Explainers

1980

What's next for green within global green parties?

Once a fringe movement, green parties are increasingly becoming unremarkable features of the political scene, adapting to the current political climate. This has been facilitated by environmental activism, including the Green Belt Movement led by Wangari Maathai, which gained global attention and paved the way for similar movements elsewhere in the world. Africa has seen a range of green politics achieving representation in government, with some politicians being mayors of major cities, including Bogota, and others having wielded influence in other ways. As of 2020, greens held 117 seats in the European Parliament, and their best performance in a presidential election was in 2004, with greens coming in second in the election in Washington, D.C.

The most fundamental debates center on the very nature of the movement, with some greens—most notably in Finland—reconsidering that a Green New Deal, which became popular among greens in the United States, is a sharper reduction in both production and emissions. Opponents of this perspective have termed it "degrowth," or a sharp reduction in both production and emissions.

Still, experts say their relevance remains low in Southern and Eastern Europe, much like in the United States. In a snap election, the Austrian Green Party formed a government with the Greens becoming prime minister and their leader, Joschka Fischer, becoming foreign minister. This was a significant rebranding for the Greens, who had been struggling with the national party leader and their national representation.

The most recent election in the Netherlands saw the Greens becoming kingmaker and forming a new government with the center-left GroenLinks. This has been true for a period of time; by the 1990s, greens were making significant gains in the state parties, and their influence has continued to grow since then.

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Greens are now seeing their support grow in many countries as a result of ambitious climate targets and the growing acceptance of nonviolent principles and their willingness to form alliances with other parties. This has been particularly true in countries such as the United States, where green parties have struggled at the national level but have become a fixture in the state parties.

In the United States, in 1983: pesticides are banned from sale, and the House of Representatives passes a bill to ban the use of the herbicide Agent Orange, which was used in Vietnam. In 1996: the Green Party's Vice-Presidential candidate, H. L. Smith, runs under the green banner for the first time. In 2004: greens enter government in Germany for the first time, with the Greens becoming the vice-chancellor and foreign minister. He influences the phasing out of nuclear power, and greens continue to focus on global trade arrangements and the role of greens in mainstream politics.

According to the Global Greens network, there are close to eighty national green parties in the world. They include climate change, pollution, and industrial agriculture as their central green issue. Although many of the green parties are in the far left or far right, they have also moved towards a central role in the political spectrum. One example of flexibility is Austria's move from a country with strong socialist parties to a country where greens play a central role. This has been facilitated by green parties developing out of a wave of radical social activism, such as the "New Left" and student movements of 1968, which broke with earlier forms of industrial civilization itself and utopian visions of life in the future. The"New Left" was not satisfied with the leveling of industrial societies beginning in the 1960s.

Protests have proliferated against nuclear power in Western countries. In 1980, thousands of people marched in the streets of Japan, demanding the closure of nuclear power plants. Their demands were met with police crackdowns, and the movement remains divided over issues such as nuclear energy, which is still a central green issue.

Left-wing green parties have often faced very different electoral conditions. The United States, under the Green Party, has been a major force in the movement of the 1970s and 80s. In the United States, greens have used the term "realos," or moderates, and the "fundis," or radicals. The latter are more likely to support a Green New Deal, which became popular among greens in the United States, is a sharper reduction in both production and emissions.

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a “major threat” to their nation, greens worldwide could be positioned to further grow their influence.

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