States as Germany and the European Union (EU) go down one path, and the United States down another.

The influence that the environmental movement in Germany and the United States left on its citizens is a second vital factor to consider when examining the political permanence of climate change. The social movement in America blossomed in the wake of the impassive response of U.S. states to harmful pollution in local communities. Books like Rachel Carson's Silent Spring spread public awareness about DDT, and the health consequences due to low quality drinking water spurred the national government to pass laws like the Clean Air and Water Act. Soon U.S. environmental standards were the role model for other nations to follow at the height of the social movement in the 1970's,^{lviii} as the country experienced an explosion of national laws to combat harmful pollutants whose legal regulation trickled down to the state and local levels. While citizen support for the environment remains a permanent factor in the U.S. social movement, the political momentum of the environmental wave has stalled in recent decades. This is due to the inability of the national government to respond effectively to new pieces of environmental legislation because of its institutional setup, which will be discussed later, and it is now the state and local levels that are prompting the national government to act on behalf of the environment.

The wave of environmentalism in Germany created not only a strong social movement, but also a powerful party—the Green Party. The post WWII atmosphere was an ideal setting for the birth of a new political order. As Germany began redefining its national identity, a party was born to embody all of its new aspects. The Greens, which grew out of local segments of society,^{lix} championed alternative energy forms, humanitarian rights, peace, and urged multilateral action on issues such as ozone depletion. As Green issues became more popular, which included large measures for environmental protection, the party gained seats in the German parliament. Since then they have changed the dynamics of policymaking and have taken away substantial electoral support for Germany's other major party—the Social Democrats (SPD). This party movement did not occur in America due to a third vital factor in explaining why climate change is a number one priority on Germany's political agenda and not on the U.S. agenda: a state's institutional/political party structures.

The political channels through which groups operate are significantly determined by a state's institutional setup. Europe mainly runs on a parliamentary system where power is fused and more concentrated in one office, such as the Prime Minister. Proportional representation, where parties only have to cater to a specific segment of the population, permits other political views to sometimes establish a physical presence in the government. The Greens were allowed to do so when they met the 5 percent threshold and entered the German parliament in 1990. This phenomenon is virtually impossible under America's two party system.

Scruggs (2003) notes political institutions are “more-or-less formal rules of representative democracy” (13) that have a profound influence over how environmental protection laws are coordinated into the domestic realm. While Scruggs acknowledges that strong factions exist that champion environmental measures in a single-party system, he demonstrates better response rates of multi-party coalition governments to environmental problems. This is clearly seen in the German Green Party and its influence throughout the nation’s Lander (164). Scruggs also recognizes strong differences in policy approaches under a unified government versus one with separation of powers, where opposing interest groups can often delay critical action concerning the environment, as has been evidenced with climate change and the loss of momentum in the U.S. environmental movement (167-168).

Schreurs (2002) also demonstrates the powerful influence of political institutions/structures. She convincingly argues that the environmental movement in the U.S., Germany, and Japan came onto the political agenda at various times in their history due to the nations’ political structures and institutional setup. These differences provide varying degrees of opportunity for certain domestic issues to come into the spotlight and onto the political agenda. Schreurs makes the case that the more parties there are, the more probable issues like the environment will be put onto the agenda and the more likely concrete political action will take place. She notes the successful rise of the Green Party in Germany by 1986, when the party held 7 percent of the vote as the main reason

why the environment, and in consequence climate change, is a leading political issue in Germany today.

The entrance of the Greens has altered the political environment in Germany. Over the last ten years the growing electoral success of the Greens have eroded votes from Germany's other major parties, especially the Social Democrats (SPD). Since the 1980's, the Greens have been competing for votes that until then went to the Social Democrats. As Pulzer (1995) points out, change was underway for the SPD as early as the late 1970's, when a vast majority of anti-nuclear protesters in Bonn were formally SPD voters (140). The party soon split as Germany's economy began to suffer, and in 1985 the Social Democrats and the Greens formed their first coalition in Hesse. Two years later the SPD was still divided over crucial issues under the Kohl government while the number of Green voters increased by 2.3 percent (144). Even though the SPD and the Green party experienced electoral losses during reunification in 1990 (the Greens did not make it into the Bundestag and the SPD only garnered 24.3 percent in the new Lander (169)) the Greens have since then made a comeback, winning 16.5 percent of the vote in Bremen's May 2007 election. While the SPD beat the Greens, earning 16.9 percent of the vote, it is lower than 2003. This is part of a growing trend, falling not only in Bremen, but also in most regions across Germany (Judy Dempsey 2007: 1).

Not only are the Greens successfully competing for people's votes in the current era, but also their growing political power is changing the dynamics of the party system. The SPD finds itself forming coalitions with the Greens more often

in order to enter parliament with a ruling majority. The success of the Greens also makes it easier for postmaterialist issues to flourish vocally and tangibly, such as securing increased funding for renewable energy sources.^{ix}

This is not the case in the United States where an entrenched two party system^{lxi} leaves no room for smaller parties in Congress. This is because the setup does not reward seats based on proportional representation, but rather is based only on receiving a majority (Mancur Olson 1986: 170). It is a winner takes all system, reaching out to broad interests in society (Olson 1986: 171). This happened when President Reagan took office—focusing his attention on boosting the economy rather than on promoting the environmental interests of an active but slender segment of the American public. While most U.S. citizens still expressed environmentally friendly attitudes, it was not a primary concern that affected them personally.

Due to the fact that only two parties earn seats in the American Congress, supporters of unrepresented interests resort to the U.S. pluralist system. Here networks compete in lobbying members of Congress. While issues such as the environment are channeled to politicians in this way, pluralism inhibits postmaterialism from permeating higher levels of government. This occurs partly, as Michael Shellenberger and William Nordhaus (2004) argue, because of the narrow definitions interest groups promote. It is also because strong industrial lobbies with large monetary resources are able to oppose much of the environmental legislation that makes its way into the German parliament because of the electoral presence of the Green party (Schreurs 2002: 88). As a result, the

fate of the environment is left in the coercive power of the U.S. federal government to ensure a certain level of compliance with already existing environmental legislation. Schreurs (2002) proclaims, however, that the level of compliance is not uniform across all fifty states. Yet, it is the lack of a formal 'Green' party in the United States that hinders more progressive environmental legislation from developing.

Thus, most concrete political environmental action must occur at the lower levels of government because there is no third party acting at the national level. This, Rabe (2004) argues, is the motivating factor behind the surge in environmental activism within individual American states^{lxii}. While Schreurs (2002) argues that there is a minimal amount of federal enforcement, Rabe (2004) declares that it is the virtual lack of federal environmental legislation in Congress that is prompting several states to go beyond what is legally required to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to mitigate climate change. For instance, the New England region is working with the Canadian government to reach emission targets set by the Kyoto Protocol despite the U.S. withdrawal from the Treaty in 2001, and California made a major commitment in 2006 to reduce its own generated greenhouse gas emissions (that rank 12th in the world) by 25 percent by 2020 independently of the federal government. The California Global Warming Solutions Act signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger sparked a series of political debates around the country due to California's large state economy.^{lxiii} While some states embrace climate change policy more so than

others (a reflection of sub-state cultures), the wave of environmental state action is a clear sign that climate change is beginning to be taken seriously.

Even major business corporations are becoming “more green” in the face of increasing state action throughout the country.^{lxiv} Indeed, the climate change ‘problem’ is falling increasingly on the shoulders of policy advocates that make up U.S. policy networks. As Henrik Selin and Stacy D. VanDeveer (2007) put forth, it is the climate change action occurring in local businesses, regions, and U.S. states that is responsible for making the U.S. federal government finally begin taking up climate change as an issue at the national level (1-27).

This is the exact opposite of what is happening in Germany. The Green Party is instigating environmental action at the national level that, in turn, is regulating the various Lander under numerous environmental requirements. Building on Germany’s traditional cultural roots with nature as a defining element, the national influence of the Third Reich and the Holocaust, and Germany’s distinct social and intellectual history, the Green Party has become a particularly powerful entity in terms of redefining Germany’s social and political policies. The Green Party grew out of the aftermath of WWII and the Holocaust, championing everything that was the antithesis of what WWII represented, heavily concentrating on environmental issues including climate change.^{lxv} It is to the immense credit of the Green Party that climate change is considered so highly on the political agenda in Germany, and it is their very presence in the Bundstag that makes other political parties and German industry more consciously “green.”

Post WWII foreign policy views, social/party movements, and political structures/institutions all influence the fourth and final variable this thesis argues is behind the climate change policy divide in Germany and the United States: cultural values. As is demonstrated above, WWII filtered out many German cultural values that predated WWII, especially in the area of national security and nuclear weaponry. A shift in cultural values led the Green party to rise successfully to power based on these new values championed in their social movements. The wave of post-materialism, which was itself an outcome of the post WWII environment, also altered cultural perceptions of the mass public in Germany. Paul R. Abramson and Ronald Inglehart (1986) empirically demonstrate how younger European populations have significantly different values from older generations. They discover that younger generations are more active in political protests and are likely to support leftist parties that champion issues such as women's rights and the environment (pp. 2). Abramson and Inglehart specifically cite the Greens in Germany as a prime example of a party that came to power largely because of its postmaterialist voters.

Abramson and Inglehart's other works from 1986 and 1997 also emphasize the importance of generational replacement, especially in Germany. Tracing two decades of research beginning in the 1970's, they argue that today's Europeans, although economically sensitive, place more value on issues such as self-expression rather than on rising inflation. The authors even successfully refute their key critics who say that postmaterialism is largely influenced by unemployment and not by generational replacement (1997).

In essence, Abramson and Inglehart quantifiably demonstrate that cultural values are changing due to gradual but sustained postmaterialism in the younger generations of Europe. In Germany alone the percentage of postmaterialists in the general population experienced a steady growth from the 1970s. The percentage rose from 10 percent in 1970-1971 to 16 percent in 1982, and when the Green Party came to power in 1986, 21 percent of the population expressed postmaterialist priorities. That statistic jumped to 25 percent in the next year alone. During these same time periods, the distribution of materialists in the German population decreased from 45 percent in 1970-71 to 31 percent in 1982, to 17 percent in 1986. While it increased to 18 percent in 1987 and to 21 percent during German reunification, postmaterialism had by then made its mark on younger generations of Germans.^{lxvi}

Their works not only strengthen the role of social and party movements but also point to the influence that cultural values play in why climate change is a hot political issue in Germany and is quickly becoming one in the United States.

The EU, in itself a consequence of Germany and Europe's post WWII perceptions, is adding a whole other dimension to climate change policy. As Cass (2007) demonstrates, political leaders and national governments are often persuaded or coerced into addressing environmental protection issues when the general public perceives certain international norms to be in their interest domestically^{lxvii}, and the EU is a tool through which "environmental leaders" are coercing and persuading other "environmental laggards" to catch up in the area of environmental protection. The absence of such a powerful player in the realm

of climate change politics in the United States is crucial to understanding why climate change is a top priority on the political agenda in Germany and not in the United States. The EU is essentially reinforcing German multilateral policy positions that were created after WWII.^{lxviii}^{lxix}. These include collective security strategies, crisis prevention, and focusing on greater reliance on renewable energy sources.

Germany is often credited as a “leader” that has shaped EU environmental policy throughout the decades. As Jordan (2002) declares, Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands were known as the “green troika” (49) that pushed numerous environmental measures onto the EU agenda. The different policy channels included the EU council of ministers, the EU commission, and various EU state alliances (52). Germany used all of these pathways to implement environmental legislation, especially when it was the nation’s turn to assume presidency of the European council of ministers during its six-month rotation (149). That rotation has come around again to Germany in 2007, and the country is once more pushing for issues it deems important, and climate change is one of them. As German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared in Berlin on March 25, 2007, at the 50-year anniversary of the European Union in reference to ratifying a EU constitution, “We must...renew the political shape of Europe in keeping with the times. Not to do so would be an historic failure” (Landler, M. (2007, March 26). European Union at 50, Seeks Footing as the World Shifts. The New York Times, pp. A3).

Germany is still a major environmental player at the EU level and uses this institution as another channel through which to promote its political priorities. For instance, when Germany failed to win crucial U.S. support for its 25 percent CO2 reduction target by 2005 and stabilization of CO2 emissions at 1990 levels by 2000, at the Houston G-7 Summit in July 1990, Germany went to what was then the European Community (EC) that fall and lobbied for reductions there. While Germany still met with opposition from other EC members, due to Germany's persistence, a compromise was eventually reached where the European Community as a whole would work to stabilize emissions at 1990 levels by 2000 (Cass 2007: 47). In addition, the country holds some of the strictest environmental standards within its own national boundaries (Jordan 2002: 63).

The United States is not a party to any such organization that must comply with increasingly stricter environmental regulations, and the EPA is often the political as well as the legal target of various lawsuits that only weakens its ability to operate effectively and adds to its already negative reputation in Washington D.C. There are, however, strong interest group networks operating in the U.S. pluralist system—networks that are substantially very weak at the EU level. While the EU has grown in strength and size over the years in fine-tuning its major institutions, such as the European Parliament (EP), Commission, and the European Court of Justice (ECJ), the EU is still very impenetrable to the interests of those outside the “exclusive club.” Interest groups that have relatively easy access to inside political actors in the U.S. are virtually left out in the cold when

trying to lobby at the EU level. This has begun to improve slightly over the years as the environmental committee on the EP has allied themselves via fluid networks representing outside environmental concerns (Jordan 2002: 154). Yet, the EU is also often used as a scapegoat by national politicians when particular EU environmental directives are found distasteful to its constituents, thereby weakening the EU's reputation and credibility, much like the EPA on a much grander scale.

Yet, the EU is a vital force in keeping the environment and reinforcing agreed upon policies from the post WWII era prominent and visible on its member states' political agendas. While some states are less environmentally conscious than others, EU requirements for membership in the increasingly beneficial and powerful economic trading bloc force many "laggards" to clean up their surroundings. Even in Germany where the environment is still a powerful domestic issue kept in place by the presence of the Green party, the EU is consciously forcing Germany to implement more stringent environmental regulations as the nation continues to heal from its Nazi past through championing multilateral views and international cooperation. In addition, the political competition of the Green Party in Germany is making the SPD have a "greener" platform^{lx}. Yet, it is a post WWII Germany with its multilateral foreign policy views, of which the EU reinforces, the social/party movements, and political institutional and party structures that are responsible for keeping environmental and increasingly climate change, on the political agenda.

CONCLUSION

In the end, climate change policy is a top priority on the German political agenda and not a top priority on the American political agenda because of the unique role that WWII played in shaping German multilateral foreign policy views that is still reinforced today through the European Union, the party/social movements that resulted since 1945, and each state's institutional structures and party system. All these variables have come together in Germany, where its powerful Green party has seized upon climate change as its latest political issue in its quest to redefine Germany as a globally peaceful nation that continues all the way up to the EU level. While Germany and the United States both experienced a wave of environmentalism in the 1960's and 1970's, the institutional structures and party system that were shaped by Germany's foreign and domestic policy decisions since 1945 has permitted environmentalism to survive and to continue evolving national policy. The absence of a past like Germany's in the United States, its increasingly unilateralist foreign policy view, and its two party system have made environmentalism at the federal level suffer in terms of concrete legislation and low levels of American public awareness.

However, times are gradually beginning to change, as a rollover in governing administrations is on the horizon.^{lxxi} As increasing state action is occurring in lieu of federal action on climate change, and as more businesses are seeing the benefits (monetary and otherwise) of going green, politicians in

Washington D.C. are beginning to take heed of climate change and recognize its truly global nature. By looking at another industrial nation that has risen to the challenge of combating climate change in the face of mounting scientific evidence, America may regain some of its environmental leadership in the near future that it displayed over 30 years ago.

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CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER III

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- ^{lxviii} Germany was one of the original member states of the European Community (EC) that signed the first implicit environmental treaty in 1957. Although the aim of the EC at this point in time was mainly to expand national trading boundaries, the Treaty of Rome is the first document that hints at environmental protection (Jordan 2002: 22). Since then, the European Union, as it was officially called in 1992 under the Maastricht Treaty, has developed stronger written documents that specifically require certain levels of environmental regulation from its member states. In addition, the number of EU members has increased who must comply with EU environmental protection laws. This is especially true of the Central Eastern European (CEE) states that have had a major cleanup of its environment in order to qualify for EU membership.
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