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**The Global Problem of Climate Change in the Political Agenda of the European Union:
The Transformation of European Parties**

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Introduction

The global problem of climate change refers to the list of issues that, according to the definition of the United Nations (UN), “transcend national boundaries and cannot be resolved by any one country acting alone.”¹. This problem should be understood as “long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns” provoked by natural or anthropogenic causes². According to the UN, global climate change is predominantly man-made, and is primarily provoked by the use of fossil fuels, which generates greenhouse gas emissions (mainly carbon dioxide or CO₂)³. From the perspective of the European Union (EU), other causes include deforestation, increase of farming livestock, fertilizers containing nitrogen and fluorinated gases⁴. The consequences of the global problem of climate change can be divided into four groups: natural (e.g., high temperatures, floods, etc.), social (e.g., health problems among the population), business-related (e.g., infrastructure vulnerability), and territorial (e.g., melting permafrost in the Arctic)⁵.

In 2021, the specialized United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published the results of the “World in 2030: Public Survey Report” on key global challenges. The category “climate change and biodiversity loss” took there first place⁶. Separately, both in the European Union and in a set of its member states (including Germany), according to the Special Eurobarometer 513: Climate Change, citizens also ranked “climate change” as the first among the “most serious problems facing the world.”⁷.

The EU, realizing the priority of the global problem of climate change, has formed its political agenda in a way that it would be most correct to characterize the environmental policy as a set of measures to “protect the environment and combat climate change.”⁸. Accordingly, special emphasis is placed on this global problem, and comprehensive measures are proposed to solve it. They primarily include reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, improving the energy efficiency, and increasing the share of renewable energy (RE) sources⁹.

¹ Global Issues [Electronic resource] // United Nations: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.un.org/ru/global-issues> (accessed 09.03.2023).

² What Is Climate Change? [Electronic resource] // United Nations: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change> (accessed 09.03.2023).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Causes of climate change [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. Available at: https://climate.ec.europa.eu/climate-change/causes-climate-change_en (accessed 09.03.2023).

⁵ Consequences of climate change [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. Available at: https://climate.ec.europa.eu/climate-change/consequences-climate-change_en (accessed 09.03.2023).

⁶ The World in 2030: Public Survey Report [Electronic resource] // UNESCO: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375950/PDF/375950eng.pdf.multi> (accessed 09.03.2023).

⁷ Special Eurobarometer 513: Climate Change. Brussels: Kantar, 2021. P. 134.

⁸ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties in Multi-Level Environmental Governance in the European Union and Germany // Management. 2021. Vol. 9, № 4. P. 123.

⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda on the Participation of the European Parties in the 2019 European Elections // The Herald of the Diplomatic Academy of the MFA of Russia. Russia and the World. 2022. №4 (34). P. 205.

The ongoing climate change, institutional and legal adaptation at all levels of governance, positioning of the European Union as a “leader” in the fight against the global problem of climate change, close relationship between climate and energy issues, as well as changes in public opinion have all contributed to the spread of this topic in many other areas¹⁰. Specifically, this thesis¹¹ is devoted to the influence of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union on the transformation of European parties.

It is worth mentioning that the term “European parties” can have two meanings. On the one hand, it should be understood as the so-called “political parties at European level,” formed from ideologically close national parties. Mostly the latter represent the member states of the European Union and are aimed at European politics, therefore the name “supranational parties” can also be found in the extant literature. However, they can additionally include national parties from other states, which is the rationale for the name “transnational parties”.

The presented thesis considers the main parties that correspond to the interpretations defined above and registered by the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations. These are the European People's Party (EPP), the Party of European Socialists (PES), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), the European Democratic Party (EDP), the European Green Party (EGP or the European Greens), the European Free Alliance (EFA), the Party of European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR Party), the Identity and Democracy Party (ID Party) and the Party of the European Left (PEL or European Left). At the same time, to a greater extent, this paper is focused on the parties that are most represented and predominantly form their political groups in the European Parliament, namely the EPP, the PES, the ALDE, the EGP, the ECR Party, the PEL and the ID Party¹².

On the other hand, “European parties” can be understood as national parties of any state in Europe. In this thesis, the main national parties of Germany are considered as a good example of the functioning of a two-level party system. In many respects this country is the economic and political state-leader of the European Union. German main national parties include the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CDU/CSU), the Alliance 90/The Greens, the Free Democratic Party (FDP), the Left, and the Alternative for Germany

¹⁰ Historic Climate Deal in Paris: EU Leads Global Efforts [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. 2015. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news/articles/news_2015121201_en (accessed 01.04.2020).

¹¹ See also: *Lisenkova A.D.* The global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union: the transformation of European parties: final qualifying work, made in the form of a scientific report on the main results of the prepared scientific and qualifying work (dissertation). Saint Petersburg, 2023. 49 p.

¹² *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 203-204; European Union. Group/Europarty [Electronic resource] // Parties and Elections in Europe. Available at: <http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/eu.html> (official website 17.03.2022); Registered Parties [Electronic resource] // Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.appf.europa.eu/appf/en/parties-and-foundations/registered-parties> (accessed 09.03.2023).

(AfD)¹³. They have stable representation in the European Parliament and the Bundestag. It is worth noting that the SPD is a part of the PES, the CDU/CSU of the EPP, and the FDP of the ALDE. The national Greens are represented in the European Greens, as well as the left in the European Left¹⁴. The AfD does not have a supranational affiliation, yet works closely with the ID Party¹⁵. Accordingly, to ensure a clearer distinction and prevent confusion, in this thesis the term “European parties” is used only when it comes to two types at once. When considered separately, they are designated as parties at European level and supranational/transnational parties or national parties.

Although they have supranational affiliations, the author decided not to consider in detail minor parties whose delegations in the European Parliament are either not represented or very small in number (usually 1-3 deputies) and have the opportunity to get there mainly at the expense of the absence of a 5%-barrier. Moreover, they are none in the Bundestag, except for having special rights as the regionalist minor South Schleswig Voters' Association (SSW)¹⁶. These parties are the SSW (member of the EFA), the Free Voters (member of the EDP), the Liberal Conservative Reformers (member of the ECR Party), and the Family Party of Germany (however, as well as its transnational affiliation represented by the European Christian Political Movement)¹⁷. The term “minor party” is used in reference to the concept of second-order national elections and the potential success of small parties there¹⁸. The author of this study believes it is reasonable to define “small parties” as those that are sufficiently strong at the national level, even if they are not considered as traditional leaders. Accordingly, the “small parties” refers to all the national parties of Germany represented in the Bundestag, except the largest ones – the CDU/CSU and the SPD, and the SSW. The current status of the Greens is debatable, which will be discussed in more detail in the main body of this thesis.

¹³ Bundestag election 2021 [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2021/ergebnisse/bund-99.html> (accessed 12.04.2022); Comparative tool [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/tools/comparative-tool/> (accessed 08.04.2022).

¹⁴ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 130.

¹⁵ Unser Programm für ein Europa der Freiheit [Electronic resource] // Alternative für Deutschland: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://www.afd.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/AfD_Europawahlprogramm_A5-hoch_web_150319.pdf (accessed 03.01.2023).

¹⁶ *Ulli E.* Eine Hürde von fünf Prozent [Electronic resource] // Demokratie Geschichte. 25.06.2021. Available at: <https://www.demokratiegeschichten.de/eine-huerde-von-fuenf-prozent/> (accessed 07.04.2022); Comparative tool; 2019 European elections: national rules [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 2018. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/623556/EPRS_ATA\(2018\)623556_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/623556/EPRS_ATA(2018)623556_EN.pdf) (accessed 08.04.2022).

¹⁷ About us [Electronic resource] // European Democratic Party: [official website]. Available at: <https://democrats.eu/en> (accessed 14. 07. 2022); Bundestag election 2021; Comparative tool; Member Parties [Electronic resource] // European Free Alliance: [official website]. Available at: <https://e-f-a.org/member-parties/> (accessed 09.04.2022); Member Parties & Regional Partners [Electronic resource] // European Conservatives and Reformists Party: [official website]. Available at: <https://ecrparty.eu/about-ecr-party/> (accessed 14. 07. 2022); Our members and associates [Electronic resource] // European Christian Political Movement: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.ecpm.info/members-and-associates.html> (accessed 09.04.2022).

¹⁸ *Reif K., Schmitt H.* Nine Second-Order National Elections. A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results // European Journal of Political Research. 1980. Vol. 8, Issue 1. P. 9-10.

However, minor parties with transnational affiliations are used as arguments and particular examples, such as the most environmentally-oriented the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative, the Human Environment Animal Protection Party, the Ecological Democratic Party, etc., and various national parties from other states (e.g., the National Rally in France)¹⁹.

In addition, since the transformation of European parties is best illustrated through election campaigns, this thesis focuses on the 2019 and 2021 elections, which formed the current convocations of the European Parliament and the Bundestag. Consequently, the most recent elections held in both institutions are considered. The transformation is understood as the adaptation of rhetoric (e.g., in election programmes, debates, or interviews) of a particular party and its leaders, as well as any other activity and seats changes obtained under the influence of this transformation in the parliaments at the two levels.

Finally, it is also worth noting here that, for convenience, the term “faction” is used in the context of the Bundestag, and “political group” in relation to the European Parliament. In fact, when translated from German, in both cases, it is permissible to speak about factions, but the most used language for the supranational level is still English. As a result, a more logical translation would be to refer to political groups²⁰.

The **relevance** of this thesis can be immediately justified by a set of arguments.

Firstly, the problem of climate change is one of the officially recognized global environmental problems at the international level. Certain references to it could be found back in the 1970s (e.g., in a report under the auspices of the Club of Rome, “The Limits to Growth”)²¹. However, much more significant confirmation of its importance was, for example, the published reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), created back in 1988 under the auspices of the UN. These texts are compiled and put forward by the recognized international academic community experts as reviews on the basis of existing scientific research. Therefore, among other things, published in 2013-2014, the three-volume Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC was subsequently used to prepare the international Paris Agreement. It is worth noting that the latest Sixth Assessment Report was released in 2021-2022²².

¹⁹ Comparative tool.

²⁰ Fraktionen [Electronic resource] // Deutscher Bundestag: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundestag.de/services/glossar/glossar/F/fraktionen-444784> (accessed 09.04.2022); Full list [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/full-list> (accessed 09.04.2022); Vollständige Liste [Electronic resource] // Europäisches Parlament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/de/full-list> (accessed 09.03.2023).

²¹ *Meadows D.H., Meadows D.H., Randers J., Behrens III W.W.* The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project. NY: Universe Books, 1972. P. 81.

²² Reports [Electronic resource] // The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/reports/> (accessed 20.03.2023).

Secondly, since the signing of the international United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (also known as the “Earth Summit”)²³, discussions about further joint steps have not stopped. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997²⁴ and the 2nd commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (“Kyoto-2”) of 2012 followed it²⁵, both of them had specific targets, particularly high for the EU and its member states, including Germany. However, these efforts achieved limited success. Moreover, the 2009 Copenhagen Conference could be considered a political failure of the European Union. Despite the EU’s desire to become a world leader and set ambitious targets, the conference did not lead to the signing of a legally binding international document with obligations for both developed and developing countries²⁶. Not only external factors, but also internal disagreements among EU member states hindered progress²⁷. The Paris Agreement in 2015, already mentioned above, changed everything. The EU successfully participated in the “High Ambition Coalition” (“Ambition Coalition”), which agreed on the main points of the text in advance²⁸, resulting in the signing of the desired international document, which in its turn allowed to confidently talk about its leadership²⁹.

Thirdly, both the preparations for the 21st Paris Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-21) in 2015 and the aforementioned agreement, as well as the subsequent adaptation of institutions and legislation, have contributed to keeping the global problem of climate change at the center of the political agenda of the European Union and its member states, Germany in particular. These include the adoption in 2018-2019 of the “Clean Energy for All Europeans” package of regulations and directives³⁰, which adapted the 2030 Climate & Energy Framework (2014), the presentation of the European Green Deal in 2019, and in the 2021 European Climate Act the subsequent consolidation of a set of its provisions, particularly the goal to become the “first climate-neutral continent” by 2050 and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55% compared to 1990³¹. Additionally, there have been national changes such as the amendment to the 2019 German

²³ *Coptug V.A.* UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992): Information Review. Novosibirsk: SB RAS, 1992. P. 2.

²⁴ *Knight J.K.* The European Chemicals Agency Experience // Chemistry International. 2012. Vol. 34, № 6. P. 6.

²⁵ *Pandey C.L.* The Limits of Climate Change Agreements: From Past to Present // International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management. 2014. Vol. 6, № 4. P. 378; *Doherty R., Lewish B.* Doha Climate Talks throw Lifeline to Kyoto Protocol [Electronic resource] // Reuters. 08.12.2012. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/doha-climate-talks-kyoto-protocol-idINDEE8B705I20121208> (accessed 05.04.2022).

²⁶ *Houser T.* Copenhagen, the Accord, and the Way Forward // Policy Brief. 2010. № PB 5-10. P. 7; *Kreienkamp J.* The Long Road to Paris: The History of the Global Climate Change Regime. London: University College London, 2019. P. 9.

²⁷ *Groen L., Niemann A., Oberthür S.* The EU as a Global Leader? The Copenhagen and Cancún UN Climate Change Negotiations // Journal of Contemporary European Research. 2012. Vol. 8, Issue 2. P. 178-179.

²⁸ *Parker C.F., Karlsson C., Hjerpe M.* Assessing the European Union’s Global Climate Change Leadership: From Copenhagen to the Paris Agreement // Journal of European Integration. 2017. Vol. 39, Issue 2. P. 248.

²⁹ Historic Climate Deal...

³⁰ Clean energy for all Europeans package [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. Available at: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/clean-energy-all-europeans-package_en (accessed 12.03.2022).

³¹ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate Change Agenda of the Party of European Socialists // Humanities and Social Sciences. Bulletin of the Financial University. 2022. Vol.12, № 5. P. 128, 132.

Climate Change Act adopted in 2021³² and the creation of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, also known as the “Superministry”³³.

Fourth, according to the documents of the European Union such as the 2014 European Energy Security Strategy and the 2016 Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, despite often broadcasted climate ambitions regarding the transition to renewable energy, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency improvements, and alternative rationales also can be seen. These include ensuring security of supplies, diversification, and moving away from energy dependence³⁴. Above all, the acquisition of a certain energy independence not only from the energy sources such as oil, gas or coal, but also from their suppliers, particularly Russia is declared. Furthermore, prior to the decline in production volumes caused by the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), the level of energy dependence, on the contrary, was steadily increasing³⁵.

Finally, the serious attention paid to climate change at the UN level, the ongoing harmonization of supranational and national legislation, the transformation of institutions, the change in the rhetoric of top officials of the European Union, and a wide coverage of what is happening in the mass media have not gone unnoticed by civil society. Notable examples include the activities of non-systemic movements such as the “School Strike for Climate”/“Fridays for Future” (especially the Swedish activist Gr. Thunberg), the “Extinction Rebellion”, and others³⁶. The logical consequence of this is a significant increase in interest of voters in both green and left-green parties, as well as the transformation of other transnational and national parties under the current political agenda, leading to subsequent changes in parliamentary institutions. Thus, there is mutual influence between the climate change policies pursued by the institutions and the voters, and vice versa. As a result, all of this has greatly modified multi-level governance, the priorities of voters and parties, as well as the value system as a whole. The growing

³² Ibid. P. 128; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor on the Transformation of the Main Political Parties in Germany // *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istoriya – Tomsk State University Journal of History.* №82. P. 143.

³³ Ministergalerie [Electronic resource] // Bundesminister für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Artikel/Ministerium/ministergalerie.html> (accessed 21.11.2022).

³⁴ EU external energy engagement in a changing world [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2022%3A23%3AFIN&qid=1653033264976> (accessed 26.10.2022); Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy [Electronic resource] // European Union External Action: [official website]. 2016. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf (accessed 24.10.2022).

³⁵ EU energy mix and import dependency [Electronic resource] // Eurostat: [official website]. 2022. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_energy_mix_and_import_dependency#Energy_mix_and_import_dependency (accessed 20.03.2023).

³⁶ *Kurbanov E.A., Fominykh A.E.* Climate Change and Environmental issues in the EU-Russia Interaction: Prospective for Academic Cooperation // *West – East.* 2019. №12. P. 179; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 205.

attention to the global problem of climate change culminated in the “climate elections,” the common name for voting in both the 2019 European Parliament and the 2021 Bundestag “climate elections.”³⁷

The **aim** of this thesis is to determine the influence of the priority of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union and its member states, specifically Germany, on the transformation of European parties.

Achieving this aim requires solving several **tasks**:

1. To characterize the place of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda and value system of citizens of the European Union and Germany.

2. To systematize the theoretical, historical, legal, and institutional foundations of the two-level institution of European parties and election campaigns in the European Union and Germany.

3. To analyze the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of European parties in the framework of the election campaigns to the European Parliament in 2019 and the Bundestag in 2021.

4. To identify the main non-climatic factors that influenced the election campaigns to the European Parliament in 2019 and the Bundestag in 2021.

The **object** of this thesis is the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union and its member states on the case of Germany. The **concrete topic** is the influence of the priority of global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union and its member states (a case of Germany) on the transformation of European parties.

Chronologically, this thesis covers the period from 2019 to 2021, which includes the election campaigns to the European Parliament in 2019, and to the Bundestag in 2021. It was through the elections in 2019 and 2021 that the current convocations of the supranational and national parliaments were formed. This framework allowed for characterizing supranational trends that occurred in transnational parties and considering in more depth the features of national member parties from Germany, including evaluating the use of lessons learned from supranational campaigns at the national level. Despite the fact that the main focus is on 2019 and 2021, it was necessary to go beyond the outlined framework in some cases. Therefore, the trends of the election campaigns to the European Parliament in 2014 and to the Bundestag in 2017 are necessary for a comparative analysis and assessment of the transformation of European parties. In addition, the interim activity of the parties, as well as the results of the 2013 Bundestag campaign, were taken into account for a more favorable application of the concept of second-order national elections when data on elections is needed for a number of points, from which the counting of electoral cycles begins.

³⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 208; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 143.

The **theoretical basis** of this thesis is social constructivism, the concept of second-order national elections, and the spatial theory of party competition.

First, the research is based on *social constructivism* (A. Wendt³⁸, P. Katzenstein³⁹, M. Finnemore and M. Barnett⁴⁰, etc.) and its more private version aimed at the study of institutional foundations, in the form of *sociological institutionalism* (J.T. Chekel⁴¹, P.A. Hall and R.K.R. Taylor⁴², etc.). The thesis uses terms corresponding to constructivism and explanations of key processes in international relations. Social/conventional constructivism concepts, such as “ideas”, “norms”, “identity”, “values”, “intersubjectivity”, and “discourse” are used, and the interaction of agency and structure is characterized. The mentioned provisions are used both to explain the subjective construction of the evaluative perception of environmental problems, which does not exclude their materiality, and the significance of the global problem of climate change, as well as changes in the emerging value system. This theory helps explain changes in the rhetoric of transnational and national parties, relations between institutions and parties, parties and citizens; and the relations between parties and elections of two levels.

Secondly, the author tested the main provisions of the *concept of second-order national elections* (K. Reif, H. Schmitt⁴³, et al.) with regard to voting during the 2014 and 2019 European elections in the EU and its member states (a case of Germany), as well as in the 2013, 2017, and 2021 Bundestag elections. The starting point in the form of 2013 is due to the beginning of electoral cycles from national elections (the main or “first-order”), which took place that year. Accordingly, turnout, propensity to protest voting (including through the proportion of spoiled ballots), and the chances of already ruling at the national level and small/new/radical/populist/protest parties, as well as the influence of internal election cycles on supranational results, were characterized. This concept allowed to avoid potential erroneous conclusions about the nuances of the transformation of citizens' party preferences, which was facilitated by taking into account national trends when assessing the behavior of voters in the elections to the European Parliament. In addition, once again, the theory's mostly proven provisions have become evidence of the still persisting attitude towards supranational campaigns as secondary.

Thirdly, the *spatial theory of party competition* (A. Downs⁴⁴, G. Th. Mavrogordatos⁴⁵, etc.) contributes to the justification of the behavior of both transnational and national parties. Its main provisions include the desire for ideological rapprochement and moderation, as well as the high role of

³⁸ Wendt A. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 429 p.

³⁹ Katzenstein P. Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security. In: *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* / P. Katzenstein, ed. NY: Columbia University Press, 1996. P. 1-32.

⁴⁰ Barnett M., Finnemore M. *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004. 240 p.

⁴¹ Chekel J.T. *Social Construction and Integration* // *Journal of European Public Policy*. 1999. Vol. 6, Issue 4. P. 545-560.

⁴² Hall P.A., Taylor R.C.R. *Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms* // *Political Studies*. 1996. XLIV. P. 936-957.

⁴³ Reif K., Schmitt H. *Nine Second-Order National...*P. 3-44.

⁴⁴ Downs A. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. NY: Harper & Row, 1957. 310 p.

⁴⁵ Mavrogordatos G.Th. *Downs Revisited: Spatial Models of Party Competition and Left: Right Measurements* // *International Political Science Review*. 1987. Vol. 8, № 4. P. 333-342.

party leaders' personalities in a two-party and majority system; equidistribution across the political spectrum, the high role of ideology and the problematic for the emergence of new members in a multiparty and proportional system. Finally, this theory allows for the presence of irrational minor parties, as well as a tendency to unite in order to achieve the desired result. The spatial theory of party competition helps explain both the tactics of national and transnational parties to adapt their rhetoric to the global problem of climate change and the current state of the party systems in the European Union and Germany. An important clarification is needed here regarding the presence of both majority and proportional features in the cases under consideration. Thus, the author of this thesis proposes to apply the theory to transnational parties, which has some parallel with the concept of second-order national elections, since it requires serious consideration of national trends.

Finally, to systematize the study of European parties, the author uses the classification of the *Climate Action Network*. It assumes that political groups formed by both German parties and transnational parties could be divided into three categories according to their climate activity: “defenders”, “delayers”, and “dinosaurs”⁴⁶. Another classification presented by the *Climate Action Network* together with the *Deutscher Naturschutzring* separately defined the German national parties into three groups: “very good”, “good”, and “very bad”⁴⁷. Applying the mentioned classifications to this study based on the established chronological framework, the author proposes to revise the composition of participants in categories/groups. In the second case, the author also suggests singling out another group – “really very bad”.

The **methodological basis** of this thesis includes the application of:

1) General scientific methods:

— System analysis (perceiving the European Union as a system of which its environmental and/or climate policy, transnational parties, national member parties from Germany, as well as other components are parts);

— Comparative analysis (comparing the support of various transnational parties and their national member parties in Germany in different years, their climate agenda, as well as party courses among themselves and their correlation with the current climate goals of the EU);

— Deduction and induction (identifying individual phenomena in the climate tactics of transnational parties and national parties in Germany from general patterns, as well as deducing general trends from specific facts).

2) Special methods of political sciences:

⁴⁶ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs: Ranking of EU Political Groups and National Parties on Climate Change. Brussels: CAN Europe, 2019. P. 4.

⁴⁷ Wen wählen für mehr Klimaschutz? [Electronic resource] // Energiezukunft. 22.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.energiezukunft.eu/politik/wen-waehlen-fuer-mehr-klimaschutz/> (accessed 05.04.2022).

— Content analysis (determining the dynamics of mentions related to environmental protection and combating global climate change when working with speeches by top officials of the EU and Germany, leaders of political parties, as well as election manifestos and programmes, data from official websites and materials of party Congresses at national and supranational levels);

— Discourse analysis (qualitative assessment of the interrelated climate priorities of the European Union and the positions of transnational parties, as well as their national member parties in Germany through work with the texts of speeches by top officials of the EU and Germany, leaders of political parties, as well as with election manifestos and programmes, data from official websites and materials of party Congresses at national and supranational levels).

Solving the research tasks required the use of a significant set of **information sources**.

The *first group* was formed of official documents of the European Union and Germany.

Firstly, the texts of the founding agreements of the European Union were used. They helped analyze the evolution of environmental provisions (the 1957 Rome Treaties⁴⁸, the 1986 Single European Act (EEA)⁴⁹, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty⁵⁰, the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam⁵¹) and the significance of the global problem of climate change (the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon⁵²), the institute of “political parties at European level” (the 1992 Maastricht Treaty⁵³, the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon⁵⁴), as well as the decision-making procedures in the European Union and the development of the European Parliament (the 1992 Maastricht Treaty⁵⁵, the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam⁵⁶, the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon⁵⁷).

Secondly, a set of national legal acts of Germany was used, which primarily includes documents regulating election campaigns (the 1949 Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany with the latest amendments in 2022⁵⁸ and the 1956 Federal Elections Act with the latest amendments in 2021⁵⁹), as well

⁴⁸ Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community [Electronic resource] // EUR-Lex: Access to European Union Law: [official website]. 1957. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11957A/TXT&from=EN> (accessed 02.01.2023); Vertrag zur Gründung der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft [Electronic resource] // EUR-Lex: Access to European Union Law: [official website]. 1957. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11957E/TXT&from=en> (accessed 02.01.2023).

⁴⁹ Single European Act // Official Journal of the European Communities. 1987. № L169. 19 p.

⁵⁰ Treaty on European Union // Official Journal of the European Union. 1992. № C 191. 112 p.

⁵¹ Treaty of Amsterdam // Official Journal of the European Union. 1997. C 340. 148 p.

⁵² Treaty of Lisbon // Official Journal of the European Communities. 2007. № C 306. 271 p.

⁵³ Treaty on European...112 p.

⁵⁴ Treaty of Lisbon. 271 p.

⁵⁵ Treaty on European...112 p.

⁵⁶ Treaty of Amsterdam. 148 p.

⁵⁷ Treaty of Lisbon. 271 p.

⁵⁸ Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Electronic resource] // Ein Service des Bundesministeriums der Justiz sowie des Bundesamts für Justiz: [official website]. 1949. Available at: <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/gg/BJNR000010949.html> (accessed 02.01.2023).

⁵⁹ Bundeswahlgesetz [Electronic resource] // Ein Service des Bundesministeriums der Justiz sowie des Bundesamts für Justiz: [official website]. 1956. Available at: https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bwahlg/_6.html (accessed 07.04.2022).

as environmental management at the national level (in particular, the 1993 Law on the Establishment of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with the latest amendments in 2020⁶⁰).

Thirdly, the documents of the EU institutions were analyzed. These mainly include acts related to the creation and functioning of transnational parties (e.g., the Decision of the Authority for European political parties and European political foundations of 4 May 2017 to register the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party as a European political party⁶¹), political groups (in particular, the 1953 ECSC Common Assembly's Decision to Create Political Groups⁶²) and climate management (in particular, the European Council (23 and 24 October 2014) – Conclusions⁶³).

Finally, the programme documents of the European Union were considered the Fifth Environmental Action Programme (1992-2000s) titled “Towards Sustainability”⁶⁴, the 2020 Climate & Energy Package (2009)⁶⁵, “Clean Energy for All Europeans” (2018-2019s)⁶⁶, etc.

The *second group* consisted of various documents of European parties.

Firstly, to understand the ideological features of the interpretation of the global problem of climate change, the 2014 election programmes and manifestos of transnational parties and political groups were used. For instance, the manifesto “It’s Time for Self-Determination for All the Peoples of Europe” of the European Free Alliance⁶⁷, the manifesto “A Europe that works” of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe⁶⁸, etc. Additionally, similar texts from 2019, such as the programme “Retune the EU. Jan Zahradil” of the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe⁶⁹, “Time to renew the

⁶⁰ Gesetz über die Errichtung eines Bundesamtes für Naturschutz // Ein Service des Bundesministeriums der Justiz sowie des Bundesamts für Justiz. 1993. 1 p.

⁶¹ Decision of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations of 4 May 2017 to Register Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party as a European Political Party [Electronic resource] // Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations: [official website]. 2017. Available at: https://www.appf.europa.eu/cmsdata/213349/00_Decision_2017_05_04_ALDE_EN.pdf (accessed 14. 07. 2022).

⁶² The ECSC Common Assembly's Decision to Create Political Groups. Writing a New Chapter in Transnational Parliamentary History [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 2019. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637959/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)637959_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637959/EPRS_BRI(2019)637959_EN.pdf) (accessed 10.04.2022).

⁶³ European Council (23 and 24 October 2014) – Conclusions [Electronic resource] // European Council: [official website]. 2014. Available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/145397.pdf (accessed 12.03.2022).

⁶⁴ Fifth European Community environment programme: towards sustainability [Electronic resource] // Publications Office of the European Union: [official website]. 1993. Available at: http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/b0086e47-40ba-49af-9ff0-a38608400bba.0002.02/DOC_2 (accessed 02.01.2023).

⁶⁵ 2020 climate & energy package [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2020-climate-energy-package_en (accessed 05.04.2022).

⁶⁶ Clean energy for...

⁶⁷ It’s Time for Self-Determination for All the Peoples of Europe [Electronic resource] // European Free Alliance: [official website]. 2014. Available at: https://www.e-f-a.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/EFA_3263_manifesto_ENG_230114.pdf (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁶⁸ A Europe that works [Electronic resource] // Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://www.aldeparty.eu/sites/alde/files/00-Pages/7475/englishversion-alde-party-manifesto.pdf> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁶⁹ Retune the EU. Jan Zahradil [Electronic resource] // European Conservatives and Reformists Party: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.acreurope.eu/files-acre-system/jz/JZ-Programme.pdf> (accessed 17.03.2022).

promise of Europe” of the European Green Party⁷⁰ were taken into consideration. Moreover, documents that are not tied to the elections, particularly the 2019 “Climate Emergency Manifesto” of the European United Left/Left-Green of the North political group⁷¹) were characterized.

Secondly, similarly, the programmes of national parties of Germany in 2014 (e.g., “This is what our Europe needs!” of the Free Democratic Party⁷², “Giving Europe a new direction” of the Social Democratic Party of Germany⁷³, etc.) and in 2019 (e.g., “Europe only in solidarity” of the Left⁷⁴, “Our programme for Europe of freedom” of the Alternatives for Germany⁷⁵, etc.), as well as in 2017 (e.g., “The future is made of courage” of the Alliance 90/The Greens⁷⁶, “For a Germany in which we live well and gladly” of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria⁷⁷, etc.) and in 2021 (e.g., “Out of respect for your future” of the Social Democratic Party of Germany⁷⁸, “It's Time to Act! For Social Security, Peace and Climate Justice!” of the Left⁷⁹, etc.) were involved. This group can also include other programmes of national parties, such as the programme “For a Europe of Nations and Peoples” for the 2019 European Parliament elections of the National Rally from France⁸⁰.

Finally, the statutory documents and activity reports of transnational and national parties were analyzed, including the 2020 Resolution of the Federal Executive Board of the FDP⁸¹ and the 2011 Statutes of the European Green Party (with the latest changes in 2021)⁸², among others.

⁷⁰ Time to renew the promise of Europe [Electronic resource] // European Greens: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://europeangreens.eu/priorities-2019-what-european-greens-fight#manifesto> (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁷¹ Climate Emergency Manifesto [Electronic resource] // The Left in the European Parliament: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.dielinke-europa.eu/kontext/controllers/document.php/897.d/4/e71671.pdf> (accessed 29.08.2022).

⁷² Das braucht unser Europa! [Electronic resource] // Freie Demokratische Partei. 2014. Available at: <https://www.freiheit.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/2014europawahlprogramm.pdf> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁷³ Europa eine neue Richtung geben [Electronic resource] // Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands. 2014. Available at: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bibliothek/download/7767555/wahlprogramm-data.pdf> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁷⁴ Europa nur solidarisch [Electronic resource] // DIE LINKE: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://www.dielinke.de/fileadmin/download/wahlen2019/wahlprogramm_pdf/Europawahlprogramm_2019_-_Partei_DIE_LINKE.pdf (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁷⁵ Unser Programm für...

⁷⁶ Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht [Electronic resource] // BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN: [official website]. 2017. Available at:

https://cms.gruene.de/uploads/documents/BUENDNIS_90_DIE_GRUENEN_Bundestagswahlprogramm_2017_barrierefrei.pdf (accessed 04.01.2023).

⁷⁷ Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben [Electronic resource] // Christlich Demokratische Union. 2017. Available at: https://www.luecking-michel.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017_CDUCSU_Regierungsprogramm.pdf (accessed 04.01.2023).

⁷⁸ Aus Respekt vor deiner Zukunft [Electronic resource] // Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Beschluesse/Programm/SPD-Zukunftsprogramm.pdf> (accessed 04.01.2023).

⁷⁹ Zeit zu handeln! Für soziale Sicherheit, Frieden und Klimagerechtigkeit [Electronic resource] // DIE LINKE: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://btw2021.dielinke.de/wahlprogramm-2021> (accessed 04.01.2023).

⁸⁰ Pour une Europe des nations et des peuples [Electronic resource] // Rassemblement National. 2019. Available at: <https://fr.readkong.com/page/pour-une-europe-des-nations-et-des-peuples-9214134> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁸¹ Beschluss des Bundesvorstands der FDP, Berlin, 18. Mai 2020 [Electronic resource] // Freie Demokratische Partei: [official website]. 2020. Available at: <https://www.fdp.de/sites/default/files/import/2020-05/8614-2020-05-18-buvo-freiheit-und-verantwortung-fur-die-zukunft.pdf> (accessed 27.10.2022).

⁸² Statutes of the European Green Party [Electronic resource] // European Greens: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://europeangreens.eu/sites/europeangreens.eu/files/EGP%20Statutes%20-%20%20updated%20annex%20B%20-%202034th%20EGP%20Council.pdf> (accessed 14.07.2022).

The *third group* was formed by public opinion polls.

This group included polls about the competences of parties (e.g., “European elections 2014. Competences” by Tagesschau⁸³), choice-determining topics (e.g., “Federal elections 2017. Polls on choice-determining topics” by Tagesschau⁸⁴), greens (e.g., “European Election 2019. Green Polls” by Tagesschau⁸⁵), lead candidates (e.g., Blitz TV-Triell on 12 September 2021 by Infratest dimap⁸⁶), voting (e.g., “The 2019 European elections: A pro-European – and young – electorate with clear expectations” by the European Parliament⁸⁷), major issues in the European Union (e.g., the Special Eurobarometer 486: Europeans in 2019⁸⁸) and Germany (e.g., “What are the most important problems facing Germany?” by Statista⁸⁹) outside of elections, as well as other relevant questions for this study (e.g., “What do you see as the most important issue facing Britain today?” by Statista⁹⁰).

The *fourth group* included statistics on the results of voting for national parties in 2014 (e.g., “European elections in 2014” published by the Federal Returning Officer⁹¹), in 2017 (e.g., “Bundestag elections in 2017” published by the Federal Returning Officer⁹²), in 2019 (e.g., “Germany. European elections 2019. Results in the federal states” published by Tagesschau⁹³), and in 2021 (e.g., “Bundestag elections in 2021” published by the Federal Returning Officer⁹⁴). It also included data on transnational parties (e.g., “Results of the 2019 European Elections (23-26 May)” published by the European Green Party⁹⁵) and political groups (e.g., data from the Comparative tool published by the European Parliament⁹⁶), as well as information on turnout (e.g., “Turnout by year: Final results”, published by the

⁸³ Europawahl 2014. Kompetenzen [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 25.05.2014. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2014-05-25-EP-DE/kompetenzen.shtml> (accessed 05.04.2022).

⁸⁴ Bundestagswahl 2017. Umfragen wahlentscheidende Themen [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 24.09.2017. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2017-09-24-BT-DE/umfrage-wahlentscheidend.shtml> (accessed 05.04.2022).

⁸⁵ Europawahl 2019. Umfragen zu den Grünen [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 26.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2019-05-26-EP-DE/umfrage-gruene.shtml> (accessed 05.04.2022).

⁸⁶ Blitz TV-Triell 12. September 2021 [Electronic resource] // Infratest dimap. 12.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2021/blitz-tv-triell/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

⁸⁷ The 2019 European elections. A pro-European — and young — electorate with clear expectations. First results of the European Parliament post-electoral survey. London: Kantar, 2019. 19 p.

⁸⁸ Special Eurobarometer 486: Europeans in 2019. Brussels: Kantar, 2019. 176 p.

⁸⁹ Was ist Ihrer Meinung nach gegenwärtig das wichtigste Problem in Deutschland? [Electronic resource] // Statista. Available at: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1062780/umfrage/umfrage-zu-den-wichtigsten-problemen-in-deutschland/> (accessed 05.04.2022).

⁹⁰ What do you see as the most important issue facing Britain today? (archived) [Electronic resource] // Statista. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20191213201831/https://www.statista.com/statistics/886366/issues-facing-britain/> (accessed 04.06.2022).

⁹¹ European Parliament election 2014 [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/europawahlen/2014/ergebnisse/bund-99.html> (accessed 12.04.2022).

⁹² Bundestag election 2017 [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 2017. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2017/ergebnisse/bund-99.html> (accessed 12.04.2022).

⁹³ Deutschland. Europawahl 2019. Ergebnisse in den Bundesländern [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 26.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2019-05-26-EP-DE/bundeslaender.shtml> (accessed 05.06.2022).

⁹⁴ Bundestag election 2021.

⁹⁵ Results of the 2019 European Elections (23 - 26 May) [Electronic resource] // European Greens: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://europeangreens.eu/2019results> (accessed 07.06.2022).

⁹⁶ Comparative tool.

European Parliament⁹⁷ or “Turnout in German federal elections from 1949 to 2021” published by Statista⁹⁸), spoiled ballots (including “Invalid votes” published by the Federal Returning Officer⁹⁹), and direct mandates (in particular, “The number of direct mandates of parties in the federal elections of September 26, 2021” published by Statista¹⁰⁰). Additionally, it covers other issues relevant to this study, such as “2019 Migration Report: Key Results” published by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees¹⁰¹.

The *fifth group* included publications with curriculum vitae of prominent political figures (e.g., “Virginijus Sinkevičius” from the European Commission¹⁰², etc.), lists of lead candidates and deputies elected in 2014 (in particular, “European Elections 2014: List of Elected MEPs” of the European Parliament¹⁰³) and in 2019 (e.g., “Lead candidates and the election of the European Commission” of the European Parliament¹⁰⁴; “Team Europe” of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe¹⁰⁵, etc.), in 2017 (in particular, “The NRW state list is in place” of the Social Democratic Party of Germany¹⁰⁶), and in 2021 (e.g., “Federal elections: CDU/CSU Chancellor candidate Armin Laschet”¹⁰⁷, “Federal elections in 2021. Parties and candidates: Brandenburg” of the Federal Returning Officer¹⁰⁸, etc.).

The *sixth group* comprised publications that contain official positions of politicians, party leaders and members, as well as representatives of civil society.

Firstly, in order to understand the parties’ climate rhetoric and their approach to tackling the global problem better, political debates held before the elections in 2014 (in particular, the “Eurovision

⁹⁷ Turnout by year: Final results [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/turnout/> (accessed 08.04.2022).

⁹⁸ Wahlbeteiligung bei den Bundestagswahlen in Deutschland von 1949 bis 2021 [Electronic resource] // Statista. Available at: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/2274/umfrage/entwicklung-der-wahlbeteiligung-bei-bundestagswahlen-seit-1949/> (accessed 07.04.2022).

⁹⁹ Ungültige Stimmabgabe [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/service/glossar/u/ungueltige-stimmabgabe.html> (accessed 12.04.2022).

¹⁰⁰ Anzahl der Direktmandate der Parteien bei der Bundestagswahl am 26. September 2021 [Electronic resource] // Statista. 2021. Available at: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1256913/umfrage/direktmandate-der-parteien-bei-der-bundestagswahl/> (accessed 07.04.2022).

¹⁰¹ 2019 Migration Report: Key Results. Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2019. 17 p.

¹⁰² Virginijus Sinkevičius [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/sinkevicius_en (accessed 13.04.2022).

¹⁰³ European Elections 2014: List of Elected MEPs [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 2014. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/elections_results/ElectedMEPs.pdf (accessed 14.07. 2022).

¹⁰⁴ Lead candidates and the election of the European Commission (archived) [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190505052214/https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/elections-press-kit/2/lead-candidates> (accessed 10.04.2022).

¹⁰⁵ Team Europe [Electronic resource] // Renew Europe: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://teameurope.eu/team-europe/> (accessed 29.08.2022).

¹⁰⁶ Die NRW-Landesliste steht [Electronic resource] // NRWSPD: [official website]. 25.03.2017. Available at: <https://www.nrwspd.de/2017/03/25/die-nrw-landesliste-steht/> (accessed 07.04.2022).

¹⁰⁷ Federal election: CDU/CSU Chancellor Candidate Armin Laschet [Electronic resource] // Deutschland.de. 27.08.2021. Available at: <https://www.deutschland.de/ru/videos/federal-election-cducsu-chancellor-candidate-armin-laschet> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁸ Bundestagswahl 2021. Parteien und Kandidaturen: Brandenburg [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/bundestagswahlen/2021/wahlbewerber/bund-99/land-12.html> (accessed 07.04.2022).

Debate”, the European Broadcasting Union¹⁰⁹), in 2017 (e.g., “TV-Duel between Angela Merkel and Martin Schulz”, Phoenix¹¹⁰, etc.), and in 2019 (e.g., “Debate of the candidates for the presidency of the European Commission”, the European Broadcasting Union¹¹¹, etc.), and in 2021 (e.g., “Electoral Campaign: Final round of parties”, Tagesschau¹¹², etc.) were analyzed. Additionally, interviews with lead candidates in 2019 (e.g., with M. Weber¹¹³, N. Beer¹¹⁴, etc.) and in 2021 (e.g., with C. Lindner¹¹⁵, etc.), as well as other representatives of the parties (e.g., with B. Hoffmann¹¹⁶, etc.) were used.

Secondly, similarly, the materials of party Congresses (e.g., the presentation in 2021 by the Christian Democratic Union of Germany of the “Six Post-Crisis Reset Packets”¹¹⁷, the 2019 Congress of the Free Democratic Party before the European elections¹¹⁸, etc.), as well as statements of party leaders (e.g., J. Meuthen from the Alternative for Germany in 2019¹¹⁹, C. Lindner from the Free Democratic Party in 2021¹²⁰, etc.) and the official party positions (e.g., “EPP Statement on Fidesz” in 2021¹²¹, “UDI France and LDP Macedonia become ALDE Party member parties” in 2016¹²², etc.) were considered.

¹⁰⁹ Eurovision Debate [Electronic resource] // European Broadcasting Union. 2014. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0y-2Nd6mC9M> (accessed 17.03.2022).

¹¹⁰ TV-Duell zwischen Angela Merkel und Martin Schulz mit Gebärdensprache am 03.09.17 [Electronic resource] // Phoenix. 2017. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDXEjSN0MOY&t=5073s> (accessed 22.10.2022).

¹¹¹ Debate of the candidates for the presidency of the European Commission [Electronic resource] // European Broadcasting Union. 2019. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8WBM9ZAmTk> (accessed 17.03.2022).

¹¹² Wahlkampf: Schlussrunde der Parteien | Livestream [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 2021. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCS2YbH3RjQ> (accessed 22.10.2022).

¹¹³ „Es geht ums Ganze“ [Electronic resource] // Detektor.fm. 15.04.2019. Available at: <https://detektor.fm/politik/europawahlen-2019-manfred-weber> (accessed 16.08.2022).

¹¹⁴ „Wir wollen Europa grundlegend reformieren“ [Electronic resource] // Detektor.fm. 18.04.2019. Available at: <https://detektor.fm/politik/europawahlen-2019-nicola-beer> (accessed 17.08.2022).

¹¹⁵ Kalarickal J., Unfried P. „German engineered Klimaschutz“ [Electronic resource] // Die Tageszeitung. 15.09.2021. Available at: <https://taz.de/FDP-Chef-Lindner-ueber-Klimapolitik!/5797246/> (accessed 27.10.2022).

¹¹⁶ 6 Gründe, warum Olaf Scholz (SPD) ein Klimaschutz-Bremser ist [Electronic resource] // Nh24. 16.09.2021. Available at: <https://nh24.de/2021/09/16/6-gruende-warum-olaf-scholz-spd-ein-klimaschutz-bremser-ist/> (accessed 27.10.2022).

¹¹⁷ Sechs Pakete für den Neustart nach der Krise (archived) [Electronic resource] // Christlich Demokratische Union: [official website]. 2021. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20210926152449mp_/https://www.cdu.de/artikel/sechs-pakete-fuer-den-neustart-nach-der-krise (accessed 27.10.2022).

¹¹⁸ Europaparteitag der Freien Demokraten [Electronic resource] // Frei Demokraten: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.fdp.de/seite/europaparteitag-der-freien-demokraten> (accessed 16.08.2022).

¹¹⁹ Jörg Meuthen: AfD stellt Programm für Europawahl online [Electronic resource] // Alternative für Deutschland: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.afd.de/joerg-meuthen-afd-stellt-programm-fuer-europawahl-online/> (accessed 17.08.2022).

¹²⁰ FDP distanziert sich von der Energiewende [Electronic resource] // Die Welt*. 07.06.2021. Available at: <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article13416271/FDP-distanziert-sich-von-der-Energiewende.html> (accessed 29.09.2021). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹²¹ EPP Statement on Fidesz [Electronic resource] // European People's Party: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://www.epp.eu/press-releases/epp-statement-on-fidesz> (accessed 14.07.2022).

¹²² UDI France and LDP Macedonia become ALDE Party member parties (archived) [Electronic resource] // Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe: [official website]. 2016. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20161202234604/https://www.aldeparty.eu/en/news/udi-france-and-ldp-macedonia-become-alde-party-member-parties> (accessed 14.07.2022).

Finally, the statements of leaders (e.g., J. Delors¹²³, etc.) and prominent political figures in the field of climate management in the European Union (e.g., C. Hedegaard¹²⁴, etc.), as well as representatives of civil society (in particular, Rezo – blogger – in 2019¹²⁵ and in 2021¹²⁶) were characterized.

The *seventh group* was formed of reference materials from European parties, international organizations, political institutions, and the mass media. This included publications on the global problem of climate change and environmental and/or climate management (e.g., “Sustainable Development Agenda” of the United Nations¹²⁷, “Environment policy: general principles and basic framework” of the European Parliament¹²⁸, “Paris Agreement” of the European Commission¹²⁹, etc.), legal and institutional structure of the European Union and Germany (e.g., “Council configurations” of the Council of the European Union¹³⁰, “The principle of subsidiarity” of the European Parliament¹³¹, etc.), regulations for conducting election campaigns in the European Union and Germany (e.g., “2014 European elections: national rules” of the European Parliament¹³², “2019 European elections: national rules” of the European Parliament¹³³, etc.), transnational parties and political groups/factions (e.g., “ALDE Member Parties” of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe¹³⁴, “List of Member

¹²³ Address given by Jacques Delors to the European Parliament (17 January 1989) [Electronic resource] // Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe. 1989. Available at: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2003/8/22/b9c06b95-db97-4774-a700-e8aea5172233/publishable_en.pdf (accessed 25.04.2020).

¹²⁴ Statement of Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner for Climate Action, on the creation of DG CLIMA [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. 17.02.2010. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/news-your-voice/news/statement-connie-hedegaard-european-commissioner-climate-action-creation-dg-clima-2010-02-17_en (accessed 05.04.2022).

¹²⁵ Dambeck H. Der Rezo-Effekt – echt oder nur gefühlt? [Electronic resource] // Der Spiegel. 2019. Available at: <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/rezo-effekt-hat-er-der-cdu-geschadet-oder-den-gruenen-genuetzt-a-1270620.html> (accessed 06.01.2023).

¹²⁶ Gries H. Rezo mit finaler „Zerstörung“ der CDU: „Krasse Formen von Korruption“ [Electronic resource] // HNA. 20.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.hna.de/politik/bundestagswahl-2021-youtube-video-rezo-zerstoerung-kritik-cdu-politik-hna-90990409.html> (accessed 02.11.2022).

¹²⁷ The Sustainable Development Agenda [Electronic resource] // United Nations: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/ru/about/development-agenda/> (accessed 05.04.2022).

¹²⁸ Environment policy: general principles and basic framework [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/71/environment-policy-general-principles-and-basic-framework> (accessed 02.01.2023).

¹²⁹ Paris Agreement [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/eu-action/international-action-climate-change/climate-negotiations/paris-agreement_en (accessed 05.04.2022).

¹³⁰ Council configurations [Electronic resource] // Council of the European Union: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/> (accessed 25.01.2023).

¹³¹ The principle of subsidiarity [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/7/the-principle-of-subsidiarity> (accessed 05.04.2022).

¹³² 2014 European elections: national rules [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 2014. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2014/140762/LDM_BRI\(2014\)140762_REV3_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2014/140762/LDM_BRI(2014)140762_REV3_EN.pdf) (accessed 08.04.2022).

¹³³ 2019 European elections...

¹³⁴ ALDE Member Parties [Electronic resource] // Alliance Liberals and Democrats for Europe: [official website]. Available at: https://www.aldeparty.eu/alde_member_parties (accessed 14.07.2022).

Parties of the Party of the European Left” in 2017¹³⁵, etc.) and, national parties (e.g., “On the way to the new left – a chronology” of the Left¹³⁶, “The Alliance/The Greens”, Deutsche Welle*¹³⁷, etc.), as well as other issues relevant to this research (e.g., “United Nations Geoscheme”¹³⁸, etc.).

Describing the **degree of scientific development of the topic**, it is worth noting the high share of studies by both Russian and foreign authors on some individual aspects related to the global problem of climate change and its corresponding management at different levels, as well as European parties and election campaigns.

The *first group* of academic literature was formed of monographs.

Firstly, the works concerning the global problem of climate change and its corresponding governance at the supranational level (e.g., C. Burns, N. Carter¹³⁹, etc.) and national (e.g., M. Jänicke¹⁴⁰, M.D. Leiren and I. Reimer¹⁴¹, etc.) are considered.

Secondly, studies on transnational (e.g., S. Hix¹⁴², B.P. Guseletov¹⁴³, E. Jansen and S. Van Hecke¹⁴⁴, etc.) and national parties (e.g., F. Ruhoze¹⁴⁵, M. Lewandowsky, J. Schwanholz, C. Leonhardt and A. Blätte¹⁴⁶, etc.) were used. The monograph by B.P. Guseletov “Trans European Political Parties in XXI Century: Formation, Development and Prospects” is particularly notable in Russian science for its the completeness in covering the topic¹⁴⁷. Separately, in this category, one can single out classical

¹³⁵ List of Member Parties of the Party of the European Left [Electronic resource] // Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations: [official website]. 2017. Available at: https://www.appf.europa.eu/cmsdata/213481/02a_Annex_List_of_Member_Parties_EL.pdf (accessed 14.07.2022).

¹³⁶ Auf dem Weg zur neuen Linken – eine Chronologie [Electronic resource] // DIE LINKE: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.die-linke.de/partei/ueber-uns/geschichte/chronologie/> (accessed 07.04.2022).

¹³⁷ Alliance 90/The Greens [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. Available at: <https://p.dw.com/p/1DB35> (accessed 24.05.2021). *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹³⁸ United Nations Geoscheme [Electronic resource] // United Nations: [official website]. Available at: https://www.emiw.org/fileadmin/emiw/UserActivityDocs/Geograph.Representation/Geographic-Representation-Appendix_1.pdf (accessed 05.04.2022).

¹³⁹ Burns C., Carter N. The European Parliament and Climate Change: From Symbolism to Heroism and Back Again. In: The European Union as a Leader in International Climate Change Politics / R. Wurzel, J. Connelly, eds. NY: Routledge, 2011. P. 58-73.

¹⁴⁰ Jänicke M. Ecological Modernization – a Paradise of Feasibility but no General Solution. In: The Ecological Modernization Capacity of Japan and Germany Comparing Nuclear Energy, Renewables, Automobility and Rare Earth Policy / L. Mez, L. Okamura, H. Weidner, eds. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2020. P. 13-23.

¹⁴¹ Leiren M. D., Reimer I. Germany: From Feed-In Tariffs to Greater Competition. In: Comparative Renewables Policy: Political, Organizational and European Fields / E. L. Boasson, M. D. Leiren, J. Wettestad, eds. Abingdon, NY: Routledge, 2021. P. 75-102.

¹⁴² Hix S. The Party of European Socialists. In: Social Democratic Parties in the European Union: History, Organization, Policies / R. Ladrech, Ph. Marlière, eds. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999. P. 204-217.

¹⁴³ Guseletov B.P. Trans European Political Parties in XXI Century: Formation, Development and Prospects. 2022. Moscow: IE RAS, 2022. 196 p.

¹⁴⁴ Jansen E., Van Hecke S. At Europe's Service: The Origins and Evolution of the European People's Party. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2011. 404 p.

¹⁴⁵ Ruhoze F. Die AfD vor der Bundestagswahl 2021: Wirkung – Perspektiven – Strategien. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2020. 56 p.

¹⁴⁶ Lewandowsky M., Schwanholz J., Leonhardt C., Blätte A. New Parties, Populism, and Parliamentary Polarization. Evidence from Plenary Debates in the German Bundestag. In: The Palgrave Handbook of Populism / M. Oswald, ed. Basingstoke / Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2021. P. 611-627.

¹⁴⁷ Guseletov B.P. Trans European Political Parties in...196 p.

theoretical works on political parties and party systems by authors such as M. Duverger “Political Parties”¹⁴⁸ or G. Sartori “Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis”¹⁴⁹.

Finally, works of the theorists relevant to this study were utilized. These are on the theory of social constructivism (e.g., P. Katzenstein¹⁵⁰, M. Finnemore¹⁵¹, etc.) and the spatial theory of party competition (e.g., J. Veisdal¹⁵², A. Hindmoor¹⁵³). Particular attention in this paragraph should be given to the texts of some of the main researchers in their field, such as A. Wendt’s “Social Theory of International Politics”¹⁵⁴ and A. Downs’ “An Economic Theory of Democracy”¹⁵⁵. Additionally, the work of M. Barnett and M. Finnemore “Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics”, where the role of international organizations in social construction is revealed, should be mentioned¹⁵⁶. This is relevant for this thesis in the context of considering the relations between transnational parties and national parties, as well as the EU and its member states.

The *second group* of academic literature was formed of publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals and collections.

First, works on the global problem of climate change and its corresponding governance were reviewed. These are texts concerning the international (e.g., N.A. Vasilyeva¹⁵⁷, I.A. Tsverianashvili¹⁵⁸, D. Bodansky¹⁵⁹, E. Schulze, R. Valentini and M. Sanz¹⁶⁰, L.V. Kochtcheeva¹⁶¹, etc.), as well as texts on supranational (e.g., E. Orlando¹⁶², R.K.W. Wurzel, D. Liefferink, M. Di Lullo¹⁶³, etc.), national (in particular, A.V. Zimakov¹⁶⁴) regulation, and inter-level interaction and European climate leadership

¹⁴⁸ Duverger M. Political Parties. Moscow: Academic Prospect, 2000. Available at: http://igf.chuvsu.ru/bibl/Dyuverzhe_M_Politicheskie_partii.pdf (accessed 30.01.2023).

¹⁴⁹ Sartori G. Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis. Colchester: ECPR Press, 2005. 368 p.

¹⁵⁰ Katzenstein P. Introduction: Alternative Perspectives...P. 1-32.

¹⁵¹ Finnemore M. National Interests in International Society. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. 176 p.

¹⁵² Veisdal J. The Median Voter Theorem: Why Politicians Move to the Center. In: The Best Writing on Mathematics / M. Pitici, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020. P. 33-44.

¹⁵³ Hindmoor A. Rational Choice. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 256 p.

¹⁵⁴ Wendt A. Social Theory of...429 p.

¹⁵⁵ Downs A. An Economic Theory...310 p.

¹⁵⁶ Barnett M., Finnemore M. Rules for the...P. 162.

¹⁵⁷ Vasilyeva N.A. UN: The Need for Environmental Management // Izvestiia Tul'skogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Gumanitarnye nauki. 2010. № 1. P. 139-149.

¹⁵⁸ Tsverianashvili I.A. The 1972 Stockholm Conference and Its Role in Establishing Global Environmental Cooperation // Vestnik of Lobachevsky University of Nizhni Novgorod. 2016. № 1. P. 89-94.

¹⁵⁹ Bodansky D. The Legal Character of the Paris Agreement // Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law (RECIEL). 2016. Vol. 25, Issue 2. P. 142-150.

¹⁶⁰ Schulze E., Valentini R., Sanz M. The long road from Kyoto to Marakesh: Implications of the Kyoto Protocol Negotiations for Global Ecology // Global Change Biology. Vol. 8, Issue 6. P. 505-518.

¹⁶¹ Kochtcheeva L.V. Globalization and the Environment in the Emerging Economies: Increased Imbalance, New Momentum, or Stalemate? // New Global Studies. 2013. Vol. 7 (3). P. 57-86.

¹⁶² Orlando E. The Evolution of EU Policy and Law in the Environmental Field: Achievements and Current Challenges // Working Paper. 2013. №21. P. 1-23.

¹⁶³ Wurzel R.K.W., Liefferink D., Di Lullo M. The European Council, the Council and the Member States: Changing Environmental Leadership Dynamics in the European Union // Environmental Politics. 2019. Vol. 28, Issue 2. P. 248-270.

¹⁶⁴ Zimakov A.V. Germany's Nuclear Energy Refusal Policy: from Conflict to Compromise // Nauchnyi dialog. 2021. № 10. P. 359-377.

ambitions (e.g., E.V. Mariin¹⁶⁵, L. Groen, A. Niemann and S. Oberthür¹⁶⁶, L.G. Van Schaik and S. Schunz¹⁶⁷, etc.). Articles on international energy security are separately touched upon (e.g., U.V. Kosov and A.V. Toropygin¹⁶⁸, O.N. Skorokhodova¹⁶⁹, H. Nam, S. Konishi, K.-W. Nam¹⁷⁰, etc.).

Secondly, publications on European parties and election campaigns were examined.

1. On transnational (e.g., B.P. Guseletov¹⁷¹, N.G. Zaslavskaya¹⁷², R.V. Kostyuk¹⁷³, P.V. Oskolkov¹⁷⁴, L. Norman and W. Wolfs¹⁷⁵, G. Pridman and P. Pridman¹⁷⁶, etc.) and national parties (L.O. Babynina¹⁷⁷, N.Yu. Kaveshnikov¹⁷⁸, N.A. Baranov¹⁷⁹, S.V. Pogorelskaya¹⁸⁰, M. Baloge¹⁸¹, etc.), as well as on the election campaign to the European Parliament in 2019 (e.g., T.V. Zonova¹⁸², M.V. Klinova¹⁸³,

¹⁶⁵ *Mariin E.V.* Implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement on the Example of Germany // Issues of sustainable development of the society. 2021. №9. P. 41-45.

¹⁶⁶ *Groen L., Niemann A., Oberthür S.* The EU as a...P. 173-191.

¹⁶⁷ *Van Schaik L.G., Schunz S.* Explaining EU Activism and Impact in Global Climate Politics: Is the Union a Norm- or Interest-Driven Actor? // Journal of Common Market Studies. 2012. Vol. 50, Issue 1. P. 169-186.

¹⁶⁸ *Kosov U.V., Toropygin A.V.* Energy and Ecological Security. Analysis of the Modern Concepts // Eurasian Integration: Economics, Law, Politics. 2009. № 6. P. 50-55.

¹⁶⁹ *Skorokhodova O.N.* Europe and Energy Crisis of 1979-1980: Instructive Lessons // Contemporary Europe. 2015. №1 (61). P. 104-115.

¹⁷⁰ *Nam H., Konishi S., Nam K.-W.* Comparative Analysis of Decision Making Regarding Nuclear Policy after the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident: Case Study in Germany and Japan // Technology in Society. 2021. Vol. 67. P. 1-12.

¹⁷¹ *Guseletov B.P.* The New European Parties without Registration in the EU // Scientific and Analytical Bulletin of the IE RAS. 2021. №2. P. 62-70.

¹⁷² *Zaslavskaya N.G.* Role of Integration Processes in the Formation of Transnational Parties // Administrative Consulting. 2017. №12 (108). P. 55-63.

¹⁷³ *Kostyuk R.V.* Left Alternatives in the Election Campaign to the European Parliament in 2019 // Contemporary Europe. 2019. №5 (91). P. 58-67.

¹⁷⁴ *Oskolkov P.V.* Ethnoregionalist Parties in the EU: The European Free Alliance Phenomenon // Contemporary Europe. 2021. №1 (101). P. 141-150.

¹⁷⁵ *Norman L., Wolfs W.* Is the Governance of Europe's Transnational Party System Contributing to EU Democracy? // Journal of Common Market Studies. 2022. Vol.60, Issue 2. P. 463-479.

¹⁷⁶ *Pridman G., Pridman P.* The New European Party Federations and Direct Elections // The World Today. 1979. Vol. 35, № 2. P. 62-70.

¹⁷⁷ *Babynina L.O.* The Impact of Brexit on the European Parliament Political Groups // Contemporary Europe. 2019. №5 (91). P. 68-77.

¹⁷⁸ *Kaveshnikov N.Yu.* Transformation of Party and Political Space of the European Union and Its Influence on the Organization and Functioning of the European Parliament // Contemporary Europe. 2020. №2 (95). P. 163-175.

¹⁷⁹ *Baranov N.A.* Elections as an Institution of Trust: Features of Functioning in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic // Administrative consulting. 2021. № 10. P. 10-21.

¹⁸⁰ *Pogorelskaya S.V.* European Elections in 2019 // The European Union: facts and comments. 2019. №. 97. P. 11-15.

¹⁸¹ *Baloge M.* From Brexit to Dexit? Alternative für Deutschland's Euroscepticism on European Debates in the Bundestag // Journal of Contemporary European Studies. 2021. Vol. 29, Issue 4. P. 552-566.

¹⁸² *Zonova T.V.* Elections of 2019: Eurooptimists vs Eurosceptics // Contemporary Europe. 2019. № 3 (89). P. 62-69.

¹⁸³ *Klinova M.V.* Nationalism vs Europeanism Before the Elections to the European Parliament // Scientific and Analytical Bulletin of the IE RAS. 2019. №2. P. 125-130.

M.V. Strezhneva¹⁸⁴, V.Y. Schweitzer¹⁸⁵, S. Hobolt¹⁸⁶, G. Ivaldi¹⁸⁷, C. Mudde¹⁸⁸, etc.) and the internal party-political structure of the institute (in particular, N.V. Eremina¹⁸⁹).

2. On national parties (e.g., N.A. Vlasov¹⁹⁰, K. Arzheimer and C.C. Berning¹⁹¹, etc.) and the election campaign to the Bundestag in 2021 (e.g., A.V. Belinsky¹⁹², V.B. Belov¹⁹³, A.P. Sokolov and A.D. Davydov¹⁹⁴, M.V. Khorolskaya¹⁹⁵, etc.).

3. On national parties and party systems without reference to the election campaigns of 2019 and 2021 (e.g., N.V. Rabotyzhev¹⁹⁶, G.T. Sardaryan¹⁹⁷, etc.).

4. On the peculiarities of the development of the European Union and Germany (e.g., L.O. Babynina¹⁹⁸, O.G. Karpovich and T.V. Zvereva¹⁹⁹, E.V. Pimenova²⁰⁰, B. Husak²⁰¹, etc.).

Thirdly, texts concerning the theoretical substantiation of this thesis were involved:

¹⁸⁴ *Strezhneva M.V.* The Influence of the European Elections on the Political Face of the EU Institutions // European Parliament Elections 2019: National Responses to the Dilemmas of European Integration / Yu. Kvashnin, A. Kudriavtsev, N. Plevako, V. Shveitser, eds. Moscow: IMEMO RAS, IE RAS, 2019. P. 30-35.

¹⁸⁵ *Shweitzer V.Y.* European Parliament Elections in 2019: Political Party Panorama // Contemporary Europe. 2019. №1 (87). P. 38-47.

¹⁸⁶ *Hobolt S.* European Elections 2019: A More Fragmented Parliament // Political Insight. 2019. Vol. 10, Issue 3. P. 16-19.

¹⁸⁷ *Ivaldi G.* Populist Voting in the 2019 European Elections // Totalitarismus und Demokratie. 2020. Vol.17, Issue 1. P. 67–96.

¹⁸⁸ *Mudde C.* The 2019 EU Elections: Moving the Center // Journal of Democracy. 2019. Vol. 30, Issue 4. P. 20-34.

¹⁸⁹ *Eremina N.V.* Ethno-Regional Parties in the European Parliament: The Unevident Political Actor // RUDN Journal of Political Science. 2022. Vol. 24, № 2. P. 303–316.

¹⁹⁰ *Vlasov N.A.* The Coalition Strategy of the Green Party in the State Parliaments of Germany // Tauride Readings 2019. The Current Problems of Parliamentarism: History and Modernity. International Scientific Conference, St. Petersburg, Tauride Palace, December 5-6, 2019: Collected Scientific Papers: 2 Pts. Part. 2 / A.B. Nikolaev, ed. St. Petersburg: Scientific and Information Technologies Center «Asterion», 2020. P. 273-278.

¹⁹¹ *Arzheimer K., Berning C.C.* How the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and Their Voters Veered to the Radical Right, 2013–2017 // Electoral Studies. 2019. Vol. 60. P. 1-10.

¹⁹² *Belinsky A.V.* Big Races to the First «Traffic Light». Bundestag Elections in 2021 and New Challenges to German Politics // European Security: Events, Assessments, Forecasts. 2021. №63 (79). P. 16-23.

¹⁹³ *Belov V.B.* Party-Political and Socio-Economic Consequences of Elections to the German Bundestag // Social Sciences and Contemporary World. 2021. №6. P. 24-39.

¹⁹⁴ *Sokolov A.P., Davydov A.D.* From Opposition into Government: the FDP's Political Dynamics at the Bundestag 2021 Elections // Contemporary Europe. 2022. № 3 (110). P. 117-131.

¹⁹⁵ *Khorolskaya M.V.* The Main German Parties ahead of the 2021 Bundestag Elections // World Economy and International Relations. 2021. Vol. 65, №9. P. 25-33.

¹⁹⁶ *Rabotyzhev N.V.* Western European Social Democracy in the 21st Century: From Modernization to Crisis // Politeia: Analysis. Chronicle. Forecast. 2019. № 4 (95). P. 132-153.

¹⁹⁷ *Sardaryan G.T.* Features of the Transition to the Right Status of the Christian Democratic Forces in the European Countries after the Second World War // Bulletin of Moscow Region State University. 2019. № 3. P. 55-66.

¹⁹⁸ *Babynina L.O.* The Tendencies of the Development of the European Union: 2017-2018 // Scientific and Analytical Bulletin of the IE RAS. 2018. №1. P. 85-90.

¹⁹⁹ *Karpovich O.G., Zvereva T.V.* The EU's Migration Policy: A New Start? // International Affairs. 2021. №7. P. 94-103.

²⁰⁰ *Pimenova E.V.* The New Era of German Politics. Challenges and Perspectives // Free Thought. 2022. №2 (1692). P. 125-134.

²⁰¹ *Husak B.* Deklaracje bońsko-kopenhaskie jako wzór regulacji prawnych wobec mniejszości narodowych we współczesnej Europie // Studia Zachodnie. 2015. №17. P. 277-288.

1. On social constructivism (e.g., T.A. Alekseeva²⁰², V.N. Konyshev, A.A. Sergunin and S.V. Subbotin²⁰³, N. Tannenwald²⁰⁴, M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink²⁰⁵, etc.) and sociological institutionalism (e.g., J. T. Chekel²⁰⁶, P.A. Hall and R.K.R. Taylor²⁰⁷, P.V. Panov²⁰⁸, etc.).

2. On the concept of second-order national elections (e.g., K. Reif and H. Schmitt²⁰⁹, F. Willermain²¹⁰, etc.).

3. On the spatial theory of party competition (e.g., J. Th. Mavrogordatos²¹¹, etc.).

The *third group* of literature consisted of publications from think tanks, institutes, foundations, and expert comments.

This included analytical publications from the Valdai Discussion Club (in particular, O.N. Barabanov, D.I. Grigoriev, B.Yu. Kagarlickij, V.G. Koltashov and A.S. Rybin²¹²) mainly covering the global problem of climate change and related governance, European parties, as well as election campaigns, and from the Russian International Affairs Council (e.g., N.V. Eremina²¹³, etc.), the Federal Agency for Civic Education (e.g., K. Völkl²¹⁴, etc.), the Climate Action Network²¹⁵, the “Eurasian Strategies” agency (in particular, A.P. Sokolov, A.D. Davydov and E.V. Pimenova²¹⁶), and the official website of the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences (in particular, M.V. Khorolskaya²¹⁷), etc. In addition, this group also included other publications that do not correspond to the already established categories. First of all, it was

²⁰² Alekseeva T.A. Think like Constructivist: Discovering a Polyphonic World // Comparative Politics. 2014. Vol. 5, №1(14). P. 4-21.

²⁰³ Konyshev V.N., Sergunin A.A., Subbotin S.V. Social Constructivism on Security Problems // Theories and Problems of Political Studies. 2016. № 3. P. 94-112.

²⁰⁴ Tannenwald N. Ideas and Explanation: Advancing the Theoretical Agenda // Journal of Cold War Studies. 2005. Vol.7, № 2. P. 13-42.

²⁰⁵ Finnemore M., Sikkink K. Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics // Annual Review of Political Science. 2001. Vol.4. P. 391-416.

²⁰⁶ Checkel J.T. Social Construction and...P. 545-560.

²⁰⁷ Hall P.A., Taylor R.C.R. Political Science and...P. 936-957.

²⁰⁸ Panov P.V. Institutionalism(s): Explanatory Models and Casuality // Polis. Political Studies. 2015. № 3. P. 38-55.

²⁰⁹ Reif K., Schmitt H. Nine Second-Order National...P. 3-44.

²¹⁰ Willermain F. From ‘Second-Order’ Elections to ‘First-Order Supranational’ Election: A State of Play after the 2014 EU Elections // Studia diplomatica: the Brussels journal of international relations. 2014. Vol. 67, Issue 3. P. 93-105.

²¹¹ Mavrogordatos G.Th. Downs Revisited: Spatial...P. 333-342.

²¹² Barabanov O.N., Grigoriev D.I., Kagarlickij B.Yu., Koltashov V.G., Rybin A.S. The Global Leftist Revolt: Expectations and Realities. Moscow: Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club, 2018. 37 p.

²¹³ Eremina N.V. A New Environmental Agenda of the EU: «Environmental Populism» versus Environmental Practice [Electronic resource] // RIAC. 24.12.2019. Available at: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/novaya-ekologicheskaya-povestka-es-ekologicheskij-populizm-versus-ekologicheskaya-praktika/> (accessed 10.01.2023).

²¹⁴ Völkl K. Wahlverhalten in Ost- und Westdeutschland im Zeitverlauf [Electronic resource] // Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. 27.05.2020. Available at: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/deutsche-einheit/lange-wege-der-deutschen-einheit/47513/wahlverhalten-in-ost-und-westdeutschland-im-zeitverlauf/> (accessed 07.04.2022).

²¹⁵ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...38 p.

²¹⁶ Sokolov A.P., Davydov A.D., Pimenova E.V. Elections to the Bundestag in 2021: Guidebook. Moscow: Eurasian Strategies, 2021. 33 p.

²¹⁷ Khorolskaya M.V. German Elections in 2021: Everything You Would Like to Know about the Parliamentary Elections in Germany [Electronic resource] // IMEMO RAS. 2021. Available at: <https://www.imemo.ru/special-rubrics/elections/german-elections/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

encyclopedic (in particular, P. Robbins²¹⁸) and project (in particular, an analytical report on a research project by authors F. Bosello and F. Buchner²¹⁹) literature, and studies published on university websites without reference to scientific editorial offices (in particular, F. Holub and M. Schündeln²²⁰) concerning various aspects of climate management.

Finally, the *fourth group* was formed of analytical publications in the mass media on election campaigns for the European Parliament and the Bundestag, as well as on other topics significant to this study, relating to the global problem of climate change, the European Union and its member states. Here, it is especially worth noting the wide involvement in the coverage of the stated issues in publications such as EurActiv (e.g., A. Brzozowski and Z. Radosavljevic²²¹, etc.), Politico (e.g., N. O'Leary²²², etc.), The Guardian (e.g., J. Rankin²²³, etc.), Der Tagesspiegel (P. Starzmann²²⁴, etc.), Deutsche Welle* (e.g., K. Brady²²⁵, etc.), Die Tageszeitung (e.g., B. Pötter²²⁶ et al.), Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (e.g., R. Burger²²⁷, etc.), etc.

As a result, the review presented above has demonstrated a high degree of separate study of various issues, such as the global problem of climate change, climate governance at different levels, transnational and national parties (a case of Germany), as well as the election campaigns in the 2019 European Parliament and the 2021 Bundestag. However, this thesis aims to conduct a more comprehensive study not only of the functioning of the two-level party system of the European Union

²¹⁸ Robbins P. Encyclopedia of Environment and Society. NY: SAGE Publications, 2007. 2736 p.

²¹⁹ Bosello F., Buchner B. The Kyoto Protocol: Current State and Implication for EU-25 Member States. A Focus on Agriculture and Forestry // Impact of Environmental Agreements on the CAP. MEACAP. WP2. D3. 2005. 27 p.

²²⁰ Holub F., Schündeln M. Pro-Environmental Voting when Climate Change is Made Salient: Evidence from High-Resolution Flooding Data [Electronic resource] // Goethe University Frankfurt: [official website]. 2022. Available at: https://www.wiwi.uni-frankfurt.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dateien_abteilungen/abt_ewf/International_Economic_Policy/admin/Ahr.pdf (accessed 30.10.2022).

²²¹ Brzozowski A., Radosavljevic Z. First Spitzenkandidaten debate falls flat [Electronic resource] // EurActiv. 29.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-elections-2019/news/first-spitzenkandidaten-debate-falls-flat/> (accessed 03.01.2023).

²²² O'Leary N. Frans Timmermans' greatest strength is his greatest weakness [Electronic resource] // Politico. 16.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/frans-timmermans-spitzenkandidat-greatest-strength-weakness-brussels/> (accessed 06.06.2022).

²²³ Rankin J. Defunct Eurosceptic party linked to Ukip asked to repay €1.1m [Electronic resource] // The Guardian. 30.05.2018. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/may/30/defunct-eurosceptic-party-linked-to-ukip-asked-to-repay-11m> (accessed 09.04.2022).

²²⁴ Starzmann P. Die FDP wirkt machtlos gegen die Grünen [Electronic resource] // Der Tagesspiegel. 27.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/gescheitert-am-zeitgeist-die-fdp-wirkt-machtlos-gegen-die-gruenen/24387636.html> (accessed 06.06.2022).

²²⁵ Brady K. Germany: Annalena Baerbock becomes prime target of sexist hate speech [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 05.10.2021. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-annalena-baerbock-becomes-prime-target-of-sexist-hate-speech/a-57484498> (accessed 05.10.2021). *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

²²⁶ Pötter B. Klimapolitik der Linken: Revolution ohne höheren CO2-Preis [Electronic resource] // Die Tageszeitung. 20.06.2021. Available at: <https://taz.de/Klimapolitik-der-Linken!/5777448/> (accessed 27.10.2022).

²²⁷ Burger R. Mode-Blogger „Joe“: Wie Laschets Sohn einen Deal mit Schutzmasken ermöglichte [Electronic resource] // Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 01.12.2020. Available at: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/corona-masken-amin-laschets-sohn-ermoeglichte-deal-mit-van-laack-17079208.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

and Germany, as well as election campaigns for the supranational and national parliaments, but also the direct influence of the global problem of climate change on them.

Research question. How did the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union and its member states, specifically in Germany, influence the transformation of programme settings, discourse and other activity of European parties, as well as the subsequent distribution of seats among them in parliaments based on the results of voting (cases of electoral campaigns in the 2019 European Parliament and the 2021 Bundestag)? The following **hypothesis** was put forward: finding the global problem of climate change at the center of the political agenda of the European Union and its member states, specifically Germany, not only led to a certain historical success of the greens at both levels of governance, but also to a significant dependence of the results for most other European parties on adapting their programmes, leadership discourse, and other actions to this popular agenda.

The **scientific novelty** of this thesis was determined by the following points:

- It is one of the first comprehensive studies in Russian political science that examines the adaptation of political parties at two levels of government to key topics on the political agenda, specifically the global problem of climate change;
- A systematization of interpretations of the global problem of climate change, based on various ideologies presented in the party systems of the European Union and its member states (a case of Germany) was carried out;
- The author developed a five-stage periodization of the evolution of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union and its member states (a case of Germany);
- The applicability of the spatial theory of party competition not only to national parties and to proportional and majoritarian systems, but also to transnational parties and mixed systems was proven;
- A unique regulation for calculating the statistics of transnational parties on the basis of the developed system of features and errors was formed;
- A set of reservations for interpreting the provisions of the concept of second-order national elections in relation to Germany (e.g., for minor parties) was outlined;
- The possibility of a favorable combination and addition of each other's provisions by the theory of social constructivism, the concept of second-order national elections and the spatial theory of party competition was substantiated.

The **theoretical significance** of this thesis is justified by its comprehensive and meaningful contribution to academic discussions regarding the influence of the global problem of climate change on the two-level interdependent transformation of European parties, as well as on the election campaigns, party systems, and institutional framework of the supranational and national levels. Based on the results obtained, it is possible to forecast the further development of transnational and national parties, the

influence of the global problem of climate change on various political processes, as well as the results of upcoming elections.

The **practical significance** of this thesis lies in its potential to contribute (in whole or in part) to the implementation of pedagogical activities within disciplines related to institutions, party systems, environmental policy and election campaigns in the European Union and Germany, as well as to the international environmental and/or climate change agenda. This includes writing syllabuses and training manuals, as well as delivering lectures and seminars. In addition, the materials can be used as a unique systematized work for academic activities, such as writing academic papers, monographs, etc.), that are relevant both for further research on the stated issues and for work on related research subjects. Finally, the results could also be applicable in expert-analytical work for analytical centers, mass media, government departments of the Russian Federation, as well as governmental and non-governmental international organizations. These primarily include institutions specializing in international relations in Europe, foreign and domestic policy of Germany and the EU, party systems, inter-parliamentary cooperation, and the implementation of environmental protection and combating climate change at the national, supranational, and international levels.

Conclusions to be defended:

— The global problem of climate change is one of the key topics in the political agenda of the European Union and Germany in the period considered in this study. Its highest priority became evident during the periods of adaptation to the signed Paris Agreement and the subsequent increase in ambitions. This topic can independently influence the preferences of citizens, the tactics of European parties, the elections results and, as consequently, the composition and decisions of political institutions.

— The global problem of climate change is a multifaceted topic that involves considering various circumstances. In addition to environmental justifications, its significance on the political agenda is attributed to aspects related to energy (diversification, independence from suppliers, and security of supply), the international leadership ambitions of the EU (one of the few areas where economic strength is the primary advantage), and the position of civil society (the growth of “green” sentiments in developed countries since the 1970s-80s).

— The established electoral preferences of citizens and the traditional ideology of European parties significantly limit the European parties’ potential for transformation in the face of the global problem of climate change. In the absence of additional obstacles (e.g., the SPD as a junior partner in a coalition with the CDU/CSU), left-of-center parties are in a better position in terms of their readiness for climate adaptation. However, this propensity for changes also explains the potential shift of classic communist voters from the far-left of the political spectrum to the far-right. Moreover, it is easier for transnational parties to demonstrate progressiveness or neutrality on certain issues, since their programme guidelines are generalized and therefore more abstract.

— Voters often lack the expertise to assess the effectiveness of the proposed measures to combat the global problem of climate change. Consequently, their choices are largely based on the extent to which political parties highlight the issue in their agendas, as well as by the discussions surrounding targets and initiatives among institutions, top EU and German officials, and the mass media. The most progressive rhetoric is chosen, in which, however, apparently unrealistic ideas do not dominate. The choice in favor of the greens is optional, since the decision-making process during voting is also influenced by the totality of interpretations on various issues, the actions of candidates, and the already established party preferences of citizens. Finally, the latter are more inclined to vote in national elections (as opposed to supranational) for issues that are more tangible in the everyday life, to which the global problem of climate change does not apply.

The results of this research were **tested**:

1. At various international, All-Russian and regional scientific conferences, seminars and forums.

These included the XXVII International Scientific Conference of Students, Postgraduates and Young Scientists “Lomonosov” (November 10-27, 2020, Moscow State University, Moscow, Russian Federation), the VII Annual International Scientific Conference of Young Scientists “Topical Issues of World Politics: Results and Perspectives” (November 27, 2020, Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Russian Federation), the International Conference for Young Researchers “World after the Pandemic: Global Challenges and Development” (April 22-23, 2021, Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation), the 27th International Conference of Europeanists “Europe’s Past, Present, and Future: Utopias and Dystopias” (June 21-25, 2021, Council for European Studies, based at Columbia University, University of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland), the 26th IPSA World Congress of Political Science “New Nationalisms in an Open World” (July 10-15, 2021, International Association of Political Sciences, NOVA University Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal), the 14th Pan-European Conference on International Relations “The Power Politics of Nature” (September 13-17, 2021, European Association of International Studies, University of Malta, Msida, Malta), the II All-Russian Conference with International participation “Processes of Reversible and Irreversible Reformatting of the World before and after the Pandemic” (November 18-19, 2021, Tomsk State University, Tomsk, Russian Federation), the ISA 2022 Annual Convention “A Wider Discipline For A Smaller World” (March 28-April 4, 2022, International Studies Association, Nashville, United States of America), the First St. Petersburg Congress on International Studies “Global and Regional Challenges in the Changing World” (November 10-12, 2022, Saint Petersburg State University, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation), the Scientific Seminar of the Center for European Studies (December 14, 2022, the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian

Federation, Moscow, Russian Federation), the Eurasian Youth Forum “Sustainable Development of the Eurasian Space through the Eyes of the Youth” (February 15, 2023, North-West Institute of Management of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation), the Kosov Readings, the Academic Conference “Russia in the Global World. Problems of Global and Regional Development” (March 13-14, 2023, North-West Institute of Management of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation), the International Scientific Symposium “Problems of Euro-Atlantic Development: Goals, Objectives, Prospects” (April 10-11, 2023, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russian Federation).

2. In a set of articles included in scientific journals that are part of databases, such as the HAK, Web of Science, and Scopus:

1) *Lisenkova A.D.* Transformation of the Climate Change Agenda of Far-Right Parties in the European Parliament // *IR Scientists' Herald*. 2021. № 2 (16). P. 46-56.

2) *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties in Multi-Level Environmental Governance in the European Union and Germany // *Management*. 2021. Vol. 9, № 4. P. 121-138.

3) *Lisenkova A.D.* Adaptation of the European Union to Environmental Trends as a Factor of the Development of Political Parties: A Case-Study of the ALDE and FDP // *Global Development ‘The World after the Pandemic: Global Challenges and Prospects for Development.’ Issue 23 / Davydov A.A., Mamedyarov Z.A., Khorolskaya M.V. et al., eds. Moscow: IMEMO RAS, 2022. P. 102-111.*

4) *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current Environmental Agenda of the Alternative for Germany // *Administrative Consulting*. 2022. №4 (160). P. 146-158.

5) *Lisenkova A.D.* COVID-19: Influence on the Political Agenda of Alternative for Germany // *Contemporary Europe*. 2022. №4 (111). P. 200-209.

6) *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda on the Participation of the European Parties in the 2019 European Elections // *The Herald of the Diplomatic Academy of the MFA of Russia. Russia and the World*. 2022. №4 (34). P. 202-218.

7) *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate Change Agenda of the Party of European Socialists // *Humanities and Social Sciences. Bulletin of the Financial University*. 2022. Vol.12, № 5. P. 127-135.

8) *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor on the Transformation of the Main Political Parties in Germany // *Tomsk State University Journal of History*. 2023. № 82. P. 142-150.

3. Through pedagogical practice at Saint Petersburg State University, academic and pedagogical activities at North-West Institute of Management of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, as well as at St. Petersburg branch of the National Research University Higher School of Economics.

The **structure** of this thesis is determined in accordance with the research tasks put forward. It consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a list of abbreviations and acronyms, as well as a list of sources and bibliography. Chapter 1 defines, systematizes, and substantiates the theoretical, historical, legal, and institutional framework relating to the global problem of climate change and election campaigns in the European Union and its member states (a case of Germany). Chapter 2 analyzes the transformation of the political agendas of transnational parties and national parties in Germany in the context of the global problem of climate change and sums up the general and climate change results of the election campaign to the European Parliament in 2019, including non-climatic factors that influenced the election results. Chapter 3 has a similar structure, exploring the further transformation of German national parties, as well as the climatic and non-climatic aspects of their participation in the election campaign to the Bundestag in 2021. The final part contains the study's results concerning the influence of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union on the transformation of European parties.

Chapter 1. The Global Problem of Climate Change and Political Parties in the EU and Germany: Theoretical, Historical, Legal, and Institutional Aspects

In this chapter, the author analyzes the general evolution of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the EU and Germany. For this, national, supranational, and global factors that influenced the development of the chosen topic were considered. A gradual increase in the priority of the problem of climate change was demonstrated, and the ability of its independent impact on political processes was proved. Then, from an environmental and/or climate change point of view, the state of the relevant institutions, legal framework and priorities of the EU and Germany at different historical stages were assessed. After that, a comparison of materials from public opinion polls was made to appreciate the perception of the need for measures to protect the environment and combat climate change in the years of elections to the European Parliament (2014 and 2019) and the Bundestag (2017 and 2021), as well as to justify the priority of the global problem of climate change itself for the citizens of the EU and Germany. Despite its high significance, understanding the specifics of the evolution of this agenda was necessary to study the direct influence of the topic on the transformation of European parties.

Accordingly, the features of the functioning of transnational parties themselves, including German national parties, were also considered. National and supranational tendencies were compared. Separately, the regulations for conducting election campaigns for the European Parliament and the Bundestag, as well as the characteristic features of the representation of European parties in both parliaments, were examined. Finally, the relation of transnational parties to German national parties, as well as their relations with the political groups of the European Parliament, were explained.

In addition, based on the data obtained in the previous sections, the author justifies the theoretical basis of the study by using the theory of social constructivism, the concept of second-order national elections and the spatial theory of party competition.

The issues addressed in this chapter have provided the comprehensive framework required to understand the key theoretical, historical, legal, and institutional features of the place of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of Germany and the EU, as well as the two-level party system. This basis was necessary for the subsequent study of the influence of the global problem of climate change (in the cases of the election campaigns to the European Parliament in 2019 and the Bundestag in 2021) on the transformation of European parties, as well as for substantiating its results.

1.1. The Evolution of the Global Problem of Climate Change in the Political Agenda of the EU and Germany: Main Stages

In this section, the author has developed a five-stage periodization, built on the principle of transitioning from the first rather fragmented international environmental efforts to a more comprehensive rethinking of environmental problems, the formation of the environmental management architecture at different levels, and a shifting focus on the global problem of climate change and subsequently its dominance in the political agenda.

The first stage (1940s-1971): Fragmentation in international environmental efforts.

The change in attitude to environmental problems and the gradual awareness of their global nature in the middle and second half of the 20th century, eventually affected all levels of governance.

In the international arena, the Constituent Assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature was held in France in 1948 under the auspices of the United Nations, and in 1949, the United States of America (USA) hosted the International Technical Conference on the Protection of Nature²²⁸. The problem of chemicals and pesticides also began to draw attention from the public and political elites, with publications, such as R. Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) highlighting this issue²²⁹.

At the European level, actions were very limited, although some isolated steps could already be seen. Indirectly, a set of provisions of the Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, dealt with the protection of the environment. These included Art. 2, which referred to the “harmonious development of economic activity” and Art. 36, which suggested possible restrictions on import, export, or transit in case of harm to life and health of people, as well as to animals or plants²³⁰. The second Treaty of Rome of the same year, establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), added provisions on the need to ensure the health of workers and the public from radiation (Art. 30), as well as on monitoring and planning the disposal of radioactive waste to avoid contamination of water, soil or air (Arts. 37-39)²³¹.

The second stage (1972-first half of the 1980s): The beginning of a comprehensive rethinking of global environmental problems.

At the international level, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, held in Sweden, is traditionally considered the first truly significant environmental event. It was of a rather generalized nature; thus, the environmental protection meant the protection of a wide range of its components (water, land, ecosystems, etc.). The Conference resulted in the signing the Stockholm Declaration, which established the principles of environmental protection. In addition, with an awareness

²²⁸ Tsverianashvili I.A. The 1972 Stockholm Conference...P. 89.

²²⁹ Marmazova T.I., Fomenko M.V. Political Ecology: Theory and Application // Law and Practice. 2021. №1. P. 202.

²³⁰ Vertrag zur Gründung...Arts. 2, 36.

²³¹ Treaty establishing the...Arts. 30, 37-39.

of the need for a global effort, the Conference also proposed the common United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and established the Environment Fund²³². The interest in the agenda was also fueled by publications such as the report by a team of authors (D. Meadows, et al.) “The Limits to Growth” under the auspices of the Club of Rome in 1972, concerning the exhaustibility of natural resources and the growth of human population, etc.²³³. Additionally, the First Energy (Oil) Crisis, followed by another one just a few years later (1979-1980), contributed to the revision of the attitude towards resources and the safety of their use²³⁴. It was from the 1970s, in this regard, when experts started associating the beginning of the use of the term “energy security”, to achieve which, in the future, a different level of energy efficiency and an expansion of the share of renewable energy would be required²³⁵. A set of disasters in different parts of the world also contributed to the environmental rethinking: the accident at the chemical plant in Flixborough (the United Kingdom) in 1974, the Seveso Dioxin disaster (Italy) in 1976, the Bhopal disaster (India) in 1984, etc.²³⁶.

At the supranational level, the emergence of the first Environmental Action Programme (1973-1976) should be considered a true starting point for the common environmental policy²³⁷. It was the result of an initiative of the heads of state or government of the Community at the 1972 Paris summit²³⁸. The tradition of adopting such programmes was preserved later (1977-1981, 1982-1986, etc.)²³⁹. However, it should be noted that the global problem of climate change was very superficially addressed in these documents for a long time²⁴⁰.

In 1973, other significant transformations that affected all three main European institutions took place, such as the European Commission as a supranational basis, the Council broadcasting the interests of member states and the European Parliament as a representation of citizens. It was in this year that the Directorate-General for the Environment and Consumer Protection emerged in the European

²³² *Tsverianashvili I.A.* The 1972 Stockholm Conference...P. 89; Stockholm Declaration of 1972 Broadly Recognizes Global Environmental Issues [Electronic resource] // Environment & Society Portal. Available at: <https://www.environmentandsociety.org/tools/keywords/stockholm-declaration-1972-broadly-recognizes-global-environmental-issues> (accessed 06.03.2023).

²³³ *Marmazova T.I., Fomenko M.V.* Political Ecology: Theory...P. 201.

²³⁴ *Skorokhodova O.N.* Europe and Energy...P. 104.

²³⁵ *Kosov U.V., Toropygin A.V.* Energy and Ecological...P. 50, 53.

²³⁶ *Kidam K., Hurme M.* Statistical Analysis of Contributors to Chemical Process Accidents // Chemical Engineering & Technology. 2012. Vol. 36, Issue 1. P. 168.

²³⁷ *Shireva I.V.* EU Environmental Policy // Economic and Law Issues. 2021. № 5(155). P. 44.

²³⁸ Statement from the Paris Summit (19 to 21 October 1972) [Electronic resource] // Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe. 1972. Available at: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/b1dd3d57-5f31-4796-85c3-cfd2210d6901/publishable_en.pdf (accessed 02.01.2023).

²³⁹ Environment Action Programmes [Electronic resource] // Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bmu.de/en/topics/europe-international/europe/environment-action-programmes> (accessed 13.04.2022).

²⁴⁰ Resolution of the Council of the European Communities and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 19 October 1987 on the continuation and implementation of a European Community policy and action programme on the environment (1987-1992) // Official Journal of the European Communities. 1987. C 328. P. 1-44.

Commission²⁴¹. The role of the field-related European Commissioner was taken over by the Vice-President of the European Commission for Parliamentary Affairs, Environment Policy, Consumer Interests, Transport and Information²⁴² (now the European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries)²⁴³. In turn, the Committee on Public Health and the Environment²⁴⁴ (now the Committee on Environment, Health and Food Safety²⁴⁵) was created in the European Parliament, which became the 12th profile committee of the institute²⁴⁶. Whereas, the Council held its first meeting in an environmental configuration²⁴⁷.

At the national level, certain environmental transformation also began in the member states of the EEC. For instance, in 1974 Germany established its first specialized state scientific body, the German Environment Agency²⁴⁸.

The third stage (second half of the 1980s-first half of the 1990s): Progress in building environmental management architecture at different levels.

At the international level, in 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development released its report, “Our Common Future”, which was headed by Norwegian Prime Minister G. H. Brundtland. The report introduced the significant concept “sustainable development”, which emphasized the relationship between “socio-economic development” and “environmental state.”²⁴⁹. In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as the “Earth Summit”, took place. It adopted the Declaration on Environment and Development, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and the programme of actions to implement the concept of sustainable development, “Agenda for the XXI century”²⁵⁰.

At the supranational level, in 1986 the Single European Act was adopted. This document not only first introduced the “Environment” section for the founding European documents, but also determined

²⁴¹ Environment DG Information Brochure. Luxemburg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2002. P. 6, 17.

²⁴² Composition of the Commission 1958-2004 [Electronic resource] // University of Pittsburgh. Available at: http://aei.pitt.edu/1535/1/Commission_list.pdf (accessed 05.04.2022).

²⁴³ Virginijus Sinkevičius.

²⁴⁴ *Martens L.* Report drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Public Health and the Environment on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 280/73) for a decision concerning the participation of the European Economic Community in the negotiations for the conclusion of a Convention for the prevention of sea-pollution from land-based sources. EP Working Document, Document 1973-1974 284/73, 13 December 1973 [Electronic resource] // University of Pittsburgh. 1973. Available at: <http://aei.pitt.edu/97587/> (accessed 05.04.2022).

²⁴⁵ Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/envi/home/highlights> (accessed 13.04.2022).

²⁴⁶ *Robbins P.* Encyclopedia of Environment...P. 618.

²⁴⁷ *Wurzel R.K.W., Liefferink D., Di Lullo M.* The European Council...P. 256.

²⁴⁸ Deutschland bekommt ein Umweltbundesamt [Electronic resource] // Umweltbundesamt: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/1974#umweltbundesamt> (accessed 04.04.2022).

²⁴⁹ Our Common Future [Electronic resource] // World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED): [official website]. 1987. Available at: <http://xn--80adbkckdfac8cd1ahpld0f.xn--p1ai/files/monographs/OurCommonFuture-introduction.pdf> (accessed 05.04.2022).

²⁵⁰ *Coptug V.A.* UN Conference on...P. 2.

that its protection “shall be a component of the Community's other policies” (Art. 130r (2))²⁵¹. Moreover, the text fixed the main principles of environmental policy: “preventive action”, “environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source” and “polluter should pay” (Article 130r (2))²⁵². The EEA's key contribution was the introduction of previously missing specific consistent environmental legal provisions in founding supranational documents²⁵³. In addition, in the “Environment” section, for the first time, there was a clause that was subsequently enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty (1992) as the “principle of subsidiarity.”²⁵⁴. Thus, in accordance with Art. 130r (4) EEA: “The Community shall take action relating to the environment to the extent to which the objectives [...] can be attained better at Community level than at the level of the individual Member States.”²⁵⁵.

Increased international attention to sustainable development was also reflected at the European level, as in the Maastricht Treaty, in parallel with the inclusion of the priority of environmental protection and the addition of another “precautionary principle” in the document’s preamble, the promotion of “sustainable growth” was also implied there²⁵⁶.

In the European Parliament, after the 1989 elections, managed to create their own political group for the first time²⁵⁷, and later, in 1993, the transnational European Federation of Green Parties²⁵⁸.

Whereas in 1989, J. Delors²⁵⁹, President of the European Commission (1985-1995), speaking before the European Parliament, declared Europe's place “in the front line of the worldwide campaign for conservation of the environment.”²⁶⁰. This vector of which was accompanied by further institutional development. So, in 1990, the European Environment Agency came into being, and in 1994 the European Environmental Information and Observation Network was established²⁶¹.

At the national level in Germany, in 1986, a few specialized institutions emerged, among those were the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety²⁶² (since 2021, after several name changes, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear

²⁵¹ Single European Act. Art. 130r (2).

²⁵² Ibid. Art. 130r (2).

²⁵³ *Orlando E.* The Evolution of...P. 4.

²⁵⁴ The principle of..

²⁵⁵ Single European Act. Art. 130r (4).

²⁵⁶ Treaty on European...Preamble, Arts. 2, 130r (2).

²⁵⁷ Comparative tool.

²⁵⁸ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 206.

²⁵⁹ For more details, see: *Lisenkova A.D.* The influence of the environmental discourse on the European elections in 2019: master's final qualifying work. Saint Petersburg, 2020. 117 p.

²⁶⁰ Address given by...

²⁶¹ *Orlando E.* The Evolution of...P. 21.

²⁶² Walter Wallmann [Electronic resource] // Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*. Available at: <https://www.kas.de/de/web/geschichte-der-cdu/personen/biogramm-detail/-/content/walter-wallmann-v1> (accessed 05.04.2022). *In accordance with the order of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, it was excluded from the register of branches and open representative offices of international organizations and foreign non-profit non-governmental organization.

Safety and Consumer Protection)²⁶³ and the Committee for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety²⁶⁴ (now the Committee for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection) in the Bundestag²⁶⁵. In 1989, the Federal Agency for the Environment was supplemented by the Federal Agency for Radiation Protection²⁶⁶ and in 1993, the same happened to the Federal Agency for Nature Protection²⁶⁷. A set of changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s was connected both with the catastrophe at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant (NPP) in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1986²⁶⁸, and with international events, as well as with the pan-European context. An illustration here can be the first receipt of seats in the European parliament by the greens (including from Germany, who also got into the Bundestag a year earlier) in 1984. This allowed them, together with the regionalists, to participate in the creation of the so-called Rainbow Group²⁶⁹.

The fourth stage (second half of the 1990s-2010): Mobilization of international cooperation in the fight against the global problem of climate change.

At the international level, in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC was adopted. It set targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for industrialized countries. They were based on a decrease of “at least 5%” compared to the 1990 level. The period for fulfilling obligations was from 2008 to 2012²⁷⁰. The European Union ambitiously proposed a figure of 15%, but other parties had been skeptical about such a statement. This was explained by the lack of even its own internal mechanisms, which would confirm the possibility of achieving the target in practice. Amid concessions, the European side agreed to a minimum of 5%, while taking on a high commitment of 8%, and the USA getting the target of 7%²⁷¹. The United States was the leader in greenhouse gas emissions at that time²⁷². As a result, the adoption of a target indicator that was too high under pressure, as well as disagreements over developing countries led the American side to refuse to ratify the document²⁷³. At the same time, the refusal of the

²⁶³ Curriculum Vitae of Steffi Lemke [Electronic resource] // Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bmu.de/en/ministry/minister-and-state-secretaries/steffi-lemke/curriculum-vitae-of-steffi-lemke> (accessed 13.04.2022).

²⁶⁴ Umweltausschuss des Bundestages wird 25 Jahre alt [Electronic resource] // Deutscher Bundestag: [official website]. Available at: https://www.bundestag.de/webarchiv/textarchiv/2011/34602764_kw22_pa_bulling_schroeter-205490 (accessed 05.04.2022).

²⁶⁵ Ausschuss für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz [Electronic resource] // Deutscher Bundestag: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundestag.de/umwelt> (accessed 13.04.2022).

²⁶⁶ 30 Jahre Bundesamt für Strahlenschutz [Electronic resource] // Bundesamt für Strahlenschutz: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bfs.de/SharedDocs/Kurzmeldungen/BfS/DE/2019/1101-30-jahre-bfs.html> (accessed 05.04.2022).

²⁶⁷ Gesetz über die...§ 1-3.

²⁶⁸ Leiren M. D., Reimer I. Germany: From Feed-In...P. 78.

²⁶⁹ Lewandowsky M., Schwanholz J., Leonhardt C., Blätte A. New Parties, Populism...P. 620; Comparative tool.

²⁷⁰ Schulze E., Valentini R., Sanz M. The long road...P. 506.

²⁷¹ Van Schaik L.G., Schunz S. Explaining EU Activism...P. 179.

²⁷² Hovi J., Skodvin T., Andresen S. The Persistence of the Kyoto Protocol: Why Other Annex I Countries Move on Without the United States // Global Environmental Politics. 2003. Vol. 3, Issue 4. P. 2.

²⁷³ Van Schaik L.G., Schunz S. Explaining EU Activism...P. 180.

USA allowed the European Union to receive additional confirmation of its global leadership ambitions to solve the global problem of climate change²⁷⁴.

At the European level, on the one hand, the attention to sustainable development that took shape at the previous stage contributed to the naming of the fifth Environment Action Programme (1992-2000) as “Towards sustainability”²⁷⁵ and the establishment of “sustainable development” as one of the EU objectives, according to the Treaty of Amsterdam²⁷⁶. On the other hand, it is equally important that, according to the text of “Towards sustainability”, climate change was also included not only in the list of “seven themes and targets” but also put on its first line²⁷⁷.

In turn, the Treaty of Lisbon (2007) further emphasized the importance of the global problem of climate change and named the environmental section as “Environment (climate change).” Moreover, it added a provision on the need to work for “promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change.”²⁷⁸. In addition, the text identified the need for the EU to work for the “sustainable development of Europe” and to contribute to the “sustainable development of the Earth.”²⁷⁹ At the present stage, the foundations of the EU environmental policy are reflected in Articles 11, 191-193 of the consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012)²⁸⁰. The Treaty of Lisbon also endowed the European Union with legal personality, which allowed it to act more effectively as a united front in the international arena, including at international climate conferences²⁸¹. Thus, the EU gained the opportunity to become a member of international organizations and sign international treaties²⁸².

In addition, the realization of low effectiveness of the Kyoto Protocol, including due to the non-participation of the United States in it, also pushed the EU to a new stage in its climate development, when the formation of this environmental policy direction as an independent one became even more clearly visible. As a result, in addition to the ongoing institutional evolution (e.g., the creation of the European Chemicals Agency in 2007)²⁸³, a significant deepening of mechanisms for solving the global problem of climate change was observed. In 2005 the European Union Emissions Trading System (or the Emissions Trading System) was introduced, which assumes a market mechanism. According to this mechanism, companies need to obtain or buy special quotas to emit greenhouse gases, which provides

²⁷⁴ *Bosello F., Buchner B.* The Kyoto Protocol...P. 8.

²⁷⁵ Fifth European Community...

²⁷⁶ Treaty of Amsterdam. Art. 1(5).

²⁷⁷ Fifth European Community...

²⁷⁸ Treaty of Lisbon. Art. 174.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Art. 2 (3, 5).

²⁸⁰ Environment policy: general...

²⁸¹ *Trifonova I.A.* EU: From the European Coal and Steel Community to Climate Neutrality // Education and Law. 2021. №6. P. 23.

²⁸² The Treaty of Lisbon [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/5/the-treaty-of-lisbon> (accessed 06.04.2022).

²⁸³ *Knight J.K.* The European Chemicals...P. 6.

them with a certain motivation to subsequent transition to more environmentally friendly production due to high cost of quotas and gradual decrease in their number²⁸⁴.

The EU's leadership ambitions to sign a legally binding international document at the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference also contributed to the priority of the global problem of climate change. Two years before the event, in the 2020 Climate & Energy Package the EU set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020. A similar percentage was expected for improving energy efficiency and increasing the share of renewable energy sources²⁸⁵. However, disagreements persisted among member states, primarily concerning the issues of a 30% increase of emissions reduction targets and financial contribution, as well as the lack of a common position on land use and forestry issues²⁸⁶. As a result, the EU was practically unprepared for negotiations, which along with disagreements between developed and developing countries led to the failure to sign a legally binding document. Meanwhile, the United States and major emerging market economies (Brazil, India, China, South Africa) played a key role in the final stage of the negotiations on the Copenhagen Accord. In contrast, the EU remained on the sidelines²⁸⁷. There was one paradox. Usually, the more developed countries stimulate the less developed to various forms of legal cooperation²⁸⁸. In fact, these differences in regional and national priorities once again reminded the absence of the effective environmental management at the international level under the auspices of the UN²⁸⁹.

However, the preparations for the Conference still had an influence on the future of the European institutional arrangement. Thus, in 2009, the Directorate-General for Climate Action was established in the European Commission. A similar decision is also connected with the expansion of the EU and the subsequent increase in the number of European Commissioners²⁹⁰. As a result, the European Commissioner for Climate Action appeared in 2010²⁹¹ (now the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for the European Green Deal)²⁹². Meanwhile, in the European Parliament, back in 2007, the Committee on Climate Change was founded on a temporary basis and with a mandate for 20 months to prepare for the already mentioned Copenhagen Conference²⁹³. It should be noted that there

²⁸⁴ Appunn K. Understanding the European Union's Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) [Electronic resource] // Clean Energy Wire. 20.07.2021. Available at: <https://www.cleanenergywire.org/factsheets/understanding-european-unions-emissions-trading-system> (accessed 05.04.2022).

²⁸⁵ 2020 climate & energy...

²⁸⁶ Groen L., Niemann A., Oberthür S. The EU as a...P. 178-179.

²⁸⁷ Lisenkova A.D. Main Features of the Climate...P. 130; Houser T. Copenhagen, the Accord...P. 7; Kreienkamp J. The Long Road...P. 9.

²⁸⁸ Kochtcheeva L.V. Globalization and the...P. 81.

²⁸⁹ Vasilyeva N.A. UN: The Need for Environmental...P. 148.

²⁹⁰ Schoenefeld J. The Politics of the Rise of DG Climate Action [Electronic resource] // Environmental Europe? 24.02.2014. Available at: <https://environmentaleurope.ideason europe.eu/2014/02/24/the-politics-of-the-rise-of-dg-climate-action/> (accessed 05.04.2022).

²⁹¹ Statement of Connie...

²⁹² Frans Timmermans [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/timmermans_en (accessed 13.04.2022).

²⁹³ Burns C., Carter N. The European Parliament...P. 66-67.

is no such division in the Council, which only, has 10 configurations in 2023²⁹⁴. This is logically explained by the absence of the division responsible for the environment and climate among the relevant ministers in most member states, while generalized environmental ministers are present in the Council.

In 2004, the European Green Party was formed on the basis of the European Federation of Green Parties. However, their independent participation within the framework of the political group of the European Parliament lasted only two convocations (until 1999), after which they again returned to cooperation with the regionalists and began to form the Greens/European Free Alliance group, where they traditionally make up the numerical majority. Following the enlargement in 1995 changes were made to the European United Left group, with the addition of a subgroup of parties from the northern countries known as the Nordic Green Left. This group continues to exist to this day, however, since 2021, it has been referred to as The Left in the European Parliament – GUE/NGL, where “GUE/NGL” stands for “European United Left/Nordic Green Left”. Among other things, this can be attributed to the eco-socialist sentiment among the left-wing parties, which greatly blurred the lines between the left and the left-greens. The latter also united in 2004 to form the Nordic Green Left Alliance, which, however, is not a transnational party²⁹⁵.

At the national level in Germany, at this stage, the Alliance 90/The Greens for the first time fell into the government's “Red-green” coalition (1998-2005) together with the Social Democratic Party of Germany. Ideologically, this was a fairly close cooperation, which was beneficial due to the total number of members of the two parties (more than half of the parliament), where the greens were assigned a noticeably secondary role, because the number of social democrats exceeded their own by several times²⁹⁶. In fact, the probability of obtaining an absolute majority in the elections to the Bundestag for one party is extremely low, which leads to the additional significance of both participation in the coalition in any roles, and the importance of its formation from the ideologically closest parties²⁹⁷.

The priority issue for the “Red-green” government became the areas that were most directly related to the political interpretation of the potential solution of the global problem of climate change at the present stage: the abandonment of nuclear energy and the enlargement of the use of renewable energy sources. The latter was enshrined in the 2000 Renewable Energy Sources Act, although it had already been present in the 1991 Electricity Feed-in Act, and became an important milestone in the course taken towards the energy turnaround²⁹⁸. As a result, no specific dates for the waiver were set, although the

²⁹⁴ Council configurations.

²⁹⁵ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental...P. 206, 211; Comparative tool.

²⁹⁶ *Jänicke M.* Ecological Modernization – a...P. 17; Bundestagswahl 1998 [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 27.09.1998. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/1998-09-27-BT-DE/> (accessed 05.04.2022).

²⁹⁷ *Vlasov N.A.* The Coalition Strategy of the Green Party... P. 275, 277.

²⁹⁸ *Perederiy S.* Significant Changes Have Been Made to the German Renewable Energy Law [Electronic resource] // LesPromInform. 2017. №8 (130). Available at: <https://lesprominform.ru/jarticles.html?id=4876> (accessed 05.04.2022).

decision was featured in both the 2000 “Nuclear consensus” with the big utilities and the amendment to the 2002 Atomic Energy Act. Thus, since 2000s, the gradual decommissioning of NPPs began²⁹⁹.

The fifth stage (2011-2021): Dominance of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda.

At the international stage, in 2012, the EU, together with Australia and several other European countries, agreed on the 2nd period of the Kyoto Protocol (from 2013 to 2020) declared its ambitious intention to reduce emissions by 20%. The Doha Amendment, which regulates this, became a part of the Doha Climate Gateway. The problem with this initiative was that only 15% of world emissions were attributable to the EU and its allies, while many other countries did not support the amendment. For example, Canada withdrew from the agreement, while Russia, New Zealand, and Japan refused to participate in “Kyoto-2”. The reason for the skepticism of many states was again the lack of commitment of the developing countries³⁰⁰. Ultimately, this document formally entered into force only on December 31, 2020³⁰¹.

In 2015, two remarkable international events occurred. First, the Agenda for Sustainable Development with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted for the period up to 2030 under the auspices of the UN³⁰². However, more significant for the EU’s ambitions, was the signing of the Paris Agreement in the same year³⁰³.

On the eve of the Conference, the EU played an active role in creating the “High Ambition Coalition” (“Ambition Coalition”). Gradually, the Coalition grew from 12 to 80 members, and many key points of the agreement were concluded in advance³⁰⁴. Speaking about the legal status of the Paris Agreement, in the context of frequently arising doubts on this matter, D. Bodanski stated: “The Paris Agreement does qualify as a treaty within the meaning of international law; it does create legal obligations for its parties; and compliance with these obligations is not voluntary.”³⁰⁵. Yet the expert did not deny that some of its provisions did not create any legal obligations³⁰⁶. China and India, as well as other large issuing states, also became participants in the document³⁰⁷. President of the European Commission J.-C. Juncker summed up: “We have long been the global leader in climate action, and the Paris Agreement now reflects our ambition worldwide.”³⁰⁸.

²⁹⁹ Zimakov A.V. Germany’s Nuclear Energy Refusal...P. 363-364.

³⁰⁰ Pandey C.L. The Limits of...P. 378; Doherty R., Lewish B. Doha Climate Talks.

³⁰¹ The Doha Amendment [Electronic resource] // United Nations: [official website]. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/process/the-kyoto-protocol/the-doha-amendment> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³⁰² The Sustainable Development Agenda.

³⁰³ Paris Agreement.

³⁰⁴ Parker C.F., Karlsson C., Hjerpe M. Assessing the European...P. 248.

³⁰⁵ Bodansky D. The Legal Character...P. 142.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. P. 143.

³⁰⁷ Christoff P. The Promissory Note: COP 21 and the Paris Climate Agreement // Environmental Politics. 2016. Vol. 25, Issue 5. P. 770-771.

³⁰⁸ Historic Climate Deal...

In the future, attention to the global problem of climate change continued to be heated both in the international arena and among the public and the mass media. These included the publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change special report “Global Warming of 1.5 °C” in 2018, the activities of non-systemic movements “School Strike for Climate”/“Fridays for Future” (and especially Swedish activist Gr. Thunberg), “Extinction Rebellion”, etc.³⁰⁹. Here one can note the encouragement of some degree of radicalization of climate views by political elites. Thus, from the point of view of N.V. Eremina, it was the “Greta Thunberg’s phenomenon” that became a clear illustration of “the rejection of academic discussion in this environment” and “transit it into a political plane.”³¹⁰

At the supranational level in 2014, on the eve of the Conference (COP-21) in Paris, the EU adopted the 2030 Climate & Energy Framework, in which it fixed the target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40%, as well as indicators for the share of renewable energy sources (27%) and the growth of energy efficiency (by 27%)³¹¹. For the EU the 40% target became the nationally determined contribution according to the Paris Agreement³¹².

In addition, in order to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement, in 2016 the European Commission put forward a list of initiatives. Subsequently, eight of them were included in the “Clean Energy for All Europeans” package, which was finally adopted by 2018-2019. In particular, it adapted the 2030 Climate & Energy Framework. Thus, the initial indicators for the share of renewable energy sources and improved energy efficiency were changed already in 2018 thanks to two directives of the package: one on renewable energy sources and the other on energy efficiency. They raised the first figure to 32% and the second to 32.5%. Six more documents related to the remaining climate and energy aspects (energy efficiency of buildings, electricity market design, etc.) were also adopted in 2018-2019. In fact, this correlation of energy and climate priorities once again underlined not only environmental ambitions but also the rational hopes that go hand in hand with reducing energy dependency³¹³. As a result, the backdrop leading up to the 2019 European Parliament elections contributed to them being commonly called “climate elections.”³¹⁴

For further harmonization, late 2019, the European Green Deal was presented, which carries a set of initiatives. Their ultimate goal was to make Europe the “first climate-neutral continent” by 2050³¹⁵.

³⁰⁹ Kurbanov E.A., Fominykh A.E. Climate Change and...P.179; Lisenkova A.D. The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 205.

³¹⁰ Eremina N.V. A New Environmental Agenda...

³¹¹ European Council (23...

³¹² Paris Agreement.

³¹³ Clean energy for...

³¹⁴ Lisenkova A.D. The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 208; Lisenkova A.D. The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 143.

³¹⁵ Lisenkova A.D. Main Features of the Climate...P. 128, 132.

To this end, the European Climate Law was adopted in 2021, which set a new and higher target to reduce emissions by 55% by 2030, and the EU's plan for a green transition (“Fit for 55”) was also launched³¹⁶.

At the national level in Germany, in the early stages of A. Merkel's rule, a course was outlined to revise attitudes towards nuclear energy, but it did not last long. An accident also intervened here, this time at the “Fukushima-1” nuclear power plant in Japan in 2011. After that, a number of the oldest plants were closed, and the rest were determined to be decommissioned by 2022³¹⁷. The long-term Energy Concept 2050, adopted a year before the disaster and aimed at addressing such issues as expanding the use of renewable energy sources, increasing energy efficiency, security of supply, expanding infrastructure, etc., was also adapted to include the changes³¹⁸. In the context of political background of that time, the replenishment of the list of specialized agencies at the expense of the Federal Office for the Safety of Nuclear Waste Management was a logical consequence³¹⁹.

Climate change management in the country developed quite harmoniously with supranational trends. Thus, in 2014, the Climate Action Programme 2020 was adopted. In accordance with it, it was assumed that the country would reduce emissions by 40% by 2020³²⁰. In 2016, the long-term Climate Plan 2050 appeared in the country; and in 2019, the Climate Action Programme 2030 was introduced, which included such industry milestones as updating CO₂ prices for transport and heating, reducing the cost of electricity for citizens, environmental renewal of the heating system, etc.³²¹. In 2021, Germany adopted an amendment to the Climate Change Act. It raised national ambitions to a 65% target for emissions reductions and 2045 as the deadline for achieving “climate neutrality.”³²². As a result, it was a logical consequence that the elections to the Bundestag in 2021 were also called “climate,” because attention to the agenda did not decrease significantly³²³.

Moreover, following the 2021 Bundestag elections and the formation of the new “Traffic Light” coalition, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection was supplemented by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, also

³¹⁶ Ibid. P. 128.

³¹⁷ Die Energiewende 2011 [Electronic resource] // Landeszentrale für politische Bildung BW. Available at: <https://www.lpb-bw.de/energiewende> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³¹⁸ Die Energiewende kommt voran: Energiekonzept [Electronic resource] // Die Bundesregierung: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/energiekonzept-425640?view=renderNewsletterHtml> (accessed 02.01.2023).

³¹⁹ Das BfE heißt jetzt BASE [Electronic resource] // LifePR. 02.01.2020. Available at: <https://www.lifepr.de/inaktiv/bundesamt-fuer-kerntechnische-entsorgungssicherheit-bfe/Das-BfE-heisst-jetzt-BASE/boxid/781027> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³²⁰ Aktionsprogramm Klimaschutz [Electronic resource] // Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://www.bmu.de/themen/klimaschutz-anpassung/klimaschutz/nationale-klimapolitik/aktionsprogramm-klimaschutz#:~:text=Deutschlands%20Klimaziel%202020,Ziel%20aller%20Bundesregierungen%20seit%202002.> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³²¹ Klimaschutz in Deutschland [Electronic resource] // Landeszentrale für politische Bildung BW. 2021. Available at: <https://www.lpb-bw.de/klimaschutz-deutschland#c72176> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³²² *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor... P. 143.

³²³ Ibid. P. 143.

known as the “Superministry”. Significant here was precisely the addition of a climate component, which confirmed the European logic of gradual separation and elevation of the global problem of climate change above all other environmental issues, traditionally referred to as environmental protection. For comparison, from 2013 to 2021 the mentioned ministry was referred to as the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. In many ways, such a transformation is connected with the entry of the Alliance 90/The Greens into the Federal government, in that case in much more significant positions³²⁴. Similar changes took place in the Bundestag. If from 1986 to 2021 there was only the Committee on the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety under different names, then the Committee on Climate Action and Energy was additionally created for the climate problem. Thus, the Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy that existed in the previous convocation became the Committee on Economic Affairs³²⁵. Whereas there is no such division in the Bundesrat, out of 16 standing committees, only one is directly devoted to environmental issues, and this is the Committee on the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety³²⁶.

If turning to the classification of supranational and national institutions concerning priority environmental areas, some confusion may appear. According to the official website of the European Commission, the following areas are considered: water, air, urban environment, forests, marine and coastal environment, waste and recycling, plastics, nature and biodiversity, soil and land, industrial emissions, chemicals, circular economy, and noise³²⁷. These various components intersect, but can also be viewed as separate directions. However, the European Parliament presents a slightly different classification: “combating climate change, biodiversity, land use and forestry; water protection and management, air and noise pollution, resource efficiency and the circular economy, sustainable consumption and production, chemicals and pesticides.”³²⁸. Meanwhile, at the national level the German Federal Government highlights the following areas: “climate and adaptation, nature and species protection, nuclear safety and radiological protection; water, resources and waste; air, noise and mobility; health and chemicals, sustainable development and digitalization, European and international participation, education and public participation in decision-making.”³²⁹. Despite the comprehensive thematic treatment by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Federal Government

³²⁴ Ministergalerie.

³²⁵ Committees [Electronic resource] // Deutscher Bundestag: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundestag.de/en/committees> (accessed 05.04.2022); Committees (archived) [Electronic resource] // Deutscher Bundestag: [official website]. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190327154703/https://www.bundestag.de/en/committees> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³²⁶ Ausschuss für Umwelt, Naturschutz und nukleare Sicherheit [Electronic resource] // Bundesrat: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundesrat.de/DE/bundesrat/ausschuesse/u/u-node.html> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³²⁷ Environment [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/index_en (accessed 05.04.2022).

³²⁸ Environment policy [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/section/193/environment-policy> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³²⁹ Topics [Electronic resource] // Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bmu.de/en/> (accessed 05.04.2022).

confirm the priority of the global problem of climate change. In fact, this creates a bit of a confusion as the fight against global climate change involves a fairly wide range of completely different environmental measures, that, when institutionally divided into the environment and climate, introduce additional confusion, because technically, many of them fall into both categories.

1.2. Features of the Transformation of Public Opinion on the Global Problem of Climate Change in the EU and Germany

This section assesses the importance of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda. Thus, it analyzes the change in public opinion on issues related to the protection of the environment and the fight against the global problem of climate change, including the growing priority of the latter, as well as the support for the greens and other most environmentally/climate-oriented parties before the 2019 European and the 2021 Bundestag elections. It is worth emphasizing that the transformation in the preferences of voters towards certain issues led both to a change in the rhetoric of European parties and reflected in the voting results. Moreover, materials from similar elections in 2014 and 2017 were used as starting points for comparison.

In 2014, according to the Special Eurobarometer 415: Europeans in 2014, on the eve of the European elections, the greatest concerns among European citizens at the national level were unemployment (49%), economic situation (29%), and rising prices/inflation (20%). The environment, climate and energy issues were only in the 11th and 12th places (6%). At the supranational level, the list of priority issues was somewhat different: economic situation (40%), unemployment (33%) and member state's public finances (25%), whereas, climate change (5%) and environment (4%) were in the 11th and 12th places again.

No countries had environmental, climate, and energy issues in the top three among national concerns. The best performers were Malta (20%), Sweden (20%), and Germany (17%), while the worst were Greece (0%), Portugal (0%) and Slovenia (0%). At the supranational level, neither climate change nor the environment, considered separately in the survey, made it to the top of the main topics in any of the countries. At the same time, the citizens of Sweden (22%), Finland (12%), and Denmark (11%) were most concerned about the climate, and the citizens of Sweden (17%) and France (11%) were most interested in the environment. Italy (1%) and Portugal (1%) had the lowest results in terms of climate, and Cyprus (0%) in terms of environment.

The position of German citizens evaluated separately, noted rising prices/inflation (22%), unemployment (21%), government debt (20%) and the education system (20%). The environment, climate and energy issues (17%) were only in the 8th place. At the supranational level, the top concerns

were member state's public finances (42%), economic situation (36%), and unemployment (29%), whereas climate change took only the 8th place (8%), and the environment was the 11th (4%).

In 2014, these ratings showed a relatively low concern of citizens with environmental issues both in the European Union as a whole and in Germany in particular. However, a number of other trends can also be observed. First and foremost, the level of interest in environmental topics in Germany was higher than the EU average. In addition, already at this stage, a certain priority of the global problem of climate change over other environmental problems could be noticed³³⁰.

In 2019, according to the similar Special Eurobarometer 486: Europeans in 2019, three main national concerns for EU citizens were: unemployment (21%), rising prices/inflation/cost of living (20%), health and social security (19%). The environment, climate and energy issues were in the 4th place (18%). At the supranational level, the top three included immigration (32%), terrorism (25%), and climate change (20%). The environment (14%) was only in the 5th place.

At the same time, at the national level, the environment, climate and energy issues, in addition to Germany (31%), were ranked first separately by the citizens of Sweden (46%), the Netherlands (57%), Denmark (50%), and Belgium (30%), second by Finland (35%) and Luxembourg (25%), and third by Malta (27%) and France (24%), while the lowest performance was recorded among the citizens of Greece (1%), Lithuania (2%), Latvia (3%), Croatia (3%), Portugal (4%) Romania (4%), Bulgaria (5%), and Cyprus (5%).

At the supranational level, climate change ranked first among the citizens of Sweden (53%), Denmark (48%), Finland (40%) and France (29%). In addition to Germany (28%), among the people of the Netherlands (42%), Belgium (28%) and Austria (20%) took the 2nd place, while in Luxembourg (24%), Ireland (23%), Estonia (16%), and Slovenia (15%) were the 3rd. The lowest performance was in Greece (3%), which was the only one with less than 5%, and in the range of 5-10% in Bulgaria (7%), Cyprus (7%), and the Czech Republic (9%). The environment was not ranked first or second in any country, but was ranked third in Denmark (24%), Sweden (22%), France (22%), and Malta (17%).

Separately, in Germany, citizens identified three main concerns: environment, climate, energy issues (31%), immigration (29%), and housing (21%). Among the topics at the supranational level, immigration (37%), climate change (28%), and member states' public finances (20%) were in the lead. The environment was only in the 4th place (19%)³³¹. The high position of immigration in Germany was quite logical. According to the 2018 report of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, Germany remained the most popular country in the EU for migrants³³².

³³⁰ Special Eurobarometer 415: Europeans in 2014. Brussels: Kantar, 2014. P. 33, 35, 36, 37.

³³¹ Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 8, 14.

³³² 2019 Migration Report...P. 12-13.

As a result, a set of trends could also be identified in 2019. The priority of the global problem of climate change over other environmental problems among citizens was preserved and significantly increased. General concern for the environment (both global climate change and the state of the environment) had growth both in the EU as a whole and in Germany in particular. Moreover, in Germany, it was still higher than the average for the European Union³³³. Taken together, the priority of environmental issues in the same countries could be noted. They also featured in the 2019 EU Eco-Innovation Index dedicated to efficiency. The leaders were Luxembourg, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK)³³⁴.

In fact, based on the geographic classification of sub-regions in Europe, according to the United Nations Geoscheme, the most concerned countries were in two regions: Western Europe (Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France and, to a lesser extent, Austria) and Northern Europe (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and, to a lesser extent, Ireland and Estonia). From Southern Europe, only Malta was closest to this list. In turn, less interest was predominantly present among the states of Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as some countries in Northern Europe (Latvia and Lithuania). In many ways, this differentiation was associated with some disproportion in the economic development of the EU member states. This was also confirmed by the higher percentage of commitment to environmental ideas among the eurozone member states than those who were not members of it. Climate change in 2019, for example, ranked the 2nd-3rd (22%) among the eurozone states and only the 3rd-4th (16%) outside of it. The exception was the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Sweden, which were not part of the eurozone, yet not because they did not meet the convergence criteria³³⁵.

Moreover, according to the First results of the European Parliament post-electoral survey in 2019, among the issues that, from the point of view of citizens, could be changed by voting, combating climate change and protecting the environment were in the first place (25%). Whereas among the issues that influenced the voting choice, this category shared the 2nd place (37%) with promoting human rights and democracy, losing to the economy and growth (44%). Among countries, the highest priority to the topic was given in Denmark (70%), Sweden (68%), the Netherlands (62%), Germany (51%), Luxembourg (50%), Finland (50%, together with the promoting human rights and democracy), Austria (49%) and France (46%). As a result, these were again the states from Western and Northern Europe³³⁶.

³³³ Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 8, 14.

³³⁴ EU Eco-Innovation Index 2019 [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/sites/default/files/eio_brief_eu_eco-innovation_index_2019.pdf (accessed 04.04.2022).

³³⁵ Special Eurobarometer 415...P. 33, 36; Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 8, 14; Ranking of countries by GDP (PPP) per capita [Electronic resource] // The World Bank. Available at: <https://nonews.co/directory/lists/countries/gdp-per-capita-ppp> (accessed 06.04.2022).

³³⁶ The 2019 European...P. 13, 17-18.

However, there were also some errors. Thus, a survey on party preferences from Ipsos MORI among citizens of 11 EU member states (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, France, the Czech Republic) made a splitting of the categories “environmental protection” and “fight against climate change” into sub-topics and separately assessed their significance for citizens: protect the environment, animals and nature (82%), creating sustainable agriculture (81%), reducing air pollution (80%), tackling global warming (77%) and protecting against extreme weather events (68%). At the same time, German citizens’ performance on the global problem of climate change was below average. In aggregate, for all environmental categories, the country had the following results: protect the environment, animals and nature (82%), make out agriculture sustainable (78%), reduce air pollution (77%), tackle global warming (77%), and protect against extreme weather events (65%). However, the comparison with the average data for the EU could only be very conditional because many member states (including those whose citizens are the least environmentally oriented) were not represented in the survey. In addition, the term “global warming” was used instead of global “climate change,” which was very common in public discourse³³⁷. Based on the materials of EurActive, it can be assumed that the significance of the global problem of climate change was also based not so much on its perception as an exceptional priority but on the high level its of popularization in the mass media and EU institutions against the background of other, already familiar environmental areas³³⁸. Tagesschau, for example, in the title of its article, called the global problem of climate change “the most important topic.”³³⁹. However, in reality, the survey was conducted under the broader theme of “protection of the environment and climate,” which can be equated to all environmental issues. This was specified only in the text itself³⁴⁰.

However, there were polls that directly confirmed the dominance of the global problem of climate change, e.g., the Eurobarometer Survey 92.2, which was conducted in autumn 2019, a few months after the European elections, and showed the priority for Europeans of climate change (52%) over other environmental issues, followed by air pollution (35%), marine pollution (31%), etc. Separately, in Germany, climate change also ranked first (56%)³⁴¹.

In both 2019 and 2021, national Statista polls in Germany showed that, shortly before the elections, a set of environmental issues (environment, climate and the energy turnaround) came to the

³³⁷ 2019 European Parliament Elections Study of Potential Voters [Electronic resource] // Ipsos MORI. 2019. Available at: https://europeanclimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/European-Parliament-Study_Media_EU.pdf (accessed 04.04.2022).

³³⁸ *Simon F.* Climate change will be key issue in EU elections, poll shows [Electronic resource] // EurActiv. 16.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/news/climate-will-be-key-issue-in-eu-elections-poll-shows/> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³³⁹ Klimaschutz ist das wichtigste Thema [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 16.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/deutschlandtrend/europatrend-101.html> (accessed 12.04.2022).

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ Eurobarometer Survey 92.2. of the European Parliament: Parlemeter 2019: Heeding the call beyond the vote. A stronger parliament to listen to citizens voices. Brussels: Kantar, 2019. P. 46-47.

fore, with gradual growth occurring approximately from the second half of 2018. In the future, only the coronavirus pandemic was able to overtake environmental problems and lead for a long time, although it lost the lead before the 2021 elections. Additionally, in March and September 2020, the migration complex of topics (foreigners, integration, refugees) dominated³⁴², which could be linked to both the national Skilled Immigration Act and the European New Pact on Migration and Asylum³⁴³.

More detailed data for Germany were given by the Infratest dimap in Tagesschau.

In 2014, environmental protection ranked only the 5th (20%) among the topics that determine the choice. It lost out to social security (48%), peacekeeping (42%), a stable currency (29%), and economic growth (24%), but overtook immigration (13%)³⁴⁴.

In 2017, environmental protection was not included in the list of key topics, which was composed of topics such as school and educational policy (64%), fight against terrorism (59%), good guarantees in old age (57%), and refugee immigration (27%)³⁴⁵.

In 2019, the category for environmental protection expanded to include a component related to the global problem of climate change, becoming “protection of the climate and the environment.”³⁴⁶. Moreover, it took first place (48%), ahead of social security (43%), peacekeeping (35%), and immigration (25%). This was 28% more than in 2014³⁴⁷.

However, in 2021 there was a decline again. Environment and climate ranked the 2nd (22%), behind social security (28%), economics and labor (22%), and living with the COVID-19 (7%)³⁴⁸. Such tendencies could be evidence of a more serious attitude of citizens towards pressing everyday problems at the national level elections. Whereas more abstract issues that are better addressed at the supranational and international level, such as fight against the global problem of climate change, are more relevant for the European elections.

Another indicator of the growth of environmental interest was the attitude towards the greens, as well as the competence of all political parties concerning environmental protection and fight against the global problem of climate change.

³⁴² Was ist Ihrer...

³⁴³ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 143; Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz [Electronic resource] // Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge: [official website]. 01.03.2020. Available at: <https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Meldungen/DE/2020/20200301-am-fachkraefteeinwanderungsgesetz.html?nn=282388> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³⁴⁴ Europawahl 2014. Wahlentscheidende Themen [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 25.05.2014. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2014-05-25-EP-DE/wahlentscheidende-themen.shtml> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³⁴⁵ Bundestagswahl 2017. Umfragen wahlentscheidende...

³⁴⁶ Europawahl 2019. Umfragen wahlentscheidende Themen [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 26.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2019-05-26-EP-DE/umfrage-wahlentscheidend.shtml> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Bundestagswahl 2021. Welche Themen entschieden die Wahl? [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 26.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2021-09-26-BT-DE/umfrage-wahlentscheidend.shtml> (accessed 05.04.2022).

In 2014, in Germany, the Alliance 90/The Greens was not recognized as particularly competent in any area. The best indicator was achieved on social justice (4%). The environment and climate were not included in the core competencies of other major parties, either³⁴⁹.

In 2017, already 56% of voters thought that they were more knowledgeable in protecting the environment. For comparison, the closest thematic pursuer was family policy (7%)³⁵⁰. The indicators in the environmental competence of the largest players, the CDU/CSU and the SPD, were 18% and 10%, respectively³⁵¹. Here it is worth clarifying that despite the growth in this area, the agenda itself was not a priority.

Meanwhile, in 2019 the attitude changed, but the competence of the Greens remained high – 56%. This time, the closest pursuer was immigration and refugee policy (12%). Among the competent parties, the CDU/CSU (14%) and the SPD (5%) were the closest pursuers. In turn, 88% of the Alliance 90/The Greens voters determined that this particular topic was the key one for them when choosing³⁵².

In 2021, the main competence was preserved – 48%, however, this was 8% less than in 2017. Family policy (19%) remained the closest pursuer³⁵³. For comparison, the SPD figure was 13%, and the CDU/CSU – 12%. Thus, these two parties switched places³⁵⁴. The indicator of environment and climate as a leading topic for voters of the Alliance 90/The Greens decreased to 82%³⁵⁵. As a result, the difference in the attitudes of citizens towards the same topic in European and national elections is also indicative here.

Comparing 2019 and 2021 as the defining theme for the voters of other parties, the dynamics was relatively stable. The closest pursuer was the Left (48% in 2019, 32% in 2021), followed by the SPD (47% in 2019, 18% in 2021). Further, there were changes, as those that in 2019, this was followed by the CDU/CSU (41%), the AfD (20%) and the FDP (19%). In turn, in 2021 these were the FDP (11%), the CDU/CSU (8%) and the AfD (–)³⁵⁶.

Therefore, a set of trends can be immediately observed. First of all, from 2014 to 2019 and from 2017 to 2021 there was a gradual increase in the interest of citizens in environmental problems and in the environmental orientation of parties. Moreover, it was with some emphasis on the supranational

³⁴⁹ Europawahl 2014. Kompetenzen.

³⁵⁰ Bundestagswahl 2017. Umfragen zu den Grünen [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 24.09.2017. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2017-09-24-BT-DE/umfrage-gruene.shtml> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³⁵¹ Bundestagswahl 2021. Wem trauen Wählende gute Lösungen zu? [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 26.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2021-09-26-BT-DE/umfrage-kompetenzen.shtml> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³⁵² Europawahl 2019. Umfragen Kompetenzen [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 25.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2019-05-26-EP-DE/umfrage-kompetenz.shtml> (accessed 07.01.2023); Europawahl 2019. Umfragen wahlentscheidende...; Europawahl 2019. Umfragen zu...

³⁵³ Bundestagswahl 2021. Wer wählte die Grünen - und warum? [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 26.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wahl/archiv/2021-09-26-BT-DE/umfrage-gruene.shtml> (accessed 05.04.2022).

³⁵⁴ Bundestagswahl 2021. Wem...

³⁵⁵ Bundestagswahl 2021. Welche...

³⁵⁶ Europawahl 2019. Umfragen wahlentscheidende...; Bundestagswahl 2021. Welche...

level. This can be explained both by a more favorable solution of these global issues at the European or even international levels, and by a lesser significance of the European elections and the willingness to vote for topics that were not the most pressing at the everyday level. In addition, accompanied by historical transformations and additional replication in the mass media, the global problem of climate change remained a priority compared to other environmental (but not limited by that) areas in the perception of citizens, continuing to gain in popularity.

1.3. Features of the Functioning of Political Parties and the Conduct of Election Campaigns at the Supranational and National Levels (Cases of the European Parliament and the Bundestag)

This section describes the evolution and essence of transnational parties, as well as their relationship with political groups of the European Parliament. In addition, the author analyzes the regulations for the functioning of transnational parties and two-level party participation (a case of Germany) in the European elections. Finally, the evolution and participation of German national parties in the Bundestag election campaigns, the rules of these elections and the formation of federal parliament factions are considered.

According to the established tradition, political parties at European level (or transnational/supranational) are formed on the basis of ideologically close national member parties. The main and most influential supranational associations include the European People's Party, the Party of European Socialists, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, the European Democratic Party, the European Green Party, the European Free Alliance, the European Conservatives and Reformists Party (until 2016 named as the Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists; until 2019 named as the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe), the Identity and Democracy Party (until 2014 named as the European Alliance for Freedom; until 2019 named as the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom) and the Party of the European Left³⁵⁷.

They are not analogous to the political groups that they form, despite the similarity of names or even their identity in some cases. In addition, several parties often create one political group. For example, The European Green Party and the European Free Alliance traditionally form the Greens/European Free Alliance, so do the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe and the European Democratic Party form the Renew Europe (until 2019 named as the Alliance of Liberals and

³⁵⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 206; AECR to change its name to ACRE [Electronic resource] // European Conservatives and Reformists Party: [official website]. 06.10.2016. Available at: https://www.ecrparty.eu/article/aecr_to_change_its_name_to_acre (accessed 13.04.2022); Bylaws of the European Conservatives and Reformists Party [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 2019. Available at: http://www.epgencms.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/upload/0da6bde0-d2d0-4642-8985-8dd06b2852e6/2019_06_27_ECR_Party_Statutes.pdf (accessed 13.04.2022); We Changed Our Name! [Electronic resource] // Identity and Democracy Party: [official website]. Available at: https://www.id-party.eu/new_name (accessed 13.04.2022).

Democrats for Europe group). The European People's Party is in the group of the same name, the Party of European Socialists is in the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, the European Conservatives and Reformists Party is in the European Conservatives and Reformists (with a small participation of the European Christian Political Movement), the Identity and Democracy Party is in the Identity and Democracy (until 2019 named as the Europe of Nations and Freedom), and the Party of the European Left is in the Left in the European Parliament – GUE/NGL (until 2021 named as the European United Left/Nordic Green Left)³⁵⁸. This is mainly due to the condition for the formation of a political group, which requires a certain diversity of composition, consisting of “at least 25 MEPs, elected in at least one-quarter of the member states.”³⁵⁹.

However, not all associations that identify themselves as transnational parties (e.g., the European Pirate Party, the Volt Europa, etc.) have official recognition in the EU³⁶⁰. Additionally, parties that do not have a supranational affiliation can join these groups. For instance, The Ecological Democratic Party is a member of the Greens/European Free Alliance. However, in all cases, this usually represents a minimum representation of 1-2 deputies for members of less influential transnational parties (excluding the main ones listed above) and German national parties without supranational affiliation³⁶¹.

It is necessary to separately dwell on the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (until 2014 named as the Europe of Freedom and Democracy) and its transnational party, the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe (2014-2017)³⁶². This mention is necessary because it was the only political group that has ceased to exist in the European Parliament since the end of the 2014-2019 convocation. From 2019 to 2024, its traces are practically non-existent. Most of the national parties that formed the group either did not cross the threshold (e.g., the Freedomites in Czech – until 2019 named as the Party of Free Citizens³⁶³), or remained among the non-inscrits (e.g., one of the most represented in 2014-2019 the Five Star Movement).

However, another trend can be traced, which was the gravitation of its former participants towards either moderate Eurosceptics or far-right populists. Thus, the Sweden Democrats joined the European Conservatives and Reformists³⁶⁴, and the Alternative for Germany (which only partly joined

³⁵⁸ European Union. Group...

³⁵⁹ Comparative tool; What are the requirements to form a political group? [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20190528BKG53306/faq-about-the-transition-from-the-8th-to-the-9th-european-parliament/11/what-are-the-requirements-to-form-a-political-group> (accessed 08.04.2022).

³⁶⁰ *Guseletov B.P.* The New European Parties without...P. 64, 67.

³⁶¹ Comparative tool.

³⁶² Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe [Electronic resource] // Crossroads Bank for Enterprises. Available at: <https://kbopub.economie.fgov.be/kbopub/toonondernemingsps.html?lang=en&ondernemingsnummer=0563463496> (accessed 09.04.2022).

³⁶³ Strana svobodných občanů se přejmenovala, používá jen název Svobodní [Electronic resource] // Svobodní: [official website]. 30.01.2019. Available at: <https://www.svobodni.cz/aktuality/strana-svobodnych-obcanu-se-prejmenovala-pouziva-jen-nazev-svobodni/> (accessed 07.01.2023).

³⁶⁴ Comparative tool.

the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy only in 2016) acceded to the Identity and Democracy. Turning to the earlier history of the Europe for Freedom and Democracy (2009-2014), its composition had a significantly different list of parties from the 2014-2019 convocation of the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy³⁶⁵. However, the trend is the same. So, for example, the Dutch Reformed Political Party, according to the results of the elections for the 2014-2019 and 2019-2024 convocations, joined the European Conservatives and Reformists, and the Danish People's Party or the Finns Party also acceded to the European Conservatives and Reformists following the results of 2014-2019, and for the 2019-2024 convocation joined the Identity and Democracy. There are several explanations for this³⁶⁶. First of all, the Reformed Political Party is a member of the transnational European Christian Political Movement, which traditionally aligns with the European Conservatives and Reformists³⁶⁷. Whereas, the far-right Europe of Nations and Freedom only emerged in 2015³⁶⁸, after the elections, due to an initially unsuccessful attempt to fulfill the necessary condition for creating a group³⁶⁹.

The situation with the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe was similar. As with its Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy, the UK Independence Party formed the basis. A split occurred in the latter, and its former leader N. Farage left the party (including due to far-right sentiments within it) and created the Brexit Party. The latter, according to the results of the elections to the convocation of 2019-2024, remained among the non-inscrits. In turn, the less influential parties of the group remained in line with Eurosceptic rhetoric. So, for example, back in 2019, the Sweden Democrats joined both the European Conservatives and Reformists and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe³⁷⁰. Finally, in 2016, the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe itself was exposed to misuse of funds, and it ceased to exist³⁷¹.

Historically, such emergencies, associations, separations and disappearances are quite traditional for parties and groups. The evolution of transnational parties is closely related to the process of European integration in general, as well as the development of the European Parliament (formerly the General Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, and then the European Parliamentary Assembly),

³⁶⁵ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current Environmental Agenda of the Alternative for Germany // Administrative Consulting. 2022. №4 (160). P. 149-150.

³⁶⁶ Comparative tool.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*; Our members and...

³⁶⁸ *Rettman A.* Far-right parties form group in EU parliament [Electronic resource] // EUobserver. 15.06.2015. Available at: <https://euobserver.com/political/129129> (accessed 08.04.2022).

³⁶⁹ *Willsher K., Traynor I.* Marine Le Pen fails to form far-right bloc in European parliament [Electronic resource] // The Guardian. 24.06.2014. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/24/marine-le-pen-fails-form-far-right-bloc-european-parliament> (accessed 08.04.2022).

³⁷⁰ ACRE Member EU Parties List [Electronic resource] // Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe: [official website]. 2019. Available at: http://www.epgencms.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/upload/e354d1f4-813c-4e92-9645-6ef70b22bf50/2019_06_26_ACRE_List_of_Member_Parties.pdf (accessed 14.07.2022).

³⁷¹ *Rankin J.* Defunct Eurosceptic party...

in particular³⁷². First of all, the number of its members gradually increased. If in 1952 it was 78 parliamentarians, then after the first direct elections in 1979 it reached 410 people³⁷³. Finally, after a series of further transformations in 2014 and 2019, there were 751 deputies³⁷⁴. This number was also fixed by the Treaty of Lisbon³⁷⁵. Then it dropped to 705 due to the UK leaving the European Union (Brexit).

At the same time, the political spectrum of the European Parliament was also expanding. In 1953, it had only three political groups: the Socialist Group, the Christian Democratic Group, and the Group of Liberals and Allies³⁷⁶. Of the existing ones, later they were joined by the Group of Communists and Allies and the European Conservatives in 1973³⁷⁷. As a result of the 2019 elections, 7 political groups were formed (excluding non-inscripts ones), while in 2014 there were 8, including the already mentioned Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy³⁷⁸.

In 2023, the Socialist Group exists as the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, the Christian Democratic Group as the European People's Party, the Liberal and Allies Group as the Renew Europe, and the Group of Communists and Allies as the Left in the European Parliament – GUE/NGL. The European Conservatives, formed mainly by the British Conservative Party³⁷⁹, was later called the European Democratic Group, and in 1992 joined the Christian democrats³⁸⁰. However, this cooperation was not long, and in 2009, under the influence of the Conservative Party of Great Britain and personally J. Cameron, the European Conservatives and Reformists was founded³⁸¹.

In addition to the already mentioned Identity and Democracy (the Europe of Nations and Freedom), whose traces can also be found in earlier convocations (e.g., in the Union for Europe of the Nations in 1999-2004 and in 2004-2009), another modern political group is the Greens/European Free Alliance. It has been operating under its current name since 1999, although cooperation between regionalists and greens began as early as 1984 in the Rainbow Group³⁸². In turn, regionalists joined the

³⁷² The European Parliament: Historical background [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/11/the-european-parliament-historical-background> (accessed 13.04.2022).

³⁷³ Comparative tool; History of the European Parliament (EP) [Electronic resource] // University of Nicosia Library & Information Centre. Available at: <https://www.library.unic.ac.cy/history-european-parliament-ep> (accessed 02.02.2020).

³⁷⁴ Comparative tool.

³⁷⁵ *Guseletov B.P.* Trans European Political Parties in...P.11.

³⁷⁶ The ECSC Common...

³⁷⁷ *Building Parliament: 50 Years of European Parliament History: 1958-2008* / Y. Mény, ed. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2009. P. 53.

³⁷⁸ Comparative tool.

³⁷⁹ Members of the European Parliament [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/home> (accessed 26.01.2023).

³⁸⁰ *Building Parliament: 50...P. 303.*

³⁸¹ *Mulholland H.* Tories unveil group of controversial new allies in European parliament [Electronic resource] // The Guardian. 22.06.2009. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2009/jun/22/conservatives-new-eu-group> (accessed 10.04.2022).

³⁸² We are Changemakers [Electronic resource] // The Greens/EFA in the European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/who-we-are/our-group> (accessed 10.04.2022).

Group for the Technical Coordination and Defence of Independent Groups and Members in 1979³⁸³. From 1989 to 1999, the two political forces existed separately. The greens managed to create an independent group twice in a row (the Green Group in the European Parliament), while regionalists first remained in the Rainbow Group (1989-1994), and then took part in the formation of the European Radical Alliance (1994-1999)³⁸⁴. Ultimately, regionalists achieved the most favorable coexistence precisely in tandem with the greens, which allowed them to be a part of the group that gradually increased its influence³⁸⁵.

Accordingly, in parallel with the development of the political groups of the European Parliament and the expansion of their ideological spectrum, transnational parties and their predecessors in the form of transnational federations/confederations also developed. Thus, among the first, in 1974 the Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community (now the Party of European Socialists) was created, in 1976 the Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties of the European Community (now the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) and the European People's Party (on that stage party in name only)³⁸⁶. Turning to the earlier history, outside of European integration, associations such as the First International, which appeared in 1864, and others, can be attributed to the predecessors. However, in many ways, the emergence of transnational parties in the 1970s was due to the need for additional coordination in connection with the prospect of holding the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979³⁸⁷.

From a legal point of view, according to Art. 138a of the Maastricht Treaty, “political parties at European level are important as a factor for integration within the Union. They contribute to forming a European awareness and to expressing the political will of the citizens of the Union.”³⁸⁸. In fact, the development of a supranational party system can also be seen as one of the tools to eliminate the so-called “democratic deficit.”³⁸⁹

Since 2004, transnational parties have the right to be funded from the budget of the European Union, which has led to the emergence of parties with different ideological orientations, such as the European Green Party, based on the European Federation of Green Parties³⁹⁰. In 2007, party-linked

³⁸³ Our History [Electronic resource] // European Free Alliance: [official website]. Available at: <https://e-f-a.org/our-history/> (accessed 10.04.2022).

³⁸⁴ Building Parliament: 50...P. 55, 303.

³⁸⁵ *Eremina N.V.* Ethno-Regional Parties in...P. 309.

³⁸⁶ *Pridman G., Pridman P.* The New European...P. 63.

³⁸⁷ *Zaslavskaya N.G.* Formation of Transnational Parties in the Context of Regional Integration // Policy development, state and the world order: proceedings of the VIII All-Russian Congress of political scientists, Moscow, December 6-8, 2018 / O.V. Gaman-Golytvina, L.V. Smorgunov, L.N. Tomofeeva, eds. Moscow: Publishing House «Aspect Press», 2018. P. 203; *Hix S.* The Party of...P. 204.

³⁸⁸ Treaty on European...Art. 138a.

³⁸⁹ *Norman L., Wolfs W.* Is the Governance...P. 463-464.

³⁹⁰ Statute and funding of European political parties under Regulation 1141/2014: Ex-post evaluation [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 2021. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/662646/EPRS_STU\(2021\)662646_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/662646/EPRS_STU(2021)662646_EN.pdf) (accessed 10.04.2022).

foundations were also made eligible for financial assistance. Finally, in 2014, it was decided to create the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations for control, sanctions, and registration of parties, which was established in 2017. There are also a set of criteria for registering such a party: (1) being located (as a legal entity) in one of the EU member states, (2) a) representing national member parties, at least in ¼ of member states parliaments (either as members of the national delegation of the European Parliament or in national/regional parliaments or assemblies); or b) achieving at least 3% of the votes in the European Parliament elections in ¼ of the member states; (3) not participating in in other transnational parties, (4) observing European values (human rights, democracy, etc.), (5) participating (or intending to participate) in the European elections, and (6) not pursuing commercial interests³⁹¹.

In addition, since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, transnational parties have gained additional importance. Now, according to Art. 9D (7), the appointment of the President of the European Commission takes place “taking into account the elections to the European Parliament.”³⁹². Combined with the heated discussion about the future of European integration³⁹³ and the prospect of increased competition³⁹⁴, this has become an incentive to start a debate between the lead candidates (Spitzenkandidaten) from these parties for the Presidency of the European Commission. The first such debates took place on the eve of the next elections in 2014 after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, and then the tradition was continued in 2019³⁹⁵. However, M. Weber, as the original candidate for the President of the European Commission from the European People's Party, was not eventually appointed. His candidacy did not suit the European Council, where the key opponent of the appointment of a little-known, insufficiently experienced politician with a questionable reputation was E. Macron³⁹⁶. As a result, this incident could have an adverse effect on the vote of citizens in 2024, as it will be harder to convince them that not only the distribution of seats in parliament, but also one of the leading positions of the EU depends on their choice.

According to the regulations, only one candidate from each transnational party could take part in the debate. Each party had to be recognized by the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations and represented in one of the officially recognized political groups of the European Parliament of the previous convocation. Moreover, each group could nominate only one candidate³⁹⁷. In

³⁹¹ *Zaslavskaya N.G.* Role of Integration Processes in...P. 61-62; Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations // Official Journal of the European Union. 2014. L317. Preamble, Art. 3.

³⁹² Treaty of Lisbon. Art. 9 D (7).

³⁹³ *Kaveshnikov N.Yu.* Transformation of Party and Political Space of the European Union and Its Influence...P. 164.

³⁹⁴ *Shweitzer V.Y.* European Parliament Elections: Summing Up // Analytical papers of the Institute of Europe RAS. №20 (№171). Available at: <http://www.instituteofeurope.ru/images/uploads/analitika/2019/an171.pdf> (accessed 10.01.2019).

³⁹⁵ Lead candidates and...

³⁹⁶ *Strezhneva M.V.* The Influence of the European Elections on...P. 31-32.

³⁹⁷ Lead candidates and...

the 2014 debate, representatives of the European People's Party, the Party of European Socialists, the European Green Party, the Party of the European Left, and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe spoke. In 2019, a representative of the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe joined them³⁹⁸. These were statistically the largest parties in almost every political group of previous convocations (even if there are several influential ones), except for the European Conservatives and Reformists and the Europe for Freedom and Democracy in 2014, as well as the Europe of Nations and Freedom and the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy in 2019³⁹⁹. It is worth noting that, as already mentioned above, the European Parliament now also takes a direct part in approving the candidacy of the European Council⁴⁰⁰.

Taken together, such a relationship between elections to the European Parliament and appointments to the European Commission, in theory, should increase the interest of citizens. It is understood that now they vote not only for members of parliament, but also for a candidate for one of the key positions of the EU. Another stimulating fact is the regulation of lawmaking in the EU. So, in accordance with Art. 192 (1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, not only the Council, but also the European Parliament are involved in the decision-making process (including on climate issues) in areas covered by the “ordinary legislative procedure.”⁴⁰¹ A similar tradition in European law did not develop immediately. For comparison, in Germany, the Bundestag, on the contrary, is historically the most involved institution in decision-making⁴⁰².

In addition, transnational parties conduct electoral campaigns for the European elections and also work closely with members of the European Commission. It is worth emphasizing the supranational nature of the European Commission activities, in contrast to the European Parliament, which represents the people and the member states of the Council. In addition to participating in the formation of political groups, parties contribute to the coordination of national members outside the European Parliament, including at the time of the formation of new groups, as well as with national members who did not convene. This is also important because of the formation of the composition of the directly transnational party from ideologically close national parties (mainly from the EU states, as well as other European states and, in some cases, other countries), and individual members⁴⁰³.

Germany has participated in the European elections since they were first held in 1979. In 1979, 1984 and 1989, the country was represented by 81 deputies. In 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009 the country

³⁹⁸ Debate of the...; Eurovision Debate.

³⁹⁹ European Union. Group/Europarty...

⁴⁰⁰ Elections and appointments for EU institutions [Electronic resource] // European Union: [official website]. Available at: https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/leadership/elections-and-appointments_en (accessed 13.04.2022).

⁴⁰¹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 125.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.* P. 127-128.

⁴⁰³ *Guseletov B.P.* Trans European Political Parties in...P. 14-15, 18.

had 99 MEPs (members of the European Parliament)⁴⁰⁴. The unification of West and East Germany and the redistribution of seats after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which fixed the total number of parliament as 751 MEPs, had an impact on the size of the country's delegation⁴⁰⁵. As a result, the country still has the largest delegation, which since 2014 has consisted of 96 out of 705 MEPs of the European Parliament (before the United Kingdom left the EU – 751). In comparison, France has 79 out of 705 (74 out of 751) MEPs, Italy 76 has out of 705 (73 out of 751) MEPs, while Malta has 6 out of 705/751 MEPs, Luxembourg has 6 out of 705/751, and Cyprus has 6 out of 705/751 MEPs. The number of seats for each country depends on its population and is determined in accordance with the method of decreasing proportionality. This means that the larger the country, the more seats it has. However, this also means that the smaller the country, the smaller the number of people represented by one deputy⁴⁰⁶.

At the same time, all members of the European Parliament are elected for a 5-year term⁴⁰⁷, and the minimum age of voters varies from country to country. In both the 2014 and 2019 elections, the minimum voting age was 18 in Germany, Austria, the United Kingdom, Hungary, Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, France, Croatia, Sweden, and Estonia. In Belgium, Bulgaria, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Estonia it was 21 years, whereas in Romania it was 23 years, and in Greece and Italy it was 25 years⁴⁰⁸. The remaining requirements for voters in the elections to the European Parliament in Germany are in general similar to the national ones, which will be discussed in more detail below. In addition, EU citizens residing in Germany also have the right to vote in their place of residence⁴⁰⁹.

The dates of the elections varied between countries. In 2014, the election period was from May 22nd to May 25th, while in 2019 it was from May 23rd to May 26th. In both 2014 and 2019, Germany, as well as several other countries including Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Finland, and Estonia, did not have a minimum threshold. However, in Cyprus the minimum threshold was 1.8%, in Greece it was 3%, Austria, Italy and Sweden had it 4%, and in Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, and France it was 5%⁴¹⁰. In addition, in Germany's elections to the European Parliament, voters were allowed to cast only one vote for the electoral list of a party or other political association. Moreover, parties themselves had the right to choose whether it will be a single list

⁴⁰⁴ Comparative tool.

⁴⁰⁵ The European Parliament: Historical...

⁴⁰⁶ Redistribution of seats in the European Parliament after Brexit [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20200130IPR71407/redistribution-of-seats-in-the-european-parliament-after-brexit> (accessed 08.04.2022).

⁴⁰⁷ Members of the...

⁴⁰⁸ 2019 European elections...; 2014 European elections...

⁴⁰⁹ Das Wahlrecht zur Europawahl [Electronic resource] // Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: Baden-Württemberg. 2021. Available at: <https://www.europawahl-bw.de/wahlrecht> (accessed 11.04.2022).

⁴¹⁰ 2014 European elections...; 2019 European elections...

for the entire country or different for each federal state. In turn, independent candidates could not apply for elections⁴¹¹. The regulations of other EU member states allow independent candidates to pass to the European Parliament⁴¹². Moreover, a deputy who left his national party during the parliamentary term can also remain in the parliament (e.g., J. Meuthen, ex-co-chairman of the AfD), becoming independent. The possibility of changing the political group, the national party or the transition to the non-inscrits is also assumed⁴¹³.

Turnout in European elections has historically never been very high. For comparison, in Germany it was 48.1% in 2014 and 61.38% in 2019, while the average figures for the European Union for the same years were 42.61% and 50.66%, respectively.

Among all member states, in 2014, the highest turnout was observed in Belgium (89.64%), Luxembourg (85.55%), and Malta (74.8%), while the lowest was in Slovakia (13.05%), the Czech Republic (18.2%), and Poland (23.83%). In 2019, the highest turnout was again in Belgium (88.47%), Luxembourg (84.24%), and Malta (72.7%), whereas the lowest was in Slovakia (22.74%), the Czech Republic (28.72%), and Slovenia (28.89%)⁴¹⁴. It should be noted that in 2019, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Luxembourg, and Cyprus had mandatory voting⁴¹⁵. In 2014, the list was identical, except for the addition of Bulgaria⁴¹⁶. However, compulsory voting was not a guarantee of high turnout, because in addition to the high indicators of Belgium and Luxembourg, as mentioned above, only Cyprus increased from 2014 to 2019 (from 43.97% to 44.99%). In Bulgaria (from 35.84% to 32.64%) and Greece (from 59.97% to 58.69%), on the contrary, it decreased⁴¹⁷. Finally, in addition to direct personal participation in elections in Germany, postal voting is also possible⁴¹⁸.

Evaluating party representation of Germany in the European Parliament, it has a fairly wide list of parties, including the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria, the Free Democratic Party of Germany, the Alliance 90/The Greens, the Left, as well as the Alternative for Germany. Minor parties regularly enter the European Parliament (e.g., the Free Voters, the Ecological Democratic Party, the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, the Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative, the Human Environment Animal Protection Party, the Family Party, etc.)⁴¹⁹.

⁴¹¹ Wahlrecht [Electronic resource] // Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung: Baden-Württemberg. 2021. Available at: <https://www.bundestagswahl-bw.de/wahlrecht-btw#c31577> (accessed 11.04.2022); Das Wahlrecht zur...

⁴¹² Independent Candidates in National and European Elections [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 15.04.2013. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL-AFCO_ET\(2013\)493008](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL-AFCO_ET(2013)493008) (accessed 11.04.2022).

⁴¹³ Jörg Meuthen [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/190518/JORG_MEUTHEN/home (accessed 11.04.2022).

⁴¹⁴ Turnout by year...

⁴¹⁵ 2019 European elections...

⁴¹⁶ 2014 European elections...

⁴¹⁷ Turnout by year...

⁴¹⁸ Das Wahlrecht zur...

⁴¹⁹ Comparative tool.

Some of these parties are members of transnational parties, namely the Social Democratic Party of Germany is a member of the Party of European Socialists the Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria of the European People's Party, the Free Democratic Party is a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, the Alliance 90/The Greens is in the European Green Party, and the Left is a part of the Party of the European Left⁴²⁰. Of the most influential parties in Germany, only the Alternative for Germany does not have such a membership. However, despite the position stated in the AfD policy documents that these “parties are not parties according to German law,” it closely cooperates with the Identity and Democracy Party within the framework of a common political group⁴²¹. Of the minor parties, the South Schleswig Voters' Association is included in the European Free Alliance, the Free Voters in the European Democratic Party, and the Family Party in the European Christian Political Movement, among others⁴²².

At the national level, since German reunification on October 3, 1990, the Bundestag was formed from a relatively small list of parties based on the results of all federal parliamentary elections (1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017, and 2021). These parties were the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria, the Free Democratic Party of Germany, the Alliance 90/The Greens (until 1993 known as the Alliance 90 and the Greens) and the Left (prior to the 2007 merger between the Party of Democratic Socialism and the Labour and Social Justice – The Electoral Alternative)⁴²³. The first exception to this trend was the Alternative for Germany, which was founded in 2013 and first entered the parliament in 2017⁴²⁴. In 2021, the South Schleswig Voters' Association also joined, becoming the only minor party represented in the Bundestag. Moreover, it already joined to it, but at a much earlier historical stage (1949-1953)⁴²⁵. At the same time, the number of parties admitted and participating in the elections was significantly higher. So, in 2017, 42 parties (out of 48 admitted) participated⁴²⁶, and in 2021 it was 47 (out of 54 admitted)⁴²⁷.

⁴²⁰ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 130.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*; Unser Programm für...

⁴²² About us; Member Parties [Electronic resource] // European Free Alliance: [official website]. Available at: <https://e-f-a.org/member-parties/> (accessed 09.04.2022).

⁴²³ Alliance 90/The Greens [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation; Auf dem Weg...; Bundestagswahlergebnisse seit 1949 – Zweitstimmen [Electronic resource] // Deutscher Bundestag: [official website]. Available at: https://www.bundestag.de/parlament/wahlen/ergebnisse_seit1949-244692 (accessed 06.06.2022).

⁴²⁴ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 148-150.

⁴²⁵ *Renke D.* Nach 70 Jahren wieder im Bundestag [Electronic resource] // Der Tagesspiegel. 27.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/suedschleswigscher-waehlerverband-holt-mandat-nach-70-jahren-wieder-im-bundestag/27654418.html> (accessed 07.04.2022).

⁴²⁶ 42 Parteien nehmen an der Bundestagswahl teil [Electronic resource] // Deutscher Bundestag: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2017/kw32-bundeswahlausschuss-513874> (accessed 07.04. 2022).

⁴²⁷ Bundestagswahl 2021: Diese 47 Parteien treten zur Wahl an [Electronic resource] // RTL News. 26.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.rtl.de/cms/bundestagswahl-diese-47-parteien-koennen-sie-neben-cdu-spd-co-heute-waehlen-4818626.html> (accessed 07.04.2022).

At the subnational level, the situation is not much different, although it is slightly more variable. Mostly, the composition of federal state parliaments (Landtag or Bürgerschaft) is formed from the same parties, although minor parties are occasionally added to them. As a rule, their main activity is related to a specific federal state. The only party that has not been represented at the federal level, but has passed several parliaments at the subnational level in recent convocations, is the Free Voters (Bavaria, Brandenburg and Rhineland-Palatinate)⁴²⁸. Moreover, in the case of Bavaria, the party even took part in the formation of the ruling coalition led by the CSU⁴²⁹.

At the national level, in order to create a faction, parties need to unite “by 5% or more of the Members of the Bundestag who belong to the same party or to parties which do not compete with each other in any Land (federal state) because they have similar political aims.”⁴³⁰. Unlike a supranational institution at the federal level, parties prefer to create factions on their own, which, however, is also due to both a small number and ideological differentiation of the participants represented. In addition, since 1953 for passage to the Bundestag at the federal level, unlike the elections to the European Parliament, there is also a 5% barrier that must be overcome by second votes. In the context of the formation of factions, this is also an auxiliary factor, since each party is interested in the greatest independence. However, the threshold is also necessary to avoid a high level of fragmentation in the parliament, which could occur due to potentially large number of minor and ideologically different parties in the composition. Previously, a limit of 5% also existed, but it operated separately for each federal state not only in subnational, but also in national elections. As a result, it was enough to overcome 5% in at least one of them to get a seat in the Bundestag. This way, in 1949, 10 parties were elected to the parliament at once. One of them was the South Schleswig Voters' Association.

At the present stage, in order to get into the Bundestag without overcoming the 5% barrier, a party must either obtain at least three direct mandates (according to the first votes), or operate as a national minority party⁴³¹. All these provisions are enshrined in the Federal Elections Act⁴³². However, in 1990, the 5% barrier for the old and new federal states was considered separately in accordance with the requirement of the Federal Constitutional Court, to avoid unequal conditions of competition between the parties of the Eastern and Western federal states⁴³³.

⁴²⁸ Ergebnisse früherer Landtagswahlen [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. Available at: https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/dam/jcr/a333e523-0717-42ad-a772-d5ad7e7e97cc/ltw_erg_gesamt.pdf (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁴²⁹ Koalitionsvertrag 2018 bis 2023 [Electronic resource] // Bayerische Staatsregierung: [official website]. 2018 Available at: <https://www.bayern.de/staatsregierung/koalitionsvertrag-2018-2023/> (accessed 07.04.2022).

⁴³⁰ Fraktionen.

⁴³¹ Ulli E. Eine Hürde von...

⁴³² Bundeswahlgesetz.

⁴³³ Völkl K. Wahlverhalten in Ost-...

The situation with the passage to the parliament due to the minimum number of necessary mandates received occurred in 2021, when the Left acquired the required minimum (3)⁴³⁴. In turn, the party did not overcome the 5% barrier for second votes, gaining 4.9%. However, thanks to direct mandates, the Left received a number of seats commensurate with its 4.9% vote share⁴³⁵.

There is also one reservation for the South Schleswig Voters' Association, which states that “the association must receive at least as many votes as other parties in order to get one mandate.”⁴³⁶. Prior to the 2021 elections, it was estimated that from 45,000 to 50,000 votes would be required for the party to overcome this threshold⁴³⁷. Despite more favorable conditions, the Left party has not been able to repeat its 1949 success and did not participate in federal elections between 1961 and 2021⁴³⁸. At some stage, the South Schleswig Voters' Association faced procedural problems at the subnational level. However, due to Germany's intention to join the North Atlantic Alliance (North Atlantic Treaty Organization/NATO), Denmark considered it necessary to take advantage of the current situation and protect its minority, resolving the problem on both sides of the border. The consequence was the emergence in 1955 of the Bonn-Copenhagen declarations⁴³⁹ and the amendment of the State Election Act⁴⁴⁰.

Unlike the European elections, independent candidates can apply for elections to the Bundestag⁴⁴¹. However, not a single independent candidate has been elected to the Bundestag since 1949⁴⁴².

In total, in accordance with the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) (Article 38 (1,2)), since 1949, citizens who have reached the age of 18 have been electing deputies to the Bundestag in “general, direct, free, equal and secret” elections for 4 years⁴⁴³. In addition, it is assumed

⁴³⁴ Anzahl der Direktmandate...

⁴³⁵ *Laboda A.* Darum ist die Linke trotz 4,9 Prozent im Bundestag [Electronic resource] // Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk. 27.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/deutschland/wahlen/bundestagswahl/linke-bundestag-warum-100.html> (accessed 07.04.2022).

⁴³⁶ Das Harrisleer Rahmenprogramm des SSW von 2016: SSW für uns im Norden. Harrisleer: SSW, 2016. P. 3.

⁴³⁷ SSW zur Bundestagswahl zugelassen – Partei will mindestens ein Mandat erreichen [Electronic resource] // Die Welt*. 08.07.2021. Available at: <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article232392953/SSW-zur-Bundestagswahl-zugelassen-mit-50-000-Stimmen-ins-Parlament.html> (accessed 30.09.2021). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁴³⁸ *Romashenko S.* The Danish minority party again entered the German Bundestag. [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 27.09.2021. Available at: <https://p.dw.com/p/40uNU> (accessed 28.09.2021). *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁴³⁹ *Husak B.* Deklaracje bońsko-kopenhaskie jako...P. 277, 280; *Schaefer-Rolffs A., Schnapp K.-U.* Special Politics for Minority Political Participation in the Danish-German Border Region // The International Journal on Minority and Group Rights. 2014. №21. P. 55-56.

⁴⁴⁰ Im Namen des Volkes. In dem Verfahren über die Wahlprüfungsbeschwerde [Electronic resource] // Schleswig-Holsteinisches Landesverfassungsgericht. 2013. Available at: https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Justiz/LVG/Entscheidungen/Dokumente/Urteil_7_12.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1 (accessed 02.01.2023).

⁴⁴¹ Wahlrecht; Das Wahlrecht zur...

⁴⁴² Der Traum vom Bundestag: Was Einzelbewerber antreibt [Electronic resource] // Abgeordnetenwatch.de. 22.06.2017. Available at: <https://www.abgeordnetenwatch.de/blog/wahlen/der-traum-vom-bundestag-was-einzelbewerber-antreibt> (accessed 11.04.2022).

⁴⁴³ Grundgesetz für die...Arts. 38-39.

that at the time of voting, for the voter Germany must be the main place of residence for at least 3 months, and they must also be German citizens⁴⁴⁴.

Since 1953, voters in Germany have two votes in federal elections: the first vote is for a specific candidate from their constituency (299 in total), and the second vote is for a party list. Depending on the election results, the number of the Bundestag can reach 598 or more people (e.g., in 2017 this number was 709, and in 2021 it was 736)⁴⁴⁵. The Bundestag is formed using a “modified ‘mixed form’ of ‘personalized proportional representation.’”⁴⁴⁶. Half of the members (299) are elected using a first-past-the-post system from single-member constituencies, and the other half is chosen from party lists according to the proportional system, with candidates from all 16 federal states. The proportions of this part depend on the votes for a particular party⁴⁴⁷. Practice showcases that not all participating parties are able to get both the first and second votes. Thus, for example, in 2017, 8 out of 42 parties were nominated only as single-mandate candidates, and in 2021, 7 out of 47. As a rule, these are minor parties⁴⁴⁸. However, the overall proportion of the parliament depends on the second votes. If the number of single-mandate candidates prevailed over the total number of seats received by the party, additional compensating seats were created. Moreover, they were supposed to be for other parties. This is necessary to maintain the proportion⁴⁴⁹. Due to the constant expansion of the parliament, in 2020 it was decided to modernize this system. Now it is determined that compensating seats are allocated to other parties only if there are more than three “overhang” mandates⁴⁵⁰.

At the same time, the Federal Chancellor (head of government) is not elected by citizens. Rather, he is chosen by the Bundestag, and is proposed (traditionally, based on the choice of the candidate by the largest faction) and subsequently appointed by the Federal President⁴⁵¹. Despite the absence of general federal election lists, parties can still nominate their candidates for the post of Chancellor during the election race⁴⁵². For instance, in 2021, O. Scholz from the SPD and A. Baerbock from the Alliance 90/The Greens, who topped the lists of Brandenburg, and A. Laschet from the CDU of North Rhine-

⁴⁴⁴ *Antropov R.V.* Features and Main Trends in the Development of the German Electoral System (On the Example of the Elections to the German Bundestag in 2013) // *Izbitatel'noe pravo*. 2016. № 2(34). P. 30; *Wahlrecht*.

⁴⁴⁵ Electoral System [Electronic resource] // *Deutscher Bundestag*: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundestag.de/ru/wahlen> (accessed 07.04.2022); Bundestag election 2017; Bundestag election 2021.

⁴⁴⁶ *Nikitenko A.I.* Features of Modern Electoral System in Western European Countries (on the example of Great Britain, France, Germany // *Central Russian Journal of Social Sciences*. 2015. Vol.10, №5. P. 56.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.* P. 56-57.

⁴⁴⁸ *Bundestagswahl 2021: Diese...; 42 Parteien nehmen...*

⁴⁴⁹ *Nikitenko A.I.* Features of Modern Electoral System...P. 57.

⁴⁵⁰ Election of Members and the allocation of seats [Electronic resource] // *Deutscher Bundestag*: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundestag.de/en/parliament/elections/arithmetic> (accessed 25.01.2023).

⁴⁵¹ *Vorobyova E.V.* Institution of Government in National Law // *Moscow Journal of International Law*. 2011. № 4. P. 120; The Procedure of the Election of the Federal Chancellor. Dossier [Electronic resource] // TASS. Available at: <https://tass.ru/info/5026605> (accessed 21.11.2022).

⁴⁵² Landesliste [Electronic resource] // *Der Bundeswahlleiter*: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/service/glossar/l/landesliste.html#id-0> (accessed 07.04.2022).

Westphalia were appointed candidates for the post of Chancellor⁴⁵³. Whereas in 2017, it was M. Schulz from the SPD and North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as A. Merkel from the CDU and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern⁴⁵⁴.

Another important factor for the study of election campaigns in Germany is the turnout. According to Statista, it has consistently been quite high in the Bundestag elections. Since 1949, the turnout has never fallen below 70%. The highest figure was recorded in 1972 – 91.1%, and the lowest in 2009 – 70.8%. However, then it began to grow again and in 2017 amounted to 76.2%, and in 2021 – 76.6%⁴⁵⁵. As already mentioned, for comparison, in the 2014 European elections it was 48.1%, and in 2019 it was already 61.38%⁴⁵⁶. Finally, the Bundestag elections themselves were held on the same day, September 24 in 2017 and September 26 in 2021⁴⁵⁷. Postal voting was also possible⁴⁵⁸, which was highly relevant amid the COVID-19 pandemic⁴⁵⁹.

1.4. The Theoretical Basis for Studying the Influence of the Global Problem of Climate Change on the Transformation of Modern European Parties (A Case of Germany)

In this section, social constructivism has become the basis for studying and explaining the construction of environmental and/or climate values, changes in the rhetoric of transnational and national parties, the relationship between institutions and parties, and parties and citizens; as well as the relationship between parties and the elections of two levels. The concept of second-order national elections helped avoid potentially erroneous conclusions about the nuances of the transformation of citizens' party preferences, which was facilitated by taking into account national cycles when assessing the behavior of voters in the European elections. Finally, the spatial theory of party competition helped explain both the tactics of various national and transnational parties in adapting their rhetoric to the global problem of climate change, and the current state of the EU and German party systems. In addition, two classifications were also included in the section (by the Deutscher Naturschutzring and the Climate

⁴⁵³ Bundestagswahl 2021. Parteien und Kandidaturen: Brandenburg; Bundestagswahl 2021. Parteien und Kandidaturen: Nordrhein-Westfalen [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/bundestagswahlen/2021/wahlbewerber/bund-99/land-5.html> (accessed 07.04.2022).

⁴⁵⁴ Die NRW-Landesliste steht...; Landesliste der CDU Mecklenburg-Vorpommern zur Bundestagswahl am 24. September 2017 [Electronic resource] // CDU: [official website]. 25.02.2017. Available at: <https://www.cdu-mecklenburg-vorpommern.de/fileadmin/redaktion/pdf/beschluesse/Landesliste.pdf> (accessed 07.04.2022).

⁴⁵⁵ Wahlbeteiligung bei den...

⁴⁵⁶ Turnout by year...

⁴⁵⁷ *Venkina E.* The President of the Bundestag fears the growth of its membership [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 19.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/ru/predsedatel-bundestaga-opasaetsja-razrastanija-ego-sostava/a-59228427> (accessed 19.09.2021). *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁴⁵⁸ Wahlrecht.

⁴⁵⁹ *Baranov N.A.* Elections as an Institution...P. 16.

Action Network), which ensured the determination of the order, in which the subsequent study of party transformation will be conducted.

Social constructivism

Social constructivism was chosen as a theoretical basis for studying the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of modern European parties. It is also understood as conventional constructivism or simply constructivism. This clarification is necessary due to the lack of a common understanding of both constructivism itself and the classification of its types. One of the most famous is the interpretation by T. Hopf, who divided constructivism into conventional (traditional) and critical (radical)⁴⁶⁰. In this text, the first type is mostly discussed. In international relations, the term “constructivism” was introduced by N. Onuf in 1989⁴⁶¹, but there are also other interpretations, for example, one of the most famous researchers, traditionally considered constructivist A. Wendt called it “a social theory.”⁴⁶².

From the prospective of V.N. Konyshov, A.A. Sergunin and S.V. Subbotin, constructivism can be spoken of as an independent paradigm, as part of postpositivism, as well as a meta-theory that is reflected and developed in subsequent critical/postpositivist approaches⁴⁶³. The latter is most clearly illustrated by such concept as “discourse”, which is involved in both social and critical constructivism (also known as poststructuralism)⁴⁶⁴. N. Onuf called language the main means of social construction, because it “makes us who we are,”⁴⁶⁵ and E. Adler added that “interpretation is an intrinsic part of the social sciences and emphasizes contingent generalizations.”⁴⁶⁶. However, interpretation cannot be carried out while being outside what is happening, i.e., the researcher is always inside and is part of the environment⁴⁶⁷. The latter is relevant for all types of constructivism.

Social constructivists do not reject the materiality, but their ideas about it have been transformed. This defines constructivism as an intermediate position between positivist and postpositivist theories⁴⁶⁸. At the same time, in more radical constructivist views, the emphasis on subjective perception of the

⁴⁶⁰ Hopf T. The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory // International Security. 1998. Vol. 23, № 1. P. 172.

⁴⁶¹ Onuf N. The World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989. P. 37.

⁴⁶² Wendt A. Social Theory of...429 p.

⁴⁶³ Konyshov V.N., Sergunin A.A., Subbotin S.V. Social Constructivism on...P. 96.

⁴⁶⁴ Milliken J. The Study of Discourse in International Relations//European Journal of International Relations. 1999. Vol. 5, Issue 2. P. 225-226.

⁴⁶⁵ Onuf N. Parsing Personal Identity: Self, Other, Agent. In: Language, Agency and Politics in a Constructed World / F. Debrix. ed. London, NY: Routledge, 2003. P. 27.

⁴⁶⁶ Adler E. Communitarian International Relations: The Epistemic Foundations of International Relations. London, NY: Routledge, 2005. P. 10.

⁴⁶⁷ Finnemore M., Sikkink K. Taking Stock: The...P. 395.

⁴⁶⁸ Hopf T. The Promise of...P. 199.

materiality is higher, in contrast to a more harmonious combination of objective and subjective in its moderate versions⁴⁶⁹.

The main categories or concepts of constructivism can include ideas, thoughts, norms, and beliefs. They allow for a broader interpretation than the narrow positivist ideas about power, especially in the context of the end of the Cold War. Constructivists believe that all structures are constantly socially constructed. This process depends on ideas and beliefs⁴⁷⁰. As a result, material values have the precise significance that the actors give them, based on their ideas. N. Tannenwald divided ideas into four types: ideologies or shared belief systems; normative beliefs (what is good and what is bad); causal beliefs (causal relationships) and policy prescriptions (specific programmes)⁴⁷¹.

Using the example of anarchy, A. Wendt illustrates the process of social construction, stating that it is “what states make of it.”⁴⁷². Anarchy can be understood as the relationship between agents (individuals, sovereign identities) and structures (states, institutional norms), where the latter restrict agents, as well as construct their identities and interests⁴⁷³. According to A. Wendt, there can be three types of anarchy: Hobbesian (enmity), Lockean (moderate cooperation), and Kantian (friendship)⁴⁷⁴. In turn, the international system is formed under the influence of intersubjective ideas⁴⁷⁵.

The category of “norms” depends on both external and internal factors⁴⁷⁶, which are also interconnected. Internally fixed norms can also originate from international organizations. M. Finnemore and M. Barnett determined that these organizations perform either an auxiliary function or act autonomously⁴⁷⁷. In contrast, P. Katzenstein emphasized the role of the national context, stating that to understand the interests, it is necessary to determine the root causes (culture and identity)⁴⁷⁸. According to T. Hopf, many identities and subcultures based on discourses within society and outside the state may exist within each state⁴⁷⁹. The norms, according to M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink, can be divided into three types: regulative (ordering behavior), constitutive (creating participants, categories, and interests),

⁴⁶⁹ *Sergeev V.M., Kazantzev A.A., Medvedeva S.M.* The Crisis of Constructivism and Methodological Problems of Studying International Relations // Polis. Political Studies. 2019. № 5. P. 58.

⁴⁷⁰ *Alekseeva T.A.* Think like Constructivist...P. 9; *Onuf N.* The World of...P. 282.

⁴⁷¹ *Tannenwald N.* Ideas and Explanation...P. 15-16, 19.

⁴⁷² *Wendt A.* Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics // International Organization. 1992. Vol. 46, Issue 2. P. 391.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.* P. 413.

⁴⁷⁴ *Wendt A.* Social Theory of...P. 18.

⁴⁷⁵ *Wendt A.* Anarchy is What...P. 394.

⁴⁷⁶ *Finnemore M.* National Interests in...P. 128.

⁴⁷⁷ *Barnett M., Finnemore M.* Rules for the...P. 162.

⁴⁷⁸ *Katzenstein P.* Introduction: Alternative Perspectives...P. 17.

⁴⁷⁹ *Hopf T.* Social Construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002. P. 294.

and often prescriptive (evaluative), which are less considered in the analysis⁴⁸⁰. Ultimately, J.T. Checkel emphasized the importance of norms in creating identity and interests⁴⁸¹.

It is possible to delve deeper into the provisions of sociological institutionalism, as the institutional contexts created, such as norms or discursive practices, serve as incentives for the social training of agents, as mentioned earlier. J.T. Checkel defines persuasion/argumentation as a “cognitive process that involves changing attitudes about cause and effect in the absence of overt coercion.”⁴⁸².

This author noted the high role of European institutions in building both interests and identity through the interaction of the agency and the structure. This means, on the one hand, a high degree of independence of institutions as actors with their own interests⁴⁸³. On the other hand, institutions are also socially constructed through certain practices, and the institutional order being created as if it were legitimate and, more importantly, perceived as correct⁴⁸⁴. In fact, it is also appropriate to recall the definition of institutions relevant to all types of neo-institutionalism from J. March and J. Olsen: “Relatively enduring collection of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances.”⁴⁸⁵.

Finally, speaking of European integration, it is worth highlighting the high degree of interconnection of the supranational and national levels⁴⁸⁶.

Summarizing, it makes sense to address to the views of P.A. Hall and R.C.R. Taylor, who attributed to the three signs of sociological institutionalism:

— a broader understanding of institutions than “formal rules, procedures or norms, but the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates;”⁴⁸⁷

— “institutions influence behavior by providing the cognitive scripts, categories and models that are indispensable for action, not least because without them the world and the behavior of others cannot be interpreted;”⁴⁸⁸

— new “specific institutional forms or practices because the latter are widely valued within a broader cultural environment.”⁴⁸⁹.

⁴⁸⁰ *Finnemore M., Sikkink K.* International Norm Dynamics and Political Change // International Organization. 1998. Vol. 52, № 4. P. 891.

⁴⁸¹ *Checkel J.T.* International Norms and Domestic Politics: Bridging the Rationalist — Constructivist Divide // European Journal of International Relations. 1997. Vol. 3, Issue 4. P. 473.

⁴⁸² *Checkel J.T.* Social Construction and...P. 548-549.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.* P. 545, 547.

⁴⁸⁴ *Panov P.V.* Institutionalism(s): Explanatory Models...P. 49-51.

⁴⁸⁵ *March J. G., Olsen J. P.* Elaborating the New Institutionalism // ARENA Working Papers. 2005. №11. Available at: <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548460.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548460-e-1> (accessed 18.04.2022).

⁴⁸⁶ *Checkel J.T.* Social Construction and...P. 552.

⁴⁸⁷ *Hall P.A., Taylor R.C.R.* Political Science and...P. 947.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.* P. 948.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.* P. 949.

Speaking about environmental problems, global or not, through the prism of constructivism, it is important to understand that their perception is socially constructed. While environmental problems are material, their significance and popularity compared to other challenges, such as the demographic crisis, are artificially created. Even assuming that environmental problems have more weight, there is differentiation among them. As shown by the data characterizing the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany in section 1.2., the created ideas about the global problem of climate change made it possible to attract much more attention to this environmental issue. Thus, as already mentioned in section 1.1., which dedicated to evolution of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the EU and Germany, the climate direction has over time been considered separately from other environmental challenges. From an institutional point of view, the European Commissioner for Climate Action (now the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for the European Green Deal) and the Directorate-General for Climate Action, the Temporary Committee on Climate Change in the European Parliament, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, etc., were specifically created and (in most cases) continue to function⁴⁹⁰. There is no such division for any other environmental direction. Discursively, the European Union has defined itself as a “leader in climate action,” which is regularly confirmed by the statements of its top officials, for example, J.-C. Juncker as the President of the European Commission (2014-2019), in the context of the signing of the Paris Agreement⁴⁹¹. This is also of fundamental importance for the course of Germany, which is traditionally considered the leading state of the EU⁴⁹². Moreover, both the perception of the global problem of climate change itself and ideas about how to solve it may vary in diverse parts of the world because they will be socially constructed differently⁴⁹³.

However, these ideas are constantly changing, and here the agendas of transnational and national parties are indicative. Firstly, transnational parties/federations/confederations appeared in parallel with the construction of their identity by the EU. The environmental component manifested itself initially in the creation of the first national green parties, followed by the European Federation of Green Parties and the European Green Party. Over time, other parties (both transnational and national) also increasingly began to expand environmental provisions. As a result, for the 2019 European Parliament elections and the 2021 Bundestag elections, all the main European parties, taking into account their own ideology, to

⁴⁹⁰ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 128; *Burns C., Carter N.* The European Parliament...P. 66-67; *Ministergalerie; Statement of Connie...*

⁴⁹¹ Historic Climate Deal...

⁴⁹² *Lisenkova A.D.* Adaptation of the European Union to Environmental Trends as a Factor of the Development of Political Parties: A Case-Study of the ALDE and FDP // *Global Development «The World after the Pandemic: Global Challenges and Prospects for Development»*. Issue 23 / *Davydov A.A., Mamedyarov Z.A., Khorolskaya M.V.* et al., eds. Moscow: IMEMO RAS, 2022. P. 105.

⁴⁹³ *Christmann G.B., Balgar K., Mahlkow N.* Local Constructions of Vulnerability and Resilience in the Context of Climate Change. A Comparison of Lübeck and Rostock // *Social Science*. 2014. № 3. P. 143.

one degree or another increased attention to the global problem of climate change in their rhetoric⁴⁹⁴. Even right-wing populists who oppose the recognition of anthropogenic influence on climate change have either abandoned their views (e.g., denial of its influence) or further strengthened them to create a truly alternative opinion based on the popular agenda⁴⁹⁵.

This transformation occurred thanks to intersubjective ideas and a gradual change of identity in the EU and Germany due to a more serious inclusion of the environmental component. The transformation also affected the position of citizens, changing their interests and beliefs. This thesis was confirmed by those presented in section 1.2., which is dedicated to the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany. According to statistics (e.g., Statista or the Special Eurobarometer 486: Europeans in 2019), there has been a significant increase in citizens' interest in environmental issues, with climate change as a priority⁴⁹⁶.

Arguing more in the spirit of sociological institutionalism, it is possible to trace the influence of the institutions of the EU and Germany on citizens and their opinions on European parties. In parallel, the latter, upon entering the European Parliament and the Bundestag, affect both institutions and citizens, due to the measures taken within the framework of politics – in other words, introducing new social norms. At the same time, the positions of the parties themselves have converged through the emergence of common points on the most popular and significant issues. On average, representatives of the parties, if we exclude mutual reproaches and accusations of insufficient attention to various topics, gradually began to build their tactics in such a way that they talked about the same thing (albeit with varying degrees of ambition), except perhaps placing accents on their original ideological foundations and intertwining them with new themes. All this is also a classic illustration of the interaction and mutual influence of agency and structure. An example is the European Free Alliance, which represents regionalists from EU member states. In addition to the traditional European agenda, over time, more specialized environmental provisions also appeared in its rhetoric, for example, on the correlation of biodiversity and cultural diversity. Such a phenomenon just illustrates the peculiarities of adapting a unique ideology to a popular trend⁴⁹⁷.

The European Union as an integration form, which has some similarities with an international organization, is the source of a set of norms for its member states. Although both mutual influence and harmonization can also be traced. In 2021, both the European Climate Law and the amendment to the

⁴⁹⁴ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 207; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 143.

⁴⁹⁵ *Lisenkova A.D.* Transformation of the Climate Change Agenda of Far-Right Parties in the European Parliament // IR Scientists' Herald. 2021. № 2 (16). P. 52-53.

⁴⁹⁶ Was ist Ihrer ...; Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 8, 14.

⁴⁹⁷ Building a Europe fit for all its Peoples [Electronic resource] // European Free Alliance: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://www.e-f-a.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/EFA_manifesto_2019_EN-1.pdf (accessed 05.05.2020).

German Climate Change Act were adopted under the European Green Deal⁴⁹⁸. Whereas, by analogy, a transnational party is a kind of international organization for national member parties (including those from Germany) and, as a result, their positions are largely harmonized. Ahead of the 2019 European elections, both the European Green Party and the Alliance 90/The Greens proposed a 55% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990⁴⁹⁹.

The concept of second-order national elections

For analyzing European elections and comparing them with national trends, the concept of second-order national elections is the most successful. It was nominated following the results of the first direct elections to the European Parliament, held back in 1979, by K. Reif and H. Schmitt. Firstly, it is necessary to determine that the authors attributed presidential or parliamentary elections (depending on the form of government) in the state to the first-order national elections. This means that these campaigns are primary and of key importance for the future of the country in the perception of citizens. In fact, they determine who will govern the state over the next term. On the other hand, second-order national elections are elections to the European Parliament, regional or municipal elections, etc. Their main difference lies in their secondary nature in comparison with the first-order national elections⁵⁰⁰. Moreover, their national character is not questioned, even if they are held only in any one part of the country (e.g., at the subnational level)⁵⁰¹. As a result, due to their secondary nature, it was suggested that at the time of the proposal of the concept (after the first direct vote in 1979), such elections could not fully determine the real balance of power in the European Union (at that time known as the European Community)⁵⁰².

Important here is a clarification about the predominant weakness of the European Parliament in the first decades of European integration. The situation began to change in the 1990s. Despite the potential interest of citizens in influencing the formation of the structure representing their interests, a significant obstacle to the practical implementation of this was the weak position of the institution. Despite the gradual expansion and deepening of competencies, as well as the increase in the influence of the European Parliament, states continued to resist the excessive delegation of part of their sovereignty to the supranational level preferring to make decisions in the Council. As a result, this gave rise to additional arguments in favor of the institution's lack of legitimacy and authority, as well as a “democratic deficit.”⁵⁰³. In turn, the main evolutionary achievements of the European Parliament include

⁴⁹⁸ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 143; *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 128.

⁴⁹⁹ Europas Versprechen Erneuern [Electronic resource] // BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN: [official website]. 2018. Available at: https://cms.gruene.de/uploads/documents/B90GRUENE_Europawahlprogramm_2019_barrierefrei.pdf (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁵⁰⁰ *Reif K., Schmitt H.* Nine Second-Order National...P. 8.

⁵⁰¹ *Norris P., Reif K.* Second-Order Elections Revisited // *European Journal of Political Research*. 1997. Vol. 31, Issue 1. P. 116-117.

⁵⁰² *Reif K., Schmitt H.* Nine Second-Order National...P. 3.

⁵⁰³ *Norris P., Reif K.* Second-Order Elections...P. 111-112, 114.

participation with the Council in the co-decision procedure (Maastricht Treaty, 1992), expansion of this procedure to most areas (Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997), as well as its elevation to the status of the “ordinary legislative procedure” (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007)⁵⁰⁴. In addition, over time, the European Parliament received the right to consult when approving a candidate for the President of the European Commission, as well as to subsequently approve the latter, together with the European Commissioners as a College (Maastricht Treaty, 1992). Later, parliamentary approval was also required when nominating a candidate for the presidency (Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997)⁵⁰⁵. Despite some wording vagueness, at the present stage, the role of the European Parliament has been further strengthened due to the appointment of the President of the European Commission in accordance with “taking into account the elections to the European Parliament” (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007)⁵⁰⁶.

It is also worth noting that in addition to the evolution of the participation of the European Parliament in the appointment of the College, the resignation of the J. Santer Commission in 1999, which had been in force since 1995, is also traditionally considered a turning point for the institution. It all started back in 1998, when the European Parliament refused to discharge the European Commission from responsibility for the 1996 budget execution. Commissars E. Cresson and M. Marin were at the center of criticism of financial and administrative management. Despite the fact that the vote of no confidence proposed by the social democrats (the parliament had the right to do it since the adoption of Treaty of Rome in 1957) was rejected in the European Parliament, the number of “for” votes was a record for the entire history of the institution (232). For comparison, slightly more votes were “against” (239, with 27 abstentions). Moreover, the European Parliament adopted a special resolution, according to which the Committee of Independent Experts was supposed to be created for additional investigation. The European Commission did not object. As a result, the report of this Committee contained significant criticism, after which a vote of no confidence was inevitable, and the Commission resigned without waiting for such a decision by the Parliament⁵⁰⁷.

The authors of the concept immediately identified a set of features that are characteristic of the second-order national elections. First of all, this is the lower involvement of citizens as voters to participate in such elections, which was confirmed by a relatively low turnout. This argument was explained by the insufficiently serious attitude towards such elections. However, it also allowed citizens to feel less constrained when making a decision during voting. On the one hand, this could manifest

⁵⁰⁴ Key milestones: from codecision to the ordinary legislative procedure [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/olp/en/in-the-past/key-milestones> (accessed 12.04.2022).

⁵⁰⁵ The European Parliament: powers [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.3.2.pdf (accessed 08.03.2023).

⁵⁰⁶ Treaty of Lisbon. Art. 9 D (7).

⁵⁰⁷ The crisis of the Santer Commission [Electronic resource] // Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe. 2016. Available at: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2004/6/17/7380f95b-1fb2-484d-a262-d870a0d5d74d/publishable_en.pdf (accessed 14.03.2023); The European Parliament: powers.

itself in a higher proportion of spoiled ballots than in the first-order national elections⁵⁰⁸. On the other hand, this provided opportunities for small and new parties. Subsequently, radical, populist and protest parties were also added to this list⁵⁰⁹. It was assumed that it was easier for voters to take risks in less significant elections and cast their votes for ideologically attractive but less influential parties. The reverse side of this alignment can be called the defeat of the national government parties. The internal (main) electoral cycles are particularly important and influential here⁵¹⁰. Thus, it was assumed that immediately after the national elections, there is a peak in the popularity of the government parties (“post-electoral euphoria”), while by the middle of the term, a minimum is reached, after which a new rise will occur only by the next elections⁵¹¹. If the campaign to the European Parliament fell in the middle of the term at the national level, this created rather unfavorable conditions for the government parties⁵¹².

At the present stage, the European elections hold greater significance. This is due to the expansion of the set of member states and the increase in powers and competencies of the European Parliament, as well as the correlation of election results with the appointment of the President of the European Commission. The latter not only has important practical implications for the future of politics but also entails higher levels of media coverage. However, despite the ongoing changes, certain and fairly stable trends inherent in the second-order national elections persist⁵¹³. In particular, the 2019 YouGov/dpa poll showed that 45% of German citizens did not know the lead candidates from their national parties. Moreover, the most well-known candidates were K. Barley from the SPD (39%) and J. Meuthen from the AfD (34%). At the same time, M. Weber, nominated not only by the CDU/CSU, but also by the European People's Party, who were expected winners, received only 26% (the 3rd-4th place). S. Keller from the Alliance 90/The Greens and the European Green Party received 7% and the 6th place⁵¹⁴. On the other hand, according to the results of the 2014 elections, 63% of those polled in the EU (the European Parliament Eurobarometer (EB/EP 82.4)) regarded the correlation of election results and the appointment of the President of the European Commission “progress for democracy.”⁵¹⁵.

Testing the concept against the case of the German national elections, the following trends can be seen, as reflected by the results of the main six parties of the country (Table 1). However, it must be remembered that there is a certain margin of error here because at the national level voters have two

⁵⁰⁸ Reif K., Schmitt H. Nine Second-Order National...P. 9-10.

⁵⁰⁹ Norris P., Reif K. Second-Order Elections...P. 118; Reif K. Nationale Regierungsparteien verlieren die Wahl zum Europäischen Parlament 1984 // Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen. 1984. Vol. 15, № 3. P. 344; Reif K., Schmitt H. Nine Second-Order National...P. 9-10.

⁵¹⁰ Reif K., Schmitt H. Nine Second-Order National...P. 9-10.

⁵¹¹ Reif K. Nationale Regierungsparteien verlieren...P. 344-345.

⁵¹² Reif K., Schmitt H. Nine Second-Order National...P. 9-10.

⁵¹³ Willermain F. From ‘Second-Order’ Elections...P. 93-94, 104-105.

⁵¹⁴ Europawahl: Jeder Zweite kennt keinen der deutschen Spitzenkandidaten [Electronic resource] // YouGov.de. 24.04. 2019. Available at: <https://yougov.de/news/2019/04/24/europawahl-ist-fur-wahler-deutlich-weniger-wichtig/> (accessed 12.04.2022).

⁵¹⁵ 2014 Parlemeter (EB/EP 82.4) [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/parlemeter-2014> (accessed 12.04.2022).

votes, but in the European elections they have only one. Considering the regulation of voting in the European elections (party-list system), it is closer in meaning to the second votes in national elections.

Table 1. Election results for the six main German parties in the Bundestag (2013, 2017, and 2021) and the European Parliament (2014 and 2019)⁵¹⁶.

Elections	Vote	CDU	CSU	SPD	FDP	Greens	AfD	Left
To the Bundestag in 2013	First	37.2%	8.1%	29.4%	2.4%	7.3%	1.9%	8.2%
	Second	34.1%	7.4%	25.7%	4.8%	8.4%	4.7%	8.6%
To the European Parliament in 2014	Single	30%	5.3%	27.3%	3.4%	10.7%	7.1%	7.4%
To the Bundestag in 2017	First	30.2%	7%	24.6%	7%	8%	11.5%	8.6%
	Second	26.8%	6.2%	20.5%	10.7%	8.9%	12.6%	9.2%
To the European Parliament in 2019	Single	22.6%	6.3%	15.8%	5.4%	20.5%	11%	5.5%
To the Bundestag in 2021	First	22.5%	6%	26.4%	8.7%	14%	10.1%	5%
	Second	18.9%	5.2%	25.7%	11.5%	14.8%	10.3%	4.9%

2013 is taken as the starting point. It was in this year that the Grand coalition (the CDU/CSU and the SPD) was formed based on the results of the national elections. The CDU/CSU was the senior coalition partner and the SPD was the junior. The results of the 2014 European elections showed lower results for the CDU and CSU, but the SPD was able to improve its national performance. After the 2017 elections, in 2018 the coalition was again formed from the same parties, with a similar distribution of

⁵¹⁶ Bundestag election 2013 [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 2013. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2013/ergebnisse/bund-99.html> (accessed 12.04.2022); Bundestag election 2017; Bundestag election 2021; Comparative tool.

roles for them (senior and junior partner). However, this time around, the subsequent 2019 European elections showed a decline for both the CDU and the SPD. The exception this time was the CSU as the younger sister party in the CDU/CSU. The 2021 elections created the “Traffic Light” coalition (the SPD, the Alliance 90/The Greens, and the FDP). The SPD has become a key partner in the coalition; however, it will be more correct to compare the results with the 2024 European elections. In 2014 and 2019, the CSU has a similar situation in the Bundestag elections (2013, 2017, and 2021), although at the European level, it managed to get a bigger share of votes in 2019 than in 2014. In terms of cycles, the elections in 2019 are more correlated with the middle of the national cycle than 2014. In turn, much less time passed from the voting in September 2013 to May 2014. However, this error is not significant, since elections still were not held literally one after another.

The trends for small parties entering the parliament are also relatively stable. The Alliance 90/The Greens have shown that their results are regularly better in European elections than in national ones. A feature of this party is that it is gradually becoming less small, as shown in the 2019 and 2021 elections. However, its national results are still lower than those in the European elections. It can be assumed that despite citizens' high level of concern about the global problem of climate change, a greater willingness to take risks in the second-order national elections still makes it easier not only to vote for small/radical/new/populist/protest parties, but also for more abstract and poorly perceived issues at the domestic level (in particular, climate change). Moreover, the global problem of climate change, having a transboundary character, is better addressed at the subnational or even international level, which implies greater relevance for European rather than national elections. On the other hand, the Alliance 90/The Greens has shown progressive growth, in contrast to the gradual decline in the indicators of the CDU/CSU, which to a lesser extent allows characterizing the party as a small one. This was also confirmed by their results in the 2021 national elections⁵¹⁷. However, R.V. Kostiuk and G.N. Kaninskaya believe that “the development of political ecology in Europe occurs in waves, which means that growth is not systematic or linear but rather characterized by ups and downs.”⁵¹⁸. Examples of such historical outbursts were seen in the 1980s and the turn of the late 1990s with the beginning of the 20th century⁵¹⁹.

Taken together, the results of the CDU/CSU, the SPD, and the Alliance 90/The Greens largely support the concept of electoral cycles, government parties and small parties.

The second small party that improved its performance in 2014 was the Alternative for Germany, but the party failed to repeat its success in 2019. As a new, small, Eurosceptic (with an emphasis on institutions and the euro in 2014) party with hints of right-wing populism, it managed to get into the

⁵¹⁷ Bund- und Länderkoalitionen in Deutschland [Electronic resource] // Statista. Available at: https://de.statista.com/themen/8712/koalition/#topicHeader__wrapper (accessed 13.04.2022); Bundestag election 2013; Bundestag election 2017; Bundestag election 2021; Comparative tool.

⁵¹⁸ Kostiuk R.V., Kaninskaya G.N. European «Greens»: from the European Parliament Elections to the Coronavirus Challenge // Contemporary Europe. 2020. №4 (97). P. 124.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. P. 124.

European Parliament for the first time before the Bundestag. Moreover, in the aftermath of the migration crisis in 2019, it improved its 2014 results, despite being the second-best small party after the Greens, its 2017 national results were still higher⁵²⁰.

Protest voting can also be analyzed through the share of spoiled ballots (Table 2)⁵²¹. It is important to remember that the number of votes cast can vary, and the voting regulations for the European Parliament are closer to the 2nd vote in the Bundestag.

Table 2. Percentage of spoiled ballots in elections to the Bundestag (2013, 2017 and 2021) and the European Parliament (2014 and 2019).

Elections	Number (First vote)	% (First vote)	Number (Second vote)	% (Second vote)
To the Bundestag in 2013	684 883	1.5%	583 069	1.3%
To the European Parliament in 2014	—	—	488 706	1.6%
To the Bundestag in 2017	586 726	1.2%	460 849	1.0%
To the European Parliament in 2019	—	—	410 857	1.1%
To the Bundestag in 2021	492 495	1.1%	412 485	0.9%

The 2014 and 2019 results are completely consistent with the concept: 1.6% in 2014 is more than 1.3% in 2013, and 1.1% in 2019 is higher than 1.0% in 2017. In turn, the result of the 2021 national elections decreased again, as it did in 2017 compared to the elections in 2014. The error was introduced by the first votes, whose results did not always correlate with the concept, which could also be due to the lower significance of these votes in federal elections compared to party list system (second votes)⁵²².

The last item is the turnout. In 2013, it was 71.5%, in 2017 it was 76.2%, and in 2021 it was 76.6%⁵²³. In the European elections in Germany, it was significantly lower: in 2014, it was 48.1%, and in 2019, it was 61.38%. The statistics confirmed the trend towards a gradual increase in the importance of elections to the European Parliament, which is also noticeable in the data for the European Union as

⁵²⁰ Lisenkova A.D. Main Features of the Current...P. 148-150; *Arzheimer K., Berning C.C.* How the Alternative...P. 3.

⁵²¹ Ungültige Stimmabgabe.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Wahlbeteiligung bei den...

a whole: 42.61% and 50.66% in the same years⁵²⁴. However, the priority of national elections is still noticeable, and the turnout statistics for all the years under consideration are consistent with the concept.

Finally, the concept of second-order national elections does not involve evaluating transnational parties directly. In addition, they do not really participate in any other campaigns, except to the European Parliament. Accordingly, their performance can only be assessed through the prism of the performance of their national member parties, as was done in sufficient detail above with the case of Germany.

The spatial theory of party competition

Considering the transformation of European parties and their attempts to respond to changes in public opinion, it is logical to turn to the median voter theorem, as well as in a broader sense to the spatial theory of party competition.

First of all, it is worth highlighting the ideas of H. Hotelling formulated in the 1920s. He stated that, from an economic point of view, the position of two shops in the center of the street is more advantageous than at its opposite ends and also drew an analogy between this case and the functioning of the party system⁵²⁵. In political science, these theses were developed in more detail by D. Black (1940s) and E. Downs (1950s). The meaning of the derived median voter theorem was reduced to the provision that “a majority rule voting system will select the outcome most preferred by the median voter.”⁵²⁶. As a result, political parties tend to move towards the center, where the median voter is located, to achieve the maximum possible success⁵²⁷. This theorem has a number of limitations, according to which the number of candidates, as a rule, is more than two; their rhetoric should be plausible enough, voters do not vote on one issue and are not evenly distributed, etc.⁵²⁸.

For a more detailed consideration of the spatial theory of party competition, as well as the justification of the rational behavior of parties and voters, it is worth turning to the views of A. Downs and going beyond the ideas exclusively about the median voter. Here it is immediately necessary to identify two assumptions: the unambiguity of voters' views with the absence of a sharp asymmetry in the distribution, moving to the left and right from the peak, as well as the presence of a one-dimensional coordinated political spectrum (scale) along which candidates/parties are placed⁵²⁹. In essence, the problem of the multidimensionality/one-dimensionality of the division according to the principle of left and right over time manifested itself, according to G. Th. Mavrogordatos, only in two real problems

⁵²⁴ Turnout by year...

⁵²⁵ Hindmoor A. Rational Choice...P. 25-26.

⁵²⁶ Veisdal J. The Median Voter...P. 39-40.

⁵²⁷ Turonok S.G. The Crisis of Institutional Trust as a Symptom of a Deeply Divided Community (The Example of the United States) // Moscow University Bulletin. Series 21. Public Administration (state and society). 2020. № 4. P. 99.

⁵²⁸ Veisdal J. The Median Voter...P. 43.

⁵²⁹ Downs A. An Economic Theory...P. 115-116.

concerning difficulties with the inclusion of greens and regionalists on the spectrum. In fact, the first one has smoothed over time⁵³⁰.

Dividing the scale conditionally in half, it is possible to place voters along it according to the principle of more moderate views and more radical right or left views at its different ends. Parties are obviously more attractive to voters who share their ideological location (the least-distance hypothesis). Their attractiveness may be shaken by the appearance of new voters, but it is not the number of the latter that matters, but only the distribution.

In a two-party system, when the largest number of citizens are close to centrist views, it is also more profitable for parties to move towards each other. This allows both parties to keep the radicals from their half of the scale and to maximally interest those who are close to the opponent's views, including voters on the other side of the center. Moreover, the potential loss of extremes is incomparably less significant than the likely victory in the center. The consequence of this logic is the formation of a system with two moderate parties. Their discourse is mostly ambiguous, moderate, and largely duplicating each other, since both opponents seek to enlist support on each other's territory. The presence of several radical items on the agenda distinguishes the parties from each other, and also affects their real position relative to the center on the scale. However, the total ideological position is still the weighted average of all its positions (the so-called net position).

In the case where most of the voters are not located in the center, there is no point in this rapprochement. However, this increases the chances of revolutions and other forms of chaos, due to the polarity of the opponents' positions. Furthermore, centrists who are more likely to be inclined to extremism, and their participation in government is also possible only in a coalition with radicals, which may still alienate voters on the other side of the center. The shift of voters to the center under the influence of the desire for compromise can prevent a collapse, which, however, will most likely lead to a split of the conditional center (the middle and the center-right and center-left as close as possible) into several poles from the interested parties. It is important to note that, despite their own desire to adapt to the voters, the parties are also trying to shift the voters closer to themselves.

A more even distribution of voters favors a multi-party system. However, in this case, any party cannot, as it were, "leap over" an opponent, because it is ideologically limited by its neighbors, and the distance between all competitors eventually becomes equally distributed. This also holds back new parties, which can occupy either a niche already between existing ones, or on the edge. With an established system, as a result, serious grounds and a free niche are needed for the emergence of a new influential party. Newcomers are also limited not only by the availability of accessible zones, but also by the natural difficulty of conducting party activities, such as funding, personnel, and potential for

⁵³⁰ *Mavrogordatos G.Th. Downs Revisited: Spatial...P. 337.*

elections. At the same time, their advantage is the ability to choose a place for a new acute topic and structure their own programme. A logical consequence of such a multiparty system is greater attention to ideological differences between parties rather than the roles of leaders, etc., as in a two-party system. This is not rational because views on politics are often more important. If ignoring the coincidences, ideology seems to be more integrated in multiparty systems. Speaking about integration, it is necessary to understand that the ideology of the parties, although consistent, is not too deeply ingrained in one worldview if talking about a two-party system. This integration around a single point/worldview is, in principle, inversely proportional to the width of the spread. However, the desire to be attractive to everyone creates a threat of harm because the priorities of each individual citizen differ.

In any case, each party needs votes and also directly depends on its representation in institutions. To achieve the latter, unions often take place, continuing until the desired result is obtained. However, there are also minor, irrational parties whose chances of being elected or exerting influence are actually close to zero.

In a majority system, the number of parties is likely to narrow down to two, multiparty system is more likely in a proportional system. Moreover, small parties can even get into ruling coalitions.

New batches can be divided into two types:

- Those aimed at winning elections (which are the majority);
- Those aimed at influencing or pressuring already ruling parties (which are more relevant in a two-party system). They are typical for the so-called third parties. Sometimes small parties can provide a necessary and insufficiently independent balance in a bipolar system, but this is rather a special case.

In practice, it is quite difficult to divide them among themselves.

Finally, it is advantageous for parties to incline voters to irrationality if it is rational for them. The only exception is the probability of system failure. Accordingly, the more ambiguous the parties behave, the more difficult it is for voters to remain rational, and the greater the number of them the party will be able to reach. However, this weakens the party's position on specific issues. As a result, each voter has a two-dimensional judgment in the form of a balance of the so-called net position (the average value of the policy) and its distribution (divergence). The interests of citizens and parties are obviously different. The first want to realize their desires, and the latter want rewards for staying in power. Mechanisms of protection against forcing citizens to irrationality include legislative restrictions on the activities of parties and the transformation of the system into a multiparty one.

The behavior of voters also depends on two circumstances:

1. The availability of complete and easily accessible information with no future-oriented voting. In this case, the refusal of radicals from voting is not rational, because it is still more favorable to choose the closest ideologically aligned force.
2. Limited information and its high cost, which reduces the ability to find minor differences.

Here it can be also said that the views of radicals are often immoderate, where they perceive everything moderate as the same. Their differentiating threshold is very high. Often, a voter may even reject a party with a similar average value to theirs, but with a high proportion of variance, in favor of a party with a less close average value but also a smaller variance. This is rational if the radicals are focused on the future and want to influence their own party so that it changes by the next elections⁵³¹.

Despite the fact that the spatial theory of party competition is focused on the study of national trends, it is also applicable to transnational parties. However, there are some limitations when evaluating the European elections through this lense. Firstly, the formation of the institute is influenced by the results of all EU member states, which have their own distinct characteristics. Secondly, in Germany, voting is carried out only by lists, which is closer in structure to the second votes in federal elections and, accordingly, proportional distribution. Nevertheless, these limitations still allow us to tentatively attribute the transnational party system as a mixed type.

As a result, on the one hand, two key participants represented by the center-right European People's Party and the center-left Party of European Socialists can be seen in the European Parliament. On the other hand, there are other influential forces. Thus, the two extreme flanks are formed by the Party of the European Left and the Identity and Democracy Party. In the center is the European Democratic Party, whose low popularity, according to the provisions of A. Downs, is fully justified by the lack of a pronounced identity. In addition, if the European Green Party occupies a position between the left and the social democrats, then everything is more complicated on the right flank. First of all, being associated with the EDP by one political group, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe is currently competing with the European People's Party for a place closer to the center, whereas the European Conservatives and Reformists Party, located definitely slightly to the left of the Identity and Democracy Party, have no equivalents on the opposite flank. It is worth noting that, according to the supposed ideological equidistribution on the scale, some duplication within the same niche ultimately contributed to the termination of the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe. Finally, remembering the ideas of G. Th. Mavrogordatos about regionalists, it is worth thinking about the situation with the European Free Alliance, some members of which despite a fairly harmonious long-term cooperation with the greens, are distributed among other ideologically dissimilar groups. This phenomenon will be analyzed in more detail in Chapter 2⁵³².

As already mentioned earlier, despite the proportional distribution of seats in the elections to the European Parliament in Germany, a significant influence of the national electoral system can be observed. At the federal level, which has already been discussed in sufficient detail in section 1.3. on the features of the functioning of political parties and the conduct of election campaigns, it is a mixed form

⁵³¹ Downs A. An Economic Theory...P. 115-139.

⁵³² Comparative tool; European Union. Group...; Mavrogordatos G.Th. Downs Revisited: Spatial...P. 337.

with features of both a proportional and majority system⁵³³. As a consequence of the majority element, one can see two leading parties that are closest to the center – the center-right CDU/CSU and the center-left SPD. Only they occupy the first two places both in the elections to the Bundestag⁵³⁴ and to the European Parliament at the present stage (with the exception of 2019 and the second place of the Alliance 90/The Greens for the first time in history)⁵³⁵. The divergence on political issues places them on different sides of the center. Historically, many years of being in the same ruling coalition only contributed to the similarity of the rhetoric of the two forces⁵³⁶.

However, the excessive ambivalence, of the Christian democrats, for example, has become one of the reasons for the emergence of the far-right Alternative for Germany. The right-wing populists were influenced both by their rhetoric based on crises (primarily migration), and the historical legacy of the Second World War that objectively prevented the emergence of extreme right forces in Germany for many years, which is why the far-right niche was vacant for so long)⁵³⁷. This case can be an illustration of the formation of new strong participants.

The consequence of proportionality is the presence of six key parties in the country. There are two pronounced radical edges represented by the Left and the already mentioned Alternative for Germany, as well as the Greens and the liberal democrats who are intermediates between them and the leaders. Accordingly, the thesis about the ideological equidistribution of ideological distance is also justified. In addition, all of them consistently pass to the federal parliament and have the opportunity to participate in coalitions (e.g., the “Black-yellow” coalition from the CDU/CSU and the liberal democrats or the “Traffic Light” coalition from the SPD, the Greens and the FDP)⁵³⁸. G. Sartori described party systems similar to Germany’s as “limited/moderate pluralism,” meaning an intermediate position between a two-party system and extreme pluralism⁵³⁹.

As an example of parties unifying to achieve their goals, we can recall the merger of the Party of Democratic Socialism and the Labour and Social Justice – The Electoral Alternative in 2007 into the Left, which definitely contributed to obtaining seats in the Bundestag⁵⁴⁰.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 2-3, the role of leaders was quite important in the voting process. Here, it is clearly possible to emphasize not only the example of the unsuccessful performance of A. Laschet from the CDU in the 2021 elections but also a series of irrational scandals (not related to ideology) that ultimately influenced the outcome of the campaign. Mutual accusations

⁵³³ Nikitenko A.I. Features of Modern Electoral...P. 56.

⁵³⁴ Bundestagswahlergebnisse seit 1949.

⁵³⁵ Comparative tool.

⁵³⁶ Lisenkova A.D. The Role of Political Parties...133.

⁵³⁷ Lisenkova A.D. Main Features of the Current...148-150.

⁵³⁸ Bundeskanzler und Kabinette von 1949 bis heute [Electronic resource] // Bernhard Gaul. Available at: <https://www.bernhard-gaul.de/wissen/bundeskanzler.php#> (accessed 29.01.2023).

⁵³⁹ Sartori G. Parties and Party...P. 154.

⁵⁴⁰ Auf dem Weg...; Bundestagswahlergebnisse seit 1949.

between the parties against each other can also be considered an attempt to sway voters to their direction. The Alliance 90/The Greens, which made its way to become the leading parties after the elections in 2019, could be considered an exception that brings to mind the words of G.Th. Mavrogordatos. However, let us not forget about the mixed system in Germany. Therefore, on the one hand, both in 2019 and in 2021, the greens were voted for rather based on the principle of ideology. On the other hand, in 2021, the role of the leader was also very significant, however, just as the strength of the party after the success of 2019. A. Baerbock's mistakes significantly reduced the potential of the Greens.

The global problem of climate change and its ideological interpretation can also, to some extent, become another example of different attitudes towards parties in a mixed system. Although the two leading and close to the center forces are influenced by acute topics, they are still less dependent on the success of interpretation and adaptation to them. The same cannot be said about other participants, such as the greens, the left, the liberal democrats and the right-wing populists⁵⁴¹.

In addition, a parallel can be drawn between the theory under consideration and the concept of second-order national elections due to the lower importance of voting in a supranational structure. Moreover, in the absence of a 5% barrier, minor parties (e.g., the Ecological Democratic Party) have a chance to pass at the supranational level⁵⁴². At the national level, their participation can be considered rather irrational (according to A. Downs). As already mentioned, 47 parties (out of 54 admitted) participated in the elections in 2021, which is significantly more than those who received seats in the end⁵⁴³. While in the European elections some of them traditionally had chances to acquire 1-2 seats, in the federal elections, as history has shown, they had actually zero chance (unless there are special conditions like the South Schleswig Voters' Association). The experience of other countries, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, showcases the fairly frequent resort of national parties to coalition participation in the European elections, which significantly increases their chances of success⁵⁴⁴.

Climate classification of European parties

Finally, for further systematization in assessing the transformation of European parties, it is worth referring to their climate classification. This is necessary to determine the order in which items related to the global problem of climate change will be compared in their political agendas. Accordingly, the transition in the comparative analysis will be carried out as per the principle from the most to the least climatically progressive party assessed by the results of their activities in the 2014-2019 convocation of the European Parliament.

⁵⁴¹ Lisenkova A.D. The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146; Mavrogordatos G.Th. Downs Revisited: Spatial...P. 337.

⁵⁴² Comparative tool; 2019 European elections...

⁵⁴³ Bundestagswahl 2021: Diese...

⁵⁴⁴ Bundestag election 2021; Comparative tool.

First of all, the Climate Rating of German parties in the European Parliament was compiled by the Deutscher Naturschutzring and the Climate Action Network. According to it, the parties were divided into three categories: “very good”, “good”, and “very bad”. Only the Alliance 90/The Greens was assigned to the first group (88%). The second group included the SPD (63%) and the Left (59%), while the FDP (14%), the CDU (13%), and the CSU (12%) were in the third group⁵⁴⁵. Probably, the AfD was not taken into account due to its too small representation during most of the parliamentary term, although, among other things, both party representatives in the European Parliament who remained after the 2015 party split voted against the Paris Agreement⁵⁴⁶.

In the context of transnational parties and the identification of supranational trends, it is important to turn to another classification, also compiled by the Climate Action Network. According to it, political groups formed by both German parties and transnational parties were also divided into three categories: “defenders”, “delayers”, and “dinosaurs”. Those who preserved in the 2019-2024 convocation, the “defenders” group included the Greens/European Free Alliance with 84.9%, the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (currently known as the Left in the European Parliament – GUE/NGL) with 66.5%, and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats with 61.3%. In turn, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe group (currently known as the Renew Europe) was “delayers” accounting for 38.1%, while the “dinosaurs” consisted of the Europe of Nations and Freedom (currently known as the Identity and Democracy) with 15.2%, the European People's Party with 14.3%, and the European Conservatives and Reformists with 10%⁵⁴⁷.

From the 1950s to 2021, the political agenda on the global problem of climate change of the European Union (formerly the European Community) and Germany underwent significant changes. It was influenced by international events, such as the UN Conference⁵⁴⁸ and the “Limits of Growth” report in 1972⁵⁴⁹, the 1970-80s energy crises⁵⁵⁰, the 1986 Chernobyl disaster⁵⁵¹, the 1992 UNFCCC⁵⁵², the 2009 Copenhagen Conference⁵⁵³, the 2011 “Fukushima-1” Nuclear Power Plant disaster⁵⁵⁴, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁵⁵⁵ and the Paris Agreement in 2015⁵⁵⁶, as well as the activities of the “School Strike for Climate” movement since 2018⁵⁵⁷ and many others.

⁵⁴⁵ Wen wählen für...

⁵⁴⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 149-151.

⁵⁴⁷ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.

⁵⁴⁸ *Tsverianashvili I.A.* The 1972 Stockholm Conference...P. 89.

⁵⁴⁹ *Marmazova T.I., Fomenko M.V.* Political Ecology: Theory...P. 201.

⁵⁵⁰ *Skorokhodova O.N.* Europe and Energy...P. 104.

⁵⁵¹ *Leiren M. D., Reimer I.* Germany: From Feed-In...P. 78.

⁵⁵² *Coptug V.A.* UN Conference on...P. 2.

⁵⁵³ *Kreienkamp J.* The Long Road...P. 9.

⁵⁵⁴ Die Energiewende 2011.

⁵⁵⁵ The Sustainable Development Agenda.

⁵⁵⁶ Paris Agreement.

⁵⁵⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 205.

Over time, two dominant vectors have become clearly visible in the environmental course of the EU and Germany: sustainable development and the fight against climate change. While the first speaks rather to the desire for socio-economic development without harming the environment, the second gradually gained priority over all other environmental areas. This means that climate institutions have gradually appeared at both levels (e.g., the European Commissioner for Climate Action⁵⁵⁸ or the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action⁵⁵⁹), which previously did not exist on such a scale in the context of any other environmental direction. This process was accompanied by extensive adoption of the regulatory framework (e.g., the Climate Action Programme 2030⁵⁶⁰ and the supranational 2030 Climate & Energy Framework⁵⁶¹, amendment to the Climate Change Act and the European Climate Law in 2021, etc.)⁵⁶² and loud statements by top officials about the status of the “first climate-neutral continent.”⁵⁶³.

These changes have affected the value system of citizens. Comparing the materials of the Eurobarometer, there was a significant cumulative increase in public concern and interest in protecting the environment and combating global climate change between 2014 and 2019. Additionally, both in Germany and the European Union, the priority of the global problem of climate change over other environmental topics was evident even in 2014. Finally, both in 2014 and in 2019, Germany's indicators were higher than the average for the European Union⁵⁶⁴. National surveys by Statista also showed that the complex of environmental issues (environment, climate, and energy turnaround) was a priority before the 2019 European elections and the 2021 Bundestag elections⁵⁶⁵. However, materials by Infratest dimap in Tagesschau demonstrated the dominance of the category “climate and environmental protection” in 2019⁵⁶⁶, although in 2021 it dropped to the 2nd place⁵⁶⁷ for two reasons. Firstly, the resolution of cross-border problems was seen more favorably at the supranational or even international level, because the global problem of climate change is more relevant for the European elections. Secondly, there was a great concern of citizens about tangible issues when voting in national elections.

The position of the greens also gradually strengthened. If in 2014 the Alliance 90/The Greens was not considered competent in any topic from the point of view of citizens⁵⁶⁸, then by 2017, and then by 2019 and 2021 it was considered the most qualified party in environmental issues⁵⁶⁹. However, by

⁵⁵⁸ Statement of Connie...

⁵⁵⁹ Ministergalerie.

⁵⁶⁰ Klimaschutz in Deutschland.

⁵⁶¹ European Council (23...

⁵⁶² *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.143.

⁵⁶³ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 128.

⁵⁶⁴ Special Eurobarometer 415...P. 33, 35, 36, 37; Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 8, 14.

⁵⁶⁵ Was ist Ihrer...

⁵⁶⁶ Europawahl 2019. Umfragen wahlentscheidende...

⁵⁶⁷ Bundestagswahl 2021. Welche...

⁵⁶⁸ Europawahl 2014. Kompetenzen.

⁵⁶⁹ Bundestagswahl 2017. Umfragen zu...; Europawahl 2019. Umfragen Kompetenzen; Bundestagswahl 2021. Wer...

2021, in comparison with 2019, both the citizens' perception of the party's competence and the desire to vote for the greens decreased. The other parties, for whose voters environmental issues were most significant, were the Left and the SPD. However, in both cases, the 2021 indicators were lower than in 2019⁵⁷⁰. Evaluating the analysis of the Deutscher Naturschutzring and the Climate Action Network, one can see their agreement with the opinion of citizens. According to the results of activities in 2014-2019, both the Alliance 90/The Greens, the SPD and the Left⁵⁷¹, as well as their political groups formed by the European Green Party with the participation of the European Free Alliance (The Greens/European Free Alliance), the Party of the European Left (The left in the European Parliament – GUE/NGL), and the Party of European Socialists (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats) were recognized as the most climate-oriented⁵⁷².

It is worth clarifying here that in Germany at the present stage, the main parties can be considered to be the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria, the Free Democratic Party, the Alliance 90/The Greens, the Left, and the Alternative for Germany. Except for the latter, they are all members of political parties at European level. Thus, the SPD is a part of the Party of European Socialists, the CDU/CSU is a part of the European People's Party, the FDP is a part of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, the Alliance 90/The Greens is a part of the European Green Party, and the Left is a part of the Party of the European Left⁵⁷³, whereas the AfD works closely with the Identity and Democracy Party⁵⁷⁴. The South Schleswig Voters' Association, which was elected to the Bundestag in 2021, is a member of the European Free Alliance, but it is not represented in the European Parliament⁵⁷⁵. In addition, a set of minor parties (e.g., the Free Voters) also has its own deputies in the European Parliament. This situation exists due to the presence of a 5% barrier in national elections and the absence of more loyal conditions for national minority parties in the European elections. Another equally important difference between the two campaigns is the number of votes offered to citizens. If in the elections to the Bundestag they can vote separately both for candidates (1st vote) and on lists (2nd vote), then in the European elections there are only lists. Otherwise, federal and supranational elections in Germany are quite similar (e.g., people over 18 years old participate in them, postal voting is possible, etc.). The requirements in other member states for elections to the European Parliament may differ, and in some cases (in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Luxembourg and Cyprus) voting is even mandatory⁵⁷⁶.

⁵⁷⁰ Europawahl 2019. Umfragen wahlentscheidende...; Bundestagswahl 2021. Welche...

⁵⁷¹ Wen wählen für...

⁵⁷² Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.

⁵⁷³ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 130.

⁵⁷⁴ Unser Programm für...

⁵⁷⁵ Member Parties [Electronic resource] // European Free Alliance: [official website]. Available at: <https://e-f-a.org/member-parties/> (accessed 09.04.2022).

⁵⁷⁶ 2014 European elections...; 2019 European elections...

The combination of the presented data allowed us to speak about the relevance of the provisions of social constructivism and its more private version in the form of sociological institutionalism for this study. Thus, environmental issues and the priority given the global problem of climate change are material, but socially constructed. This was confirmed by the discourse of top officials, where the emphasis on climate is clearly evident⁵⁷⁷. Historically, the environmental agenda manifested itself in the creation of the first national green parties, followed by the European Federation of Green Parties and the European Green Party⁵⁷⁸. Then, parties began to adapt their ideology to environmental issues more and more seriously, realizing their popularity. This happened thanks to intersubjective ideas and a gradual change of identity. The parties' positions on key environmental issues began to converge more and more, or (in the case of far-right populists and Eurosceptics) the agenda also began to be actively used to develop an alternative point of view. Such transformations have changed the interests and beliefs of citizens. There is a mutual influence of agency and structure, because the interests of citizens influence the parties, and those in power transform the activities of the government (in other words, introduce new social norms) and other institutions. Finally, it can be noted that the similarity of the EU and transnational parties with international organizations lies in their member states and member parties, where norms are created for participants, and there is mutual influence and harmonization.

With regard to the European elections in Germany (2014 and 2019) and comparing them with the Bundestag elections (2013, 2017 and 2021), the concept of second-order national elections also revealed a set of patterns. However, in the context of this study, the 2021 elections became a certain error, since the countdown of electoral cycles begins with national elections, and the next European campaign is only in 2024. Mainly, the 2014 and 2019 results confirmed the concept for the government parties. Although in 2014 (in comparison with 2013), the SPD's indicators did not decrease, and in 2019 (in comparison with 2017) the CSU as the younger sister party in the CDU/CSU. Among the small/radical/new/populist/protest parties, the Eurosceptic AfD (2014) and the Greens (2014 and 2019) showed higher results than in the national elections. The first performed better in 2019 than 2014, but in 2017, switching to migration problems in a timely manner, it was more successful. In the second case, the results also correlated with a greater willingness to vote for environmental issues at the supranational level, both because of the cross-border nature of the problems, and because of a greater willingness to risk and the choice of small/radical/new/populist/protest parties. The 2021 elections showed that the Alliance 90/The Greens is gradually ceasing to be a small party, but its success in 2019 was still more significant⁵⁷⁹. According to such indicator as the turnout for the Bundestag and the European elections,

⁵⁷⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 128.

⁵⁷⁸ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 206.

⁵⁷⁹ Bundestag election 2013; Bundestag election 2017; Bundestag election 2021; Comparative tool.

the concept fully justified itself⁵⁸⁰, which can also be said about the percentage of spoiled ballots in the European elections, which was higher than in the federal ones⁵⁸¹.

The situation in Germany also corresponds to the basic ideas of the spatial theory of party competition, although it adds some nuances to it. Thus, its electoral system has both majoritarian and proportional features⁵⁸², because among the main parties one can see both two key moderate parties that are as close as possible to the center, the CDU/CSU and the SPD⁵⁸³, as well as other more ideologized participants: the radical Left and the Alternative for Germany, and the intermediate Alliance 90/The Greens and the FDP. When voting, both the role of leaders and other similar factors (which is more relevant for the two government parties and corresponds to the provisions concerning the majority system) and ideology (more suitable for other parties and the proportional system) are important. As an example, the unsuccessful participation of A. Laschet from the CDU in 2021 or the success of the green ideology in 2019 can be taken⁵⁸⁴. Separately, it is worth noting minor irrational parties whose chances of getting into the Bundestag are virtually zero (unless they have special conditions). However, due to the absence of a 5% barrier in the European elections, the situation is slightly better. The experience other European countries suggests the favorability of resorting to coalition cooperation⁵⁸⁵. This does not exclude associations such as, for example, the Party of Democratic Socialism and the Labor and Social Justice – The Electoral Alternative⁵⁸⁶. However, despite the excessive duality of the CDU/CSU, the presence of crisis-based (primarily migration) rhetoric and a special historical legacy that delayed the emergence of an AfD-type party; further expansion of the system is quite problematic. All the key niches are already occupied⁵⁸⁷.

Studying the European elections through the prism of the spatial theory of party competition is more challenging due to the differing systems in member countries. In Germany, there is no division of votes into first and second in these elections, which brings them closer only to the proportional system. Furthermore, as a result of the concept of second-order national elections, voting in a supranational institution is less significant. Accordingly, it is quite logical that national peculiarities are still somehow transmitted to the supranational level. Consequently, for example, the CDU/CSU and the SPD are usually moderate and leading anyway, except for the SPD in 2019⁵⁸⁸.

⁵⁸⁰ Turnout by year...; Wahlbeteiligung bei den...

⁵⁸¹ Ungültige Stimmabgabe.

⁵⁸² *Nikitenko A.I.* Features of Modern Electoral System...P. 56.

⁵⁸³ Bundestagswahlergebnisse seit 1949.

⁵⁸⁴ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.145-146; *Mavrogordatos G.Th.* Downs Revisited: Spatial...P. 337.

⁵⁸⁵ Bundestag election 2021; Comparative tool.

⁵⁸⁶ Auf dem Weg...; Bundestagswahlergebnisse seit 1949.

⁵⁸⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 148-150.

⁵⁸⁸ Comparative tool; 2019 European elections...

Similarly, to Germany, transnational parties have two relatively moderate leading forces (the EPP and the PES), as well as two radical flanks (the PEL and the ID Party). On the left, the EGP occupies a rather intermediate position, but further differences are noticeable. Firstly, the ALDE is increasingly able to compete with the EPP for a center-right position. An interesting fact here is the cooperation of the liberal democrats with the strictly centrist and therefore, the unpopular EDP, if we rely on the provisions of A. Downs. Secondly, the conservatives and reformists are located slightly to the left of the ID Party. There is no equivalent in the Bundestag. Earlier, there was the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe in the European Parliament, whose disappearance can be explained by some duplication of the niche, which also corresponds to the provisions of the theory. Finally, the argument of G. Th. Mavrogordatos about the ambiguity of regionalists is quite relevant in the context of the European Union, whose members not only work closely with the greens, but can also join other more conservative groups⁵⁸⁹.

⁵⁸⁹ *Mavrogordatos G.Th.* Downs Revisited: Spatial...P. 337; Comparative tool; European Union. Group...

Chapter 2. The Influence of the Global Problem of Climate Change on the Transformation of European Parties in the 2019 European Parliament Election Campaign: Key Trends in the EU and Germany

In this chapter, the author analyzes the main trends regarding the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of European parties within the framework of the 2019 election campaign for the European Parliament at both supranational and national levels. To achieve this, the author characterized the provisions of the political programmes/manifestos of the main transnational parties and German national parties. In addition, texts from 2014 were used as a basis for comparison in order to determine the positive or negative dynamics of climate provisions' development and their adaptation to European and national political trends. Furthermore, publications on the official websites of the parties along with recordings of debates, interviews, podcasts, and other public speeches (including those at party Congresses) by lead candidates, leaders, and other active representatives of the parties were analyzed. Based on the results, the main features of interpretation and priorities in the fight against global climate change through the prism of one ideology or another were derived, trends were compared at two levels, and progress/regression in deepening and/or expanding climatic provisions was characterized. Subsequently, the general election results for parties of two levels were characterized, taking into account the influence of the global problem of climate change, and the main non-climatic factors that also affected the 2019 campaign in the European Union and Germany were identified. Therefore, this chapter was necessary to provide a comprehensive explanation of the results of the 2019 election campaign in the EU and Germany, with an emphasis on the influence on them of a combination of aspects (public opinion, party rhetoric, political events, etc.) related to the global problem of climate change.

2.1. The Global Problem of Climate Change in the Political Agenda of the Main Transnational Parties in 2019

In this section, the author analyzes the political agenda of the main transnational parties through the lense of the global problem of climate change. This analysis was based on the content of programmes/manifestos, interviews of their leaders, and parties' participation in debates and other significant events that are relevant to this research. The listed sources allowed for a comprehensive characterization of both the parties transformation and their ideological interpretation of the research topic.

Before proceeding to the comparison of the programmes/manifestos of the main transnational parties, it is important to reference the key debates of the lead candidates that took place in Brussels on

May 15, 2019. Despite the limitations imposed by the regulations (such as speech duration and predefined topics), these debates provide insights into the most prominent features of the interpretations of the representatives of the parties on the global problem of climate change and highlight those parties that placed the most emphasis on the climate issue. The procedure has already been presented in more detail in section 1.3. of the 1st Chapter, which is dedicated to the features of the functioning of political parties and the conduct of election campaigns at the supranational and national levels (specifically, the European Parliament and the Bundestag).

It should be noted that during a similar meeting in 2014, no separate category was allocated to issues related to environmental protection and combating global climate change. The candidates discussed various topics such as the economy, Euroscepticism, immigration, religious issues, corruption, the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, etc.⁵⁹⁰. However, in 2019, the agenda somewhat shifted to reflect current priorities. Foremost, the candidates touched upon migration, unemployment, foreign policy, corporate taxation, and more. Notably, the category devoted to the global problem of climate change became one of the most discussed. Candidates not only stated their positions on the topic but also asked additional questions and presented counterarguments to their opponents⁵⁹¹.

In 2014, only S. Keller (European Greens) and G. Verhofstadt (ALDE) mentioned the global problem of climate change in their opening speeches. While G. Verhofstadt acknowledged climate change along with other important problems like unemployment, S. Keller determined the place of Europe “at the forefront of fighting climate change.”⁵⁹². In 2019, the social democrats joined the ALDE and the European Greens, and F. Timmermans proposed to “put the climate crisis and sustainability on the very-very top of the list of the next Commission.”⁵⁹³. M. Vestager (liberal democrats), when listing key topics, also mentioned climate change, and S. Keller from the European Greens, not only acknowledged the climate crisis but also emphasized the need for Europe to protect “our common planet.”⁵⁹⁴.

In 2014, the candidates completely ignored environmental issues, excluding climate change, whereas in 2019 the situation did not show much change, however some environment-related topics were touched upon. In 2019, in the context of climate change, M. Vestager suggested using the crisis as an excuse to create new jobs (e.g., in the construction of high-speed railways), and to develop technologies. F. Timmermans proposed implementing a Carbon tax for all companies in Europe, especially large ones. S. Keller emphasized the need for immediate action, criticized other political groups and climate-harmful subsidies, and stressed the importance of technological development and

⁵⁹⁰ Eurovision Debate.

⁵⁹¹ Debate of the...

⁵⁹² Eurovision Debate.

⁵⁹³ Debate of the...

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

the connection between climate change with biodiversity loss. J. Zahradil (conservatives and reformists) acknowledged the importance of gradually introducing necessary technologies without setting unrealistic targets, as well as developing a more environmentally oriented agriculture. N. Cué (PEL) pointed out that over 70% of pollution comes from transnational companies rather than citizens. M. Weber, as a candidate from the most represented in the 2014-2019 convocation EPP, generally supported the current EU course with a target of achieving “climate neutrality” by 2050, expressing concerns for socially vulnerable population groups (e.g., pensioners). F. Timmermans criticized him referring to non-governmental organizations, and calling the European People's Party “dinosaurs” in voting on new proposals in the context of the climate crisis⁵⁹⁵. M. Weber responded by advocating for the expansion of the EU Emissions Trading System, including the aviation sector, and emphasizing innovation and technology. S. Keller continued the criticism, highlighting that the EPP voted against an ambitious reform of the EU Emissions Trading System, to which M. Weber recalled such sustainable development components as the economy and the social sphere. M. Vestager noted that climate change is more important than party affiliation, to which M. Weber agreed. N. Cué criticized the closure of steel mills and the ignored proposals of trade unions for producing steel that does not require washing, which would increase production and reduce waste from detergents. However, M. Weber avoided addressing the issue directly and cited Europe as an example for the rest of the world, emphasizing the impossibility of solving the problem of climate change alone⁵⁹⁶.

Speaking about economic issues, S. Keller in 2014 not only talked about creating sustainable jobs but also about “greener economy and sustainable economy.”⁵⁹⁷. The candidate included not only renewable energy or energy efficiency, but also education and health. Furthermore, in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and the need to reduce dependence on Russian supplies, she proposed a way out in the form of “investing in renewable resources independent.”⁵⁹⁸. According to the politician, this decision would offer advantages such as independence from supplies and greater economic stability. However, other participants did not share the enthusiasm of the green candidate. Indeed, J.-C. Juncker (EPP) mentioned the problem of dependence on Russia even in the introduction, but exclusively in the energy context. In the economic direction, the importance of energy was also emphasized by G. Verhofstadt (liberal democrats) and M. Schulz (social democrats). In turn, the candidates still remembered about sustainable development. Thus, in the economic direction, J.-C. Juncker mentioned sustainable employment, and A. Tsipras (left) referred to a “sustainable solution for the debt” in his final

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.; Eurovision Debate.

⁵⁹⁶ Debate of the...

⁵⁹⁷ Eurovision Debate.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

monologue⁵⁹⁹. In the final part, only S. Keller spoke about the climate⁶⁰⁰, but in 2019, N. Cué (left) joined her.

In 2019, in non-thematic headings, M. Vestager attributed climate change to the most important causes of migration, noted the importance of animal protection and technology exports in trade. S. Keller proposed investing in a green economy to create hundreds of thousands of jobs and announced the priority of the climate aspect in trade agreements. In turn, N. Cué criticized the actions of free trade agreements, within which it is not possible to persuade foreign policy partners to comply with social and environmental standards⁶⁰¹.

Taken together, it can be determined that while in 2014 the global problem of climate change was practically ignored (except for the thematically oriented European Green Party and, to a much lesser extent, the ALDE), in 2019, a number of other parties (the ALDE, the PES and, to a lesser extent, the European Left) immediately turned significant attention to it. Although all participating parties spoke about the climate, only those who addressed issues outside the thematic heading should be considered more closely. In addition, positive dynamics can also be seen in the public reaction on social networks, which were repeatedly addressed by the hosts during the debate⁶⁰². This confirms the provisions of social constructivism, because other environmental topics, as in 2014, were not of interest to both candidates and citizens⁶⁰³. The attempt to link climate change to other European problems is also interesting. For example, according to the Special Eurobarometer 486: Europeans in 2019, immigration ranked first among supranational problems in 2019, while unemployment ranked first among national ones. M. Vestager linked climate change to these two topics, and in the case of unemployment, S. Keller agreed with her⁶⁰⁴.

The election programmes/manifestoes have elaborated on the key strategic points mentioned by the lead candidates for each of the major transnational parties. Here it can be recalled the classification previously presented by the Climate Action Network, which divided the political groups formed by the all-European parties on “defenders”, “delayers”, and “dinosaurs” in climate issues, based on activities in the 2014 – 2019 convocation.

Following this logic, it would be most logical to start this section of the study with the “defenders”, which included groups formed by the European Green Party with the European Free Alliance, as well as the Party of the European Left and the Party of European Socialists⁶⁰⁵.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Debate of the...

⁶⁰² Ibid.; Eurovision Debate.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ *Lisenkova A.D. Adaptation of the European Union...P. 104; Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 8, 14; Debate of the...*

⁶⁰⁵ *Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.*

European Green Party (European Greens)

The ideological feature of the European Greens is their interpretation of priorities either through the prism of ecology, or endowing the manifesto with extensive environmental epithets. However, it is necessary to separate them from general provisions and specific proposals.

First of all, discussions about innovation, reducing the ecological footprint, the circular economy, sustainable development, financing, and mitigation and adaptation are fairly standard and general for the party. In the international arena, more specifically, they propose creating a World Environmental Organization under the auspices of the UN structures, including the “concept of climate refugees” in international law, additionally, they played a leading role in the negotiations on a binding climate agreement in 2015 at the UN Conference in Paris⁶⁰⁶.

As part of the Green New Deal, the European Greens proposed developing renewable energy, increasing energy efficiency, rejecting shale gas and fracking, and gradually abandoning nuclear energy (with immediate closure of the most dangerous plants) and subsidies (including for other fossil fuels or nuclear programmes such as the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor – ITER), and holding operators accountable for damages and consequences of accidents. In addition, the party planned to reform the Emissions Trading System, introduce national carbon floor pricing, create the European Renewable Energy Community, and supplement the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) criteria with measures of sustainable prosperity and well-being. The EU budget was supposed to be formed from contributions such as the energy/carbon tax. The target was planned to increase from 20% to 30% by 2020 compared to 1990, and then to 55% by 2030 with a full transition to renewable energy and achieving “climate neutrality” by 2050. By 2030, the party aimed for 45% of energy consumption to come from the RE, with a 40% decrease in energy consumption within 15 years.

In matters of transportation, the party aimed to shift from aviation and road transport to less harmful and more energy efficient modes (bicycles, sustainable water modes, public and rail transport), with a focus on cross-border rail links, especially for the goods transportation⁶⁰⁷.

In 2019, the European Greens reaffirmed their statement that Europe must “lead the way on climate action,” remembering their own important historical role⁶⁰⁸. The party supported infrastructure projects, research, innovation, investment, energy efficiency, renewable energy, a carbon-neutral economy, a ban on fracking, phasing out coal and other fossil fuels, including gas and nuclear energy by 2030, as well as special subsidies.

⁶⁰⁶ Change Europe, Vote Green. Green Common Manifesto. European Elections 2014 [Electronic resource] // European Greens: [official website]. 2014. Available at: https://europeangreens.eu/sites/europeangreens.eu/files/CommonManifesto2014_0.pdf (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Time to renew...

Arguing in favour of its Green New Deal, the party called for a high minimum cost for emissions trading, the implementation of a European Climate Law, and a 55% reduction in emissions by 2030. They also advocated for the restoration of forests and soils, the introduction of a border-tax adjustment, and tax increases on fossil fuels in member states. The EGP pushed for the supplementation of the Stability and Growth Pact with the Sustainability and Prosperity Pact, the establishment of a new environmental action agenda, the creation of an international environmental court, the implementation of environmental standards in trade based on the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, and addressing climate change from a security perspective.

In the field of transportation, the party reiterated its support for the development of railway communication, public, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. They emphasized the concept of “clean” transport in general and promoted the transfer of freight traffic to railways or waterways. Their main aspiration was zero-emissions from all modes of transport, which would be achieved through measures such as a European flight tax and a value-added tax (VAT) on tickets. They also called for the abolition of tax exemptions on kerosene for airplanes (with the exception of long-haul flights due to the lack of alternatives) to the party highlighted the “polluter pays” principle and expressed the intention to phase out fossil fuel cars by 2030, while ensuring that biofuels should do not harm the environment. They discussed controlling emissions from ships and implementing a ban on heavy fuel oil emissions in the Arctic and Antarctic regions⁶⁰⁹.

The case of the greens is unique among supranational parties. They were trapped in too ambitious targets, set back in 2014, which limited their ability to gradually and harmoniously increase their ambitions in the fight against global climate change from one election to another, for fear of excesses and accusations of populism. Consequently, their set of targets has remained unchanged since 2014, which has not prevented the party from proposing new mechanisms and expanding their focus on related environmental issues, without specifying specific numerical targets⁶¹⁰.

European Free Alliance

The regionalists devoted a significant portion of their 2014 manifesto to energy issues, without directly mentioning the global problem of climate change. However, their ambitions indirectly pointed to this topic. Foremost, this was the “annual carbon emissions reduction target” and the priority of renewable energy and energy efficiency in general, including funding and necessary research in areas such as capture and storage technology, small-scale hydroelectric power plants, and sea bed turbines, etc.⁶¹¹. The party was skeptical about fracking, and advocated for the gradual abandonment of fossil fuels and, especially, nuclear energy⁶¹².

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ It's Time for..

⁶¹² Ibid.

In 2019, the European Free Alliance highlighted its historic commitment to environmental issues and spoke more directly about the global problem of climate change, especially in relation to the fishing and agricultural industries. However, the specific goals did not significantly change. They continued to emphasize renewable energy, energy efficiency, and aligning their plans with the SDGs. Regionalists reaffirmed their ambitions to phase out nuclear and fossil energy in general, as well as their commitment to ban fracking⁶¹³.

In fact, the main ideological feature of the party in the context of the global problem of climate change was the priority of the principle of subsidiarity. Accordingly, the role of the regions in energy supply issues and the importance of allowing the regions to independently choose their energy sources, although the topic of climate eventually received more coverage⁶¹⁴.

Party of the European Left (European Left)

Despite a rather high level of environmental engagement, the Party of the European Left did not offer anything specific in 2014. To a greater extent, the text primarily consisted of ideologically critical arguments about the “ultraliberal structure” of the European Union and the international crisis of the capitalist system, which led to environmental and social consequences⁶¹⁵. They provided an example of mismanagement of funds by the European Central Bank, which prioritized protecting financial investments rather than social and environmental development. They party also criticized “transforming the private debts of the banks into public debts.”⁶¹⁶. At the same time, the global climate change still stood out separately. They pointed out the high level of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU, the detrimental effect of free trade zones on emissions and the inefficiency of the Emissions Trading System, which the party referred to as “exchange rights to pollute.”⁶¹⁷. It was proposed to develop renewable energy sources and energy supply, as well as to finance projects under a new model of production and consumption⁶¹⁸.

Neoliberalism, capitalism, and profit-seeking were once again criticized in 2019, citing their consequences as the main contributors to “most of the ecological problems we face.”⁶¹⁹. Along with inequality, poverty and war, climate change was identified as a driver of migration, while the lack of reforms and problems with legal migration channels were also criticized. The party addressing these issues through the promotion of renewable energy, improvement of public transport, and the fight against

⁶¹³ Building a Europe...

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.; It’s Time for...

⁶¹⁵ Change Europe for a Europe of Work [Electronic resource] // European Left: [official website]. 2013. Available at: https://www.european-left.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/political_doc_en.pdf (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Let’s create a different Europe (archived) [Electronic resource] // European Left: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20190526172323/https://www.european-left.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/7392-01_EL_Wahlpr19_A6_EN_V02_190321.pdf (accessed 08.01.2023).

“so-called market solutions to carbon emissions.”⁶²⁰. In fact, the party did present anything new, continuing to discuss environmental issues vaguely.

Thus, the main characteristic of the PEL could be described as consistently linking capitalism to all the problems of Europe. According to their perspective, it is impossible to effectively address environmental problems, including global climate change, without fundamentally changing the economic system. In this regard, they argued for the revision of European treaties aiming at “winning power for the people, workers, and residents.”⁶²¹.

Party of European Socialists

In 2014, the social democrats emphasized the importance of “regaining” European global environmental leadership, particularly in the fight against climate change⁶²². This rhetoric was understandable, as it was the first elections since the EU failure at the Copenhagen Conference. It was logical to mention the need to establish new targets after 2020 while also meeting the existing targets for energy efficiency, greenhouse gases reduction, and increasing the share of renewable energy⁶²³. The text of this manifesto included fairly general environmental points about improving technology and production, implementing environmental and social standards in trade agreements, and transitioning to more sustainable changing models of consumption, production, mobility, processing and financing⁶²⁴.

In 2019, the PES prioritized the fight against climate change and highlighted the importance of maintaining leadership in this area. Compared to 2014, the party mentioned specific instruments, such as the Sustainable Development Pact, the Just Transition Fund to implement the SDGs, increased ambitions for the Paris Agreement and new scientific data, industry renewal to be “climate-neutral” by 2050 and leadership in renewable energy, socially fair taxation of CO₂ emissions across the EU, improved mobility, energy-efficient housing provision, agricultural reform, and, like in 2014, the inclusion of social and environmental standards in trade agreements⁶²⁵. However, not all these tools were truly innovative as ideas about taxation were proposed back in the 1990s, and the concept of the Just Transition Fund was introduced in 2016⁶²⁶.

As a result, while increasing climate ambitions, the party also remained committed to their ideological social orientation, which manifested itself in the desire not to leave “no person and no

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 132; PES Manifesto ‘Towards a new Europe’ [Electronic resource] // Party of European Socialists. 2014. Available at: https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/partyofeuropeansocialists/pages/1/attachments/original/1397230958/110001306_PES_Manifesto_UK.pdf?1397230958 (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁶²³ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 132.

⁶²⁴ Ibid; PES Manifesto ‘Towards...

⁶²⁵ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 132-133; A New Social Contract for Europe. PES Manifesto 2019 [Electronic resource] // Party of European Socialists: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://www.pes.eu/export/sites/default/.galleries/Documents-gallery/PES-Manifesto-2019_EN.pdf_2063069299.pdf (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁶²⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 132-133.

territory behind in the green and digital transitions.”⁶²⁷. In particular, a long-term investment plan was proposed to prepare workers for the green transition and address the causes of migration, including climate change⁶²⁸.

The next category to be considered is the “delayers”, which includes a group formed by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe and the European Democratic Party⁶²⁹.

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

In 2014, the liberal democrats were already talking about Europe that “takes the lead in fighting climate change.”⁶³⁰. Their manifesto included points on achieving a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy, developing renewable energy sources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and improving energy efficiency. The Emissions Trading System was designated as a key instrument, promoting innovation and supporting initiatives such as carbon capture and storage technologies, phasing out harmful subsidies (including those for fossil fuels), and financing renewable energy⁶³¹.

In 2019, the ALDE reiterated their commitment to the leading international role in combating climate change. Like other parties, they emphasized the need for investments aligned with the Paris Agreement (e.g., rail infrastructure, zero-emission cars and decarbonization of all transport), research, the SDGs, and the need for international cooperation. Accordingly, it was necessary to complete the creation of the Energy Union, improve energy efficiency, increase the share of renewable energy, including through the creation of a single European energy market, reduce emissions, including in transport, shipping and aviation. The ALDE reaffirmed the priority of the Emissions Trading System and proposed extending it to the transport sector, as well as set specific targets for a 55% reduction by 2030 and achieving “neutrality” by 2050⁶³². Finally, it was proposed to update the international Chicago Convention on international civil aviation to revise fuel tax exemptions.

Thus, the ALDE also began to move away from general phrases on the global problem of climate change towards more specific mechanisms and targets, while still emphasizing its ideological priorities of growth, competitiveness and innovation, and promoting a resource-efficient circular economy⁶³³.

⁶²⁷ A New Social...

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.

⁶³⁰ A Europe that...

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Freedom, opportunity, prosperity: the Liberal vision for the future of Europe [Electronic resource] // Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe: [official website]. 2018. Available at: https://www.aldeparty.eu/freedom_opportunity_prosperity_the_liberal_vision_for_the_future_of_europe (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁶³³ Ibid.

European Democratic Party

In 2014 the European democrats have called for “good” governance of environmental, climate, and energy issues⁶³⁴. They supported new targets for reducing emissions to reduce emissions, increasing energy efficiency, and expanding the share of renewables by 2030, in the name of “overcoming the paralysis of post-Kyoto.”⁶³⁵. The party has promoted CO₂ reduction in agriculture, renewable energy research, and the inclusion of social and environmental provisions in all free trade agreements based on the principle of reciprocity⁶³⁶.

In 2019, European Democratic Party supported the current European emission reduction targets for 2020⁶³⁷. They emphasized the special role of the European initiative in light of the USA’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, whereas the “transition to a green economy” was designated as the “third industrial revolution.”⁶³⁸. Promoting innovation and investment, the party proposed a correlation between climate policy and other areas of EU activity. Thus, climate change was characterized as one of the causes of migration, and trade agreements were to be based on the Paris Agreement. In addition, they advocated for setting prices for greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to renewable energy, creating mechanisms to monitor the fulfillment of Paris Conference obligations, expanding the tax on financial transactions to create a global investment fund, and allocating 100 billion euros for 2019-2024 to develop the climate component of the energy industry, as well as promote decarbonization and electromobility.

Thus, one can also observe a certain shift from general judgments to the promotion of more specific measures based on innovation, growth and the development of European integration. However, the centrist position of the party prevents a full examination of the party’s climate rhetoric through some unique ideological themes. In addition, the EDP has not proposed progressive targets⁶³⁹.

The next category was formed by transnational parties, whose groups have been classified as “dinosaurs” in terms of climate protection. These are the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom, the European People's Party, and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe⁶⁴⁰.

⁶³⁴ Dalla Crisi Dell’europa, A Una Nuova Speranza Europea. Il tempo della Rifondazione [Electronic resource] // Parti Démocrate Européen. 2014. Available at: <https://www.repubblicafutura.sm/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Manifeste-PDE-IT.pdf> (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Europe Stand Up! [Electronic resource] // European Democratic Party: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://www.democrats.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/2019_PDEManifesteElect_EN_0.pdf (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁶³⁸ Ibid; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental...P. 210.

⁶³⁹ Europe Stand Up!

⁶⁴⁰ *Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...*P. 4.

Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom (formerly the European Alliance for Freedom, later the Identity and Democracy Party)

The highest form of antagonism among transnational parties was achieved by the predecessors of the Identity and Democracy Party. In the 2014 manifesto of the European Alliance for Freedom, the entire complex of environmental issues was completely ignored⁶⁴¹.

It is not possible to compare this decision with the text of 2019, as the Movement for Europe of Nations and Freedom had no manifesto⁶⁴². However, reference can be made to the electoral programme of one of its leading members, the French National Rally (formerly the National Front), which also traditionally largely overlooked environmental issues⁶⁴³. In 2019, the party expressed skepticism about environmentally harmful free trade agreements and referred to the movement of goods between continents, with different regions involved in production, processing, and consumption, as “anti-environmental⁶⁴⁴.” Accordingly, the global problem of climate change has also not been adequately disclosed.

The predecessors of the Identity and Democracy Party generally consistently ignored the issue of climate change. This was determined by the lack of unified position among the members, not only regarding specific targets, but also the anthropogenic nature and significance of the problem itself. However, two complementary processes can also be traced in this context. Right-wing populists realized the popularity of the climate agenda among citizens and their leaders changed. In particular, the former leader of the National Front, J.-M. Le Pen, called climate change the “new religion of the bobo” (bohemian bourgeoisie), but the rhetoric changed under the leadership of M. Le Pen⁶⁴⁵. A similar transformation, for example, took place in the Freedom Party of Austria. As a comparison, M. Helme, one of the leading members and the leader of the Conservative People's Party of Estonia since 2020, called for Estonia's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, labeling it “classic leftist activity,” back in 2016⁶⁴⁶. He also described the current activity as “climate hysteria” in 2021⁶⁴⁷.

As a result, assessing the place of the global problem of climate change in the rhetoric of the far-right and right-wing populists in the run-up to the 2019 elections is challenging. The topic was not a key focus for them and, due to disagreements among national members, it was largely ignored. Nevertheless,

⁶⁴¹ Political Party Manifesto // European Alliance for Freedom. Brussels: European Alliance for Freedom, 2014. P. 1-8.

⁶⁴² Charveriat C., Richer C., Highton R. IEEP: 2019 European Elections' Manifestos Analysis [Electronic resource] // Institute for European Environmental Policy. 2019. Available at: <https://ieep.eu/uploads/articles/attachments/8d02097f-3388-4216-aa6c-6a33d13aba31/IEEP%20Manifesto%20Analysis.pdf?v=63722187465> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁶⁴³ Européennes: ce que propose le FN [Electronic resource] // ParisDepeches. 26.05.2014. Available at: https://www.parisdepeches.fr/16-Politique/2048-France/9831-Europeennes_que_propose.html (accessed 23.07.2022).

⁶⁴⁴ Pour une Europe...

⁶⁴⁵ Lisenkova A.D. Transformation of the Climate Change Agenda...P. 50, 52.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid. P. 49-50.

⁶⁴⁷ Martin Helme: meie väärtused on rahvuslus, kristlus ja vabadus [Electronic resource] // Meie Kirik. 05.08.2021. Available at: <https://www.meiekirik.net/index.php/uudislood/1808-martin-helme-meie-vaeaertused-on-rahvuslus-kristlus-ja-vabadus> (accessed 23.07.2022).

there was a certain shift away from the only radical perception of global climate change, which is characteristic of parties located to the right of the political center.

European People's Party

In 2014, the Christian democrats focused on both climate change and concerns about the economy and energy market. The importance of sustainable investments was acknowledged, including renewable energy/low carbon technologies, while maintaining the industrial base and affordable energy prices. They also emphasized sustainable growth based on a competitive and innovative environment-respecting economy, as well as the efficient use of energy⁶⁴⁸.

In 2019, the European People's Party reaffirmed its international leadership ambition to fight global climate change and emphasized the need to uphold the evidence-based Paris Agreement. The party also highlighted the importance of “clean” technology innovation and expanded its climate provisions compared to 2014⁶⁴⁹. These included ensuring an efficient price for CO₂ within the framework of the EU Emissions Trading System, providing additional incentives for emission reduction in industry and energy sectors, promoting investments and innovations for low-carbon mobility, establishing an Energy Union, and adapting agricultural policies.

However, following its relatively conservative course, the EPP chose to avoid specifying any targets. Furthermore, the emphasis on the global problem of climate change seemed to stem mainly from its popularity and previous policies, which may indicate an absence of real priority of this topic for the party. The lack of detailed discussion on other less popular environmental topics further supports this point⁶⁵⁰.

Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (formerly the Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists, later the European Conservatives and Reformists Party)

The conservatives and reformists were even more restrained than the EPP. In their 2014 programme, they supported the ideas of a sustainable and inclusive economy, as well as its further growth, including through the Europe 2020 growth strategy. However, the party's proposed course mainly reflected their traditional ideology, which was confirmed by the provisions of proportionality, subsidiarity, factuality, coherence, security, and encouragement of the involvement of a wide range of parties⁶⁵¹.

⁶⁴⁸ Why Vote for the European People's Party? [Electronic resource] // European People's Party: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://www.epp.eu/papers/epp-elections-manifesto-2014/> (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁶⁴⁹ EPP Manifesto 'Let's Open the Next Chapter for Europe Together' [Electronic resource] // European People's Party: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.epp.eu/files/uploads/2019/05/EPP-MANIFESTO-2019.pdf> (accessed 17.03.2022).

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ Commission Work Programme: Unleashing Europe's potential [Electronic resource] // European Conservatives and Reformists Group: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://ecrgroup.eu/files/ECR-CWP-brochure-FINAL-VERSION.pdf> (accessed 17.03.2022).

Similarly, the conservatives and reformists supported many of the existing environmental and/or climate targets but opposed the introduction of new documents and additional costs. Thus, there was skepticism towards targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 20% by 2020. The party advocated global agreements under the UNFCCC, rather than unilateral measures. This perspective extended to emissions from aviation under the auspices of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Moreover, in the context of long-term goals for 2030 and 2050, the conservatives and reformists were critical of the intention to phase out nuclear power due to concerns about its impact on energy efficiency. However, they supported the development of VAT incentives for energy-saving products. Additionally, the party supported the Single European Transport Area, an efficient European energy market, as well as more efficient air transport through the implementation of the Single European Sky⁶⁵².

In 2019, reflecting their conservative and Eurosceptic stance, and seemingly protesting against one of the most popular pro-European topics, the party's programme did not include any climate provisions⁶⁵³. Thus, the party's approach to such costly policies can be summarized by J. Zahradil's words of "less but better" the already mentioned debate⁶⁵⁴.

Overall, supranational parties in their manifestos or programmes, have expectedly increased their attention to the climate problem since 2014. Specific proposals have been made by the European Green Party, the Party of European Socialists, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe and, to a lesser extent, the European Democratic Party. On the other hand, the Party of the European Left, as well as the European Free Alliance and, to a lesser extent, the European People's Party, have focused more on the general environmental context or climate issues. It is worth noting that only the ALDE and the European Greens fixed a new assumed target of 55%⁶⁵⁵. However, as early as 2018, J. Leinen, the Chair of the PES Environment and Climate Change Network, expressed support for achieving this ambitious target by 2030⁶⁵⁶. Nevertheless, the party did not include this in the text, and when comparing the overall environmental activity of the socialists and democrats before and after the European elections, particularly with the appointment of F. Timmermans as the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for the European Green Deal, it can be concluded that there was an even more significant increase in the climate agenda after the 2019 election campaign⁶⁵⁷.

Such trends were typical not only for the social democrats but extended beyond the global problem of climate change. There has been an increase in the number of news publications on environmental issues in general, as observed on the website of the European Democratic Party. For comparison, in July 2022 alone, there were approximately ten thematic entries in the news section of the

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Retune the EU...

⁶⁵⁴ Debate of the...

⁶⁵⁵ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental...P. 209-210.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid. P. 209; *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 132.

⁶⁵⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 133.

official website of the European democrats, compared to only half that number in the entirety of 2019⁶⁵⁸. Similarly, the Party of the European Left announced the launch of the environmental campaign “Alternatives to the capitalist Green Deal in Europe” much later. In both cases, these developments can be correlated with the parallel policy of the European Union, such as the European Green Deal and subsequent transformations, as well as the desire to adapt to the trend popular among voters⁶⁵⁹.

The general position of the left during the 2019 campaign can be summarized by the words of V. Tomić, the second leading candidate of the party, in an interview with Euronews*: “With neoliberal capitalism you cannot really change the climate goals because it follows unlimited growth on the planet which has some limits.”⁶⁶⁰. At the same time, it was V. Tomić who called the global climate change “the biggest crisis of 21st century” during the debates of the lead candidates in Maastricht⁶⁶¹.

It is important to clarify that the debates in Brussels mentioned earlier in this section, although significant, were not the only ones. Another meeting took place in Maastricht on April 29, 2019, where J. Zahradil and F. Timmermans also took part, but the European Greens (B. Eickhout), the liberal democrats (G. Verhofstadt) and the left (V. Tomić) represented the second lead candidates from each of the parties. These parties opted not to nominate only one candidate in order to comply with the gender principle⁶⁶². Nevertheless, in the case of the ALDE, G. Verhofstadt announced in Florence on May 2 that the party had a list of seven candidates as a protest against the “Spitzenkandidat” (lead candidate) process and the lack of support from other parties for the introduction of transnational lists of candidates.

In addition to the already mentioned meetings in Maastricht on April 29 and in Florence on May 2⁶⁶³, another notable event was the debate between F. Timmermans and M. Weber in Berlin, which was aired on ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen/Second German Television) on May 16⁶⁶⁴. A similar meeting was held in Strasbourg and was broadcasted on 17 April by FRANCE 24. It is noteworthy that there were no references to the global problem of climate change, sustainable development and environmental protection, except in the latter case⁶⁶⁵.

⁶⁵⁸ News [Electronic resource] // European Democrats: [official website]. Available at: <http://www.democrats.eu/en/news?page=1> (accessed 09.07.2022).

⁶⁵⁹ Alternatives to the capitalist Green Deal in Europe [Electronic resource] // European Left: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://www.european-left.org/campaigns/alternatives-to-the-capitalist-green-deal-in-europe/> (accessed 09.07.2022).

⁶⁶⁰ Raw Politics – Fragen an die Spitzenkandidatin der Europäischen Linken [Electronic resource] // Euronews*. 30.04.2019. Available at: <https://de.euronews.com/my-europe/2019/04/30/raw-politics-fragen-an-die-spitzenkandidatin-der-europaischen-linken> (accessed 01.05.2021). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁶⁶¹ The Maastricht Debate 2019 - Who will be the next President of the European Commission? [Electronic resource] // POLITICO Europe. 2019. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7dnTm2Bid0> (accessed 29.07.2022).

⁶⁶² Ibid.; 2 May – Spitzenkandidaten debate • Sala del consiglio | SoU 2019 [Electronic resource] // EUI TV. 2019. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SH2jAEU8Jc> (accessed 29.07.2022).

⁶⁶³ 2 May – Spitzenkandidaten...

⁶⁶⁴ Das #tvDuell zur Europawahl #GehtWählen | 16.05.2019 | Frans Timmermans, Manfred Weber [Electronic resource] // Deutschland Talk. 2019. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ecc19Pdqeec> (accessed 31.07. 2022).

⁶⁶⁵ EU Commission Clash: The Candidates' Debate - Part 1 [Electronic resource] // FRANCE 24 English. 2019. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9g0xSoBrYwc> (accessed 31.07.2022); EU Commission Clash: The Candidates' Debate

During the Maastricht debate, F. Timmermans characterized the left, the social democrats and the greens as “on the green side,” while positioning liberals “in the middle” (probably between the “dinosaurs” and those who are “on the green side”)⁶⁶⁶. However, as G. Verhofstadt rightly noted, it is the liberal democrats who are already creating the necessary majority in the European Parliament, which would otherwise be impossible. In response, B. Eickhout and the moderators raised a relevant question that undermined the position of the liberal democrat, who initially argued for the need for environmental standards and/or the inclusion of the Paris Agreement provisions in trade negotiations and agreements⁶⁶⁷. The green politician highlighted that it was the liberal democrats who supported negotiations with the United States, despite the country having already withdrawn from the agreement, to which G. Verhofstadt could only answer that there should be no deal with the United States without the Paris Agreement, reaffirming the same stance in Florence. He also expressed support for carbon taxes as an advantage to the EU's own resources⁶⁶⁸.

V. Tomić also emphasized the need for “strict rules” for imports⁶⁶⁹. In an interview with Euronews*, S. Keller agreed with her partner in the European Greens, defining that “climate above trade.”⁶⁷⁰. Summarizing the position of the party, B. Eickhout defined: “It's more important that we not only talk about climate change but also act on it,” while promising “to claim to be a leader on climate action.”⁶⁷¹. F. Timmermans also pledged to take “personal responsibility” for achieving the SDGs⁶⁷².

In an interview with The Guardian, G. Verhofstadt criticized Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom, highlighting the necessity of a “common approach” to solve problems such as climate change, while “national sovereignty is meaningless” here⁶⁷³. In essence, the politician, indirectly discussed the benefits of the principle of subsidiarity and the need to tackle problems at a more favorable level⁶⁷⁴. Here we can recall the position of the European Free Alliance, which had cooperated within the same political group as the European Greens for many years. The party's main thematic focus did not hinder their cooperation. Despite skepticism about the national level of governance, the party is predominantly Euro-

- Part 2 [Electronic resource] // FRANCE 24 English. 2019. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wR_kt1Djm8 (accessed 31.07.2022).

⁶⁶⁶ The Maastricht Debate...

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ 2 May - Spitzenkandidaten...

⁶⁶⁹ The Maastricht Debate...

⁶⁷⁰ Hooper D., Harris C., Amiel S. Watch: 'EU should put climate above trade,' says Ska Keller in bid for Brussels top job [Electronic resource] // Euronews*. 25.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2019/04/25/watch-green-mep-ska-keller-kicks-off-race-for-eu-s-top-job> (accessed 27.04.2021). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁶⁷¹ The Maastricht Debate...

⁶⁷² Ibid.

⁶⁷³ Adams T. Guy Verhofstadt: 'If you want to see what nationalists have done, come to Britain' [Electronic resource] // The Guardian. 19.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/19/guy-verhofstadt-brexite-interview-nationalists-london-european-elections> (accessed 29.07.2022).

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

optimistic. In fact, support for regional integration, the principle of subsidiarity and joint action is a favorable factor in addressing the global problem of climate change⁶⁷⁵.

J. Zahradil was the only participant in the Maastricht debate who openly did not support climate strikes and expressed his doubts about the readiness of economies in certain countries, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, for a rapid transition. During this meeting, the representative of the conservatives and reformists also received from F. Timmermans the definition “in the red zone with the “dinosaurs” but Mr. Weber and his EPP is even beyond.”⁶⁷⁶. Earlier, at the Blue Green Summit, the lead candidate had criticized the prioritization of climate change over other environmental issues and accused the greens of “a loss their intellectual way.”⁶⁷⁷.

In terms of comparing manifestos/programmes, M. Weber was indeed the closest to the Eurosceptic in his judgments, having confirmed his support for the current goals at the Party Congress held in Finland, without putting forward more ambitious proposals. Consequently, during the campaign, the candidate himself was criticized, including in the mass media, for seemingly neglecting the climate change issue⁶⁷⁸. As demonstrated in the debates mentioned above, the politician did not actively address the global problem of climate change in non-thematic headings, which was, for example, typical of representatives of the greens, the left, the social democrats⁶⁷⁹, and the liberal democrats⁶⁸⁰. Additionally, during a televised duel with F. Timmermans on ZDF, Weber urged not to rush at all, and defended the auto industry in the context of saving jobs⁶⁸¹.

When asked about his key and initial investments as the President of the European Commission, he primarily focused on the single market (in the context of services), innovation, the fight against cancer, etc. In contrast, F. Timmermans and S. Keller prioritized various aspects of a “carbon-neutral” or sustainable economy⁶⁸². However, the politician frequently emphasized the importance of innovation. Avoiding answering the question about the content of the manifesto: “Does that [effective carbon price and a well-functioning Emissions Trading System] mean higher carbon taxes?” M. Weber referred again to his belief in innovation and change as “a socially acceptable way,” supplemented this with a reference to the current climate achievements of Europe (in particular, at the Paris Conference) and significant contribution of his party to them⁶⁸³. On the other hand, not even the most socially oriented, like the left

⁶⁷⁵ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 125, 127.

⁶⁷⁶ The Maastricht Debate...

⁶⁷⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental...P. 210.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.* P. 210.

⁶⁷⁹ The Maastricht Debate...

⁶⁸⁰ Debate of the...

⁶⁸¹ Das #tvDuell zur...

⁶⁸² 2 May – Spitzenkandidaten...

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*

or the social democrats) the greens spoke about the close correlation of climate problems with social problems, using the argument that the poor produce the least amount of emissions⁶⁸⁴.

Before proceeding to conclusions, for a more accurate comparison results, it is worth considering factors such as the comparison of the volume of manifestos/programmes for different parties, both among themselves and over different years. As a result, a short text may give the impression of insufficiently developed environmental issues, while in reality all relevant topics are spelled out in it. Accordingly, an erroneous reverse image may also be present if the text is large enough. The most illustrative example of the error here is the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom, whose manifesto in 2019 was not presented at all.

Another important factor is the non-participation of some transnational parties in debates, which only allows for a superficial assessment of their discourse. This applies to the European Democratic Party and the European Free Alliance, as well as again the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom (formerly the European Alliance for Freedom). In the first two cases, this is primarily due to the regulations that have already been discussed in more detail in the section 1.3. of the 1st Chapter, dedicated to the features of the functioning of political parties and the conduct of election campaigns at the supranational and national levels (cases of the European Parliament and the Bundestag).

By comparing manifestos, speeches at debates or interviews, and materials from official websites, it was possible to draw the following conclusions.

Firstly, when talking about environmental topics, in 2019, the parties, to a greater extent, did indeed focus on the global problem of climate change. This topic was directly or indirectly connected to most other environmental topics raised. Key climate issues included the Paris Agreement, the Emissions Trading System, renewable energy, emission reduction, energy efficiency, the green economy, innovation, investment, transportation transformation, as well as trade based on the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. In addition, it was assumed that all of these initiatives should be supported by a desire for international leadership, with a commitment to leaving “no person and no territory behind.”⁶⁸⁵.

At first glance, it may seem that the main pro-European parties were discussing similar topics but placing different emphasis depending on their main ideology.

Analyzing the differences in party, it is worth referring back to the classification of the Climate Action Network, which was discussed in more detail in Section 1.4. of Chapter 1, devoted to the theoretical basis for studying the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of modern European parties (a case of Germany). This classification divided the political groups formed by the parties under study into “defenders”, “delayers”, and “dinosaurs” in relation to combating climate

⁶⁸⁴ Hooper D., Harris C., Amiel S. Watch: 'EU should put climate above trade,' says Ska Keller in bid for Brussels top job [Electronic resource] // Euronews*. *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁶⁸⁵ A New Social...

change. This is also relevant given the repeated references to “dinosaurs” by F. Timmermans towards M. Weber and J. Zahradil⁶⁸⁶. When studying the actions of the parties during the election campaign, we can indeed observe the lowest environmental activity (in descending order) in the European People's Party, the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe, as well as in the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom. In the context of the debates, the approaches of M. Weber and J. Zahradil can be seen as an argument for a definitely conscious tactics of hushing up environmental topics in the opening and closing monologues, as well as in non-thematic headings. In other words, they exclusively answered the questions posed, without paying special attention to the climate issue, and their judgments were quite restrained, if not critical of the deepening of existing measures. On the other hand, within the framework of the manifestos/programmes, the Christian democrats still assigned a certain place to the global problem of climate change, emphasizing its significance, and, compared to 2014, along with other Euro-optimists started trying to draw more attention to the climate matter. The same cannot be said for the conservatives and reformists, who chose to ignore the environmental agenda entirely. Unlike the EPP, the position of Eurosceptics can be seen as a form of protest or alternative, summarized by the idea of “less but better.”⁶⁸⁷.

In the case of the Christian democrats, this logic may not be relevant. Being the most influential supranational party and declaring the connection of the EU achievements with its activities, as well as having high environmental priorities and values of citizens at the supranational level, the restraint of the “ruling” party can be seen as a disadvantage. On the other hand, right-wing radicals and right-wing populists have not reached a consensus on whether climate change, as the most popular environmental topic, is man-made and whether there is harm from it. In fact, the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom, in particular, did not take a clear stance on this issue, thus missing an opportunity to offer an alternative to the pro-European course, which is often the approach of their national member parties that criticize the EU's climate policies and advocate for populist alternatives. However, a number of national member parties, clearly realizing the unprofitability of such criticism, have shifted towards supporting climate action. In addition, returning to the classification, where these three parties are “dinosaurs”, it is necessary to recall their internal ranking, where the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom made the most climate-oriented impression, followed by the European People's Party and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe⁶⁸⁸. The pre-election activity of the parties in 2019 makes it necessary to place the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom last, while leaving the sequence of the other two parties unchanged.

⁶⁸⁶ The Maastricht Debate...

⁶⁸⁷ Debate of the...

⁶⁸⁸ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.

The climate views of the European Democratic Party and the European Free Alliance should rather be considered in relation to their leading partners in political groups, despite the presence of their own ideological priorities. This applies to the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe and the European Green Party. In fact, all four forces, like the Party of European Socialists, have expectedly placed emphasis on the global problem of climate change. Moreover, in addition to S. Keller and B. Eickhout (EGP), F. Timmermans and M. Vestager were the most active voices in the debate, from an environmental point of view. However, G. Verhofstadt's dubious theses on a trade agreement with the United States in 2019 did not play in favor of the ALDE. On the other hand, it was the liberal democrats who explicitly stated in their manifesto their intention to reduce emissions by 55% (instead of the established 40%), which the social democrats did not do. In the context of the international climate agenda, specific numbers and targets, as well as "climate leadership" (including within the framework of the Paris Agreement), hold great importance. Thus, among the larger parties, the European Greens, the PES and the ALDE have shown themselves to be the most climate-oriented. Referring back to the classification of the Climate Action Network, the ALDE has demonstrated a particularly significant positive trend, which was also noted by the VoteWatch Europe later on⁶⁸⁹. In fact, besides the European Green Party and the Party of European Socialists, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe comes closest to the "defenders" category. However, if we consider the rhetoric of the European Free Alliance and the European Democratic Party separately, the former one is more likely align with the "delayers", while the latter with the "defenders". Nevertheless, the positions of both parties are rather intermediate between these two categories, varying in degrees of proximity to either one.

The Party of the European Left showed itself somewhat more reservedly. As a historical representative of a group of the "defenders", it did not prominently prioritize climate issues. Far-left populism and eco-socialism, often visible at the national level, coupled with the desire to compete with the greens for the greatest climate orientation, was not apparent in the 2019 elections. This was primarily influenced by the restrained rhetoric of N. Cué (unlike V. Tomić) and the content of the election manifesto⁶⁹⁰. It is even more surprising that the seemingly more diverse European United Left/Nordic Green Left published a separate manifesto in April 2019 called the "Climate Emergency Manifesto", which included much more specific targets, such as 100% transition to RE and "climate neutrality" by 2040⁶⁹¹. In contrast, the pre-election text remained "vague", because the section on "a new model for ecological development," included the paragraph on climate change as just one of seven other abstract

⁶⁸⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* Adaptation of the European Union...P. 105.

⁶⁹⁰ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 206-207.

⁶⁹¹ Climate Emergency Manifesto.

provisions⁶⁹². Therefore, the place of the PEL can most logically be characterized as intermediate between the “defenders” and the “delayers”.

In total, the parties not only increased their attention to climate and ecology in general, but also provided more in-depth and specific explanations of their provisions. In 2019, for example, the Party of European Socialists proposed supplementing the Sustainable Development Pact with social and environmental goals⁶⁹³. It is important to note the ideological priorities that are predominantly characteristic of parties historically. Thus, the European Free Alliance focused on increasing regional involvement in governance (including through the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity) and supporting national minorities. The Party of European Socialists placed more emphasis on the social issues of transitioning to a green economy, members of the Movement for Europe of Nations, on the contrary, had a national-level focus on implementing provisions. The Party of the European Left focused on criticizing capitalism, while the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists emphasized slowing down European integration and adhering to the principle of “less but better,”⁶⁹⁴ while expressing concerns for less economically developed member states that may struggle with high environmental spending. In addition, the European Greens aimed to move beyond being associated solely with a single theme party and to expand their ambitions to remain a leading environmental force. To some extent, the foundations for ALDE and the EPP, formed by economic, energy and innovative components, were close to it. Finally, the centrist European Democratic Party, in the context of environmental and/or climate issues, evenly distributed its priorities among the standard key themes.

From the social constructivism and sociological institutionalism point of view, it can be determined that there was a subjectively constructed significant increase in attention to the global problem of climate change. This increase stood out not only among other general political issues but also within the realm of environmental problems. This was due to the systematic environmental and/or climate development of the European Union policy and growing popularity of the agenda among the public, which was discussed in detail in section 1.1. of the 1st Chapter on the evolution of the global climate change issue in the political agenda of the EU and Germany. As a result, in order to align with or update the current European ambitions and to win the interest of citizens, many already adopted targets, established mechanisms, and voiced criticism. They also expressed intentions to deepen and expand their efforts. This is how, among other things, the interaction between the agency and the structure was manifested, where a special role in building interests was played historically by European institutions. The interpretation of values was also based on the ideological foundations of, which acted

⁶⁹² *Weyers T., Goritz A., Lange K., Mohr K.* Die Bedeutung von Klimapolitik während der Europawahl 2019: Wie das Thema die Agenden prägte. In: *Die Europawahl 2019: Ringen um die Zukunft Europas* / M. Kaeding, M. Müller, J. Schmälter, eds. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2020. P. 292-294.

⁶⁹³ A New Social...

⁶⁹⁴ Debate of the...

as “international organizations” harmonizing the positions of their national members. However, the differences in interpretation, including those based on national identity, acted as a constraint on the ambition or restraint of each transnational party. This, in turn, led to some level of compromise and limited their collective views.

2.2. The Global Problem of Climate Change in the Political Agenda of the Main German National Parties in 2019

In this section, the author analyzes the political agenda of the main German national parties through the lens of the global problem of climate change. This analysis was based on the content of election programmes, podcasts, interviews, as well as their leaders’ participation in debates and other significant events related to the topic. The listed sources allowed for a comprehensive characterization of the parties’ transformations and their ideological interpretations of the research topic.

Before comparing the provisions of the political programmes of the parties, it is important to characterize the key priorities voiced by the lead candidates on the online radio and podcast platform Detektor.fm prior to the 2019 elections. This helps to identify the most prominent features of the interpretations of party representatives on the global problem of climate change and to highlight those parties that were most engaged with the climate issue.

The recordings of M. Weber (CSU), K. Barley (SPD), J. Meuthen (AfD), Ö. Demirel (Left), N. Beer (FDP), and S. Giegold (Alliance 90/The Greens) were analyzed⁶⁹⁵. It is worth clarifying that in some cases, a system of two lead candidates was in effect, although they technically still occupied the first and second places in the lists. Thus, S. Keller headed the list for the Alliance 90/The Greens, by, M. Schirdewan represented the Left, while U. Bullmann was the second candidate from the SPD⁶⁹⁶. In addition, formally, the CDU/CSU had 16, each with its own first place candidate⁶⁹⁷. However, despite the superiority of M. Weber in the CSU list in Bavaria, it would be more accurate to consider him as the common candidate from the CDU/CSU⁶⁹⁸.

⁶⁹⁵ Europawahlen 2019 [Electronic resource] // Detektor.fm. Available at: <https://detektor.fm/serien/europawahlen-2019> (accessed 25.08.2022).

⁶⁹⁶ Europawahl 2019 – Infos, Kandidaten und Zeitplan [Electronic resource] // Berchtesgadener Anzeiger. 23.05.2019. Available at: https://www.berchtesgadener-anzeiger.de/startseite_artikel,-europawahl-2019-infos-kandidaten-und-zeitplan-_arid,485784.html (accessed 25.08.2022).

⁶⁹⁷ Diese Spitzenkandidaten treten an [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 05.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/europawahl/spitzenkandidaten-alle-parteien-europawahl-101.html> (accessed 25.08.2022).

⁶⁹⁸ Venema N., Steffan D. Kleine Parteien, unprofessionelle Kampagnen? Strukturen und Strategien der Plakatwerbung im Europawahlkampf 2019. In: Europawahlkampf 2019: Zur Rolle der Medien / C. Holtz-Bacha, ed. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2020. P. 164.

The least active candidates were K. Barley and Ö. Demirel. Both have focused their attention on social issues, which is justified by the ideology of their respective parties⁶⁹⁹. However, their attention to the climate and/or general environmental issues was minimal, K. Barley only noticed that Europe is “the answer to so many questions,” including climate protection⁷⁰⁰. On the other hand, Ö. Demirel mentioned “environmental friendliness” as one of the criteria for the proposed Constitution, along with a general focus on “social and environmental policy.”⁷⁰¹. The justification for these candidates is the fact that they were not asked specific questions related to the topic, however, the almost complete disregard allows to conclude that they are not of the highest importance when it comes to the main priorities.

In contrast, only S. Giegold showed genuine interest, focusing on protecting the environment and combating climate change, although he also paid serious attention to “social Europe,” considering this topic a key reason for the growth of Euroscepticism, nationalism and right-wing populism⁷⁰². The politician expressed concerns about the behavior of Germany, not the Eastern European states, as a “brake” in the Council, hoping for it to engage in “rethinking” and returning to the role of an “environmental pioneer.”⁷⁰³. In addition, he also noted the necessity to really ensure the implementation of the climate goals, including in the transportation sector⁷⁰⁴.

Security and prosperity became a priority for M. Weber. Answering a question about the global problem of climate change, he noted the importance of new technologies, ambitious goals (“climate neutrality” by 2050), and industrial projects, including the automotive industry. He also highlighted job protection and social aspects, acknowledging that not everyone can afford an electric car). Finally, the politician remarked that this is no longer a part of economic policy, but it has become a “fundamental policy” issue⁷⁰⁵.

N. Beer emphasized the importance of reforms, including simplifying procedures and promoting competition, even in climate policy. When answering the topic question, the main focus, in line with the party's tradition, was on expanding the Emissions Trading System to sectors such as transportation. According to the politician, companies should be economically interested in reducing CO₂, modernizing infrastructure, etc.⁷⁰⁶.

⁶⁹⁹ „Wir wollen ein soziales Europa“ [Electronic resource] // Detektor.fm. 16.04.2019. Available at: <https://detektor.fm/politik/europawahlen-2019-katarina-barley> (accessed 16.08.2022); „Wir wollen europaweit armutsfeste Mindestlöhne durchsetzen“ [Electronic resource] // Detektor.fm. 17.04.2019. Available at: <https://detektor.fm/politik/europawahlen-2019-oezlem-demirel> (accessed 22.08.2022).

⁷⁰⁰ „Wir wollen ein...

⁷⁰¹ „Wir wollen europaweit...

⁷⁰² „Ein entschiedenes Ja zu Europa“ [Electronic resource] // Detektor.fm. 18.04.2019. Available at: <https://detektor.fm/politik/europawahlen-2019-sven-giegold> (accessed 18.08.2022).

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ „Es geht ums...

⁷⁰⁶ „Wir wollen Europa...

Finally, J. Meuthen, focusing on solving European problems at the national level (i.e., reducing the powers of the EU), addressed the issues posed to him by expressing doubts about the anthropogenic impact on climate change. He emphasized the need to rely on factual evidence and defended the use of nuclear power plants. His stance on climate can be summed up as “human arrogance is to believe that we could, so to speak, save this planet with an active climate protection policy.”⁷⁰⁷.

Taken together, two main trends emerge from this series of interviews. This is one pro-environmental/pro-climate position⁸ and one anti-climate position. Other candidates had relatively similar positions, placing other priorities at the forefront. Compared to the European level, there were no particular activities from representatives of the SPD, the FDP or the Left. Moreover, the position of M. Weber has already been described in the previous section.

The content of the political programmes of the main national parties reveals several noteworthy aspects that need to be addressed before presenting the results of comparing their content. Foremost, this is the uneven size of the texts, which affected the depth of study of different topics. This applies both to the programmes of different parties in the same year (e.g., the text of the Left in 2014 spanned 76 pages⁷⁰⁸, while the SPD for the same year had only 14 pages⁷⁰⁹), and the same party across different years (e.g., the programme of the FDP for 2014 contained 28 pages⁷¹⁰, and already 150 pages for 2019⁷¹¹, while the AfD had 25 pages in 2014⁷¹², and 88 pages in 2019⁷¹³). Moreover, it is impossible to deduce an unambiguous trend towards an increase in the volume, which would be characteristic of all parties (e.g., if the SPD had 14 pages in 2014⁷¹⁴, and 76 pages in 2019⁷¹⁵, then the CDU had 107 pages in 2014⁷¹⁶ and the CDU/CSU had 26 pages in 2019⁷¹⁷).

⁷⁰⁷ „Die EU macht zu viel“ [Electronic resource] // Detektor.fm. 17.04.2019. Available at: <https://detektor.fm/politik/europawahlen-2019-joerg-meuthen-im-interview> (accessed 16.08.2022).

⁷⁰⁸ Europa geht anders: sozial, friedlich, demokratisch [Electronic resource] // DIE LINKE [official website]. 2014. Available at: https://www.die-linke.de/fileadmin/download/wahlprogramme_alt/europawahlprogramm2014.pdf (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁷⁰⁹ Europa eine neue...

⁷¹⁰ Das braucht unser...

⁷¹¹ Europas Chancen Nutzen [Electronic resource] // Freie Demokratische Partei: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.fdp.de/sites/default/files/import/2019-04/7381-fdp-europa-wahlprogramm-a5.pdf> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁷¹² Mut zu Deutschland. Für ein Europa der Vielfalt [Electronic resource] // Alternative für Deutschland: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <http://www.afdbayern.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/86/2014/12/Europaprogramm-der-AfD1.pdf> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁷¹³ Unser Programm für...

⁷¹⁴ Europa eine neue...

⁷¹⁵ Kommt zusammen und macht Europa stark! [Electronic resource] // Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Europa_ist_die_Antwort/SPD_Europaprogramm_2019.pdf (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁷¹⁶ Europapolitischer Antrag des CDU-Bundesvorstands an den 26. Parteitag [Electronic resource] // Christlich Demokratische Union: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://www.cdu.de/sites/default/files/media/dokumente/europapolitischer-antrag-an-den-parteitag.pdf> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁷¹⁷ Unser Europa macht stark. Für Sicherheit, Frieden und Wohlstand [Electronic resource] // Christlich Demokratische Union: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.cdu.de/system/tdf/media/dokumente/europawahlprogramm.pdf> (accessed 03.01.2023).

Separately, it is also worth noting the CDU/CSU, which presented two programmes at once in 2014 (one for the CDU and one for the CSU), which was typical of sister parties before. It was only in 2019 that they adopted a joint European programme for the first time⁷¹⁸. However, this did not mean that there were any fundamental discrepancies (at least on environmental topics) between the texts in 2014. Rather, it was about several different accents within the same ideological priorities. In particular, this was expressed in more regional motifs in the discourse of the CSU. Such unanimity is justified by both their long-term national partnership and joint membership in the European People's Party (both in the transnational party and in the political group with the same name). The latter also explains the absence of any significant ideological differences between the various national parties and their supranational affiliates. Similar to the regional accents seen in the CSU, the CDU or the CDU/CSU as a whole (more relevant for 2019) appeared more focused on the characteristics of their respective states in comparison to the EPP.

In addition, a number of parties, especially the Alliance 90/The Greens and the Left, employed the tactic of artificially inflating the volume of their programmes by adding a large number of “empty” phrases and slogans, examples, repeated provisions throughout the text. In 2014, the Greens even appended a manifesto for their transnational party at the end. Uneven distribution of text on pages was used (e.g., the CDU in 2014, although this did not fully compensate for the significant difference in size compared to 2019), which also artificially increased the number of pages. Similar tendencies can be observed to a lesser extent in supranational parties mainly due to the small average volume of manifestos in comparison with those of national members.

Turning directly to the characteristics of the provisions in the election programmes, it is necessary to refer back to the analytical classification. As already mentioned in the dedicated theoretical basis for studying the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of modern European parties (a case of Germany) in section 1.4. of the 1st Chapter, the Deutscher Naturschutzring and the Climate Action Network divided the German national parties into three categories according to their climate activism in the 2014-2019 convocation as follows: “very good” (Alliance 90/The Greens), “good” (the SPD, the Left), and “very bad” (the FDP and the CDU/CSU). The AfD was not included in this list but given its denial of the anthropogenic impact on climate change, it would be reasonable to assign it to at least the “really very bad” category. At the end of this section, the relationship between this classification and the one used for transnational parties (“defenders”, “delayers”, and “dinosaurs”) will also be presented.

Accordingly, only the greens belonged to the first category “very good”⁷¹⁹.

⁷¹⁸ *Wimmel A.* Europa-Lager im deutschen Parteiensystem auf Basis des Wahl-O-Mat // MIP. 2019. Heft 2. P. 188.

⁷¹⁹ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4; Unser Programm für...; Wen wählen für...

Alliance 90/The Greens

The deep elaboration of many environmental topics in the rhetoric of the Greens is historically noticeable. So, in 2014, already in the preamble, they determined that the European contribution to the protection of the environment and nature is significant, also calling for “putting your economy and energy supply on an environmentally friendly and sustainable basis.”⁷²⁰

According to the content of the programme, the first subsection was devoted to climate change and the energy turnaround. The party had clearly defined targets: reducing greenhouse gas emissions (by 30% by 2020, 55% by 2030, 90% by 2050), increasing energy efficiency (by 20% by 2020, 40% by 2030) and increasing the share of renewable energy (by 45% by 2030). The implementation of these targets involved a deep reform of the Emissions Trading System, proposing the inclusion of sectors such as air and sea transportation, as well as the establishment of minimum prices for certificates and the removal of excess ones.

Given the regional disproportion, the Greens were concerned about the independent energy supply of Eastern Europe and also puzzled by the transition of Southern Europe to solar and wind energy. This determined the priority of renewable energy sources and support for the German Renewable Energy Sources Act. However, it also allowed for compensation of fluctuations, including with gas. Additionally, it was planned to allocate 3-3.5% of the member states' GDP to research. The party advocated for the abandonment of coal and nuclear energy, including the export of waste and the ITER project), but with the financing of disposal, insurance of stations, and unlimited liability of operators. They also called for the prohibition of fracking, capture and storage of hydrogen, non-environmentally friendly subsidies and essentially replacing the Euratom with the European Renewable Energy Community.

The legal protection of environmental and climate refugees was offered, and the ideas of a binding international agreement, productive work in the International Renewable Energy Agency, and adaptation funding were promoted at the international level – 100 billion euros per year starting from 2020, where the European contribution alone would be 100 billion dollars. They also promoted the foundations of sustainable development in international trade, (including the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership or the TTIP), which involved incorporating special provisions in trade and fishing agreements and conducting preliminary examinations. They supported the idea of an independent UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) and the Covenant of Mayors, which is a movement of authorities from different regions committed to sustainable development.

In the transportation sector, the priority was given to rail, public and ferry transport, cycling, and walking. Accordingly, it was determined that it was necessary to develop a Trans-European Transport

⁷²⁰ Europa. Mitentscheiden, Erneuern, Zusammenhalten [Electronic resource] // BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN. 2013. Available at: <https://docplayer.org/29864938-Europa-mitentscheiden-zusammenhalten-europawahlprogrammwurf-2014-von-buendnis-90-die-gruenen.html> (accessed 03.01.2023).

Network and freight rail transport, while transforming the industry. The latter was justified by both electromobility and the desire to limit CO₂ emissions to 60 g. per 1 km by 2025. In addition, the greens did not support any privileges, including for large transport. They also rejected various “dubious” and essentially unproductive projects like micro-airports, large-scale tunnel projects, or oversized small waterways⁷²¹. Air transport was planned to be taxed on kerosene and VAT.

The party advocated for a significant shift in the economy from short-term profits to sustainable development, which would require investments. Therefore, they supported initiatives such as the programme under the auspices of the Green New Deal, the Connecting Europe Facility (at least 50 billion euros per year), the activities of the European Investment Bank (EIB), etc. Finally, they promoted the development of building technologies and the implementation of the Energy performance of buildings directive⁷²².

In 2019, the Alliance 90/The Greens, already in the preamble, identified their commitment to “a leading role in the field of climate protection,” “a safe supply of energy from renewable sources,” “a united, ecological, feminist and fair Europe,” etc.⁷²³. Moreover, already in the first subsection, they advocated for climate change and highlighted the priority of renewable energy.

Regarding energy and climate issues, the Greens expressed their ambitions to become a “climate defense union,” strongly rejecting the Energy Charter Treaty, carbon capture and storage, fracking, new gas pipelines, LNG-terminals (terminals for receiving liquefied natural gas), coal and nuclear power, and other fossil fuels⁷²⁴. The party supported renewable energy sources and a decentralized system, while abandoning their non-environmentally friendly subsidies in favor of supporting regions that have abandoned coal with structural funds. On the other hand, in the nuclear industry it was supposed to close the most dangerous plants immediately and to set a 40-year limit on the remaining ones. In addition, it was required to limit nuclear transit in Europe, increase public participation in the decision-making process for border stations, and take responsibility for the transboundary effect. The powers of the Euratom should have been limited only to the dismantling and disposal of waste. The topic of construction and energy efficiency in this industry was also revealed. These included proposals for self-generation of energy through solar panels in buildings

In addition, support was given to the planning of the Multiannual Financial Framework, financing the fight against the “climate catastrophe” from the EU budget, the development of a pan-European energy system, and the establishment of a smart energy network⁷²⁵. Regarding the latter, it was assumed that the development of networks, including gas networks, could help mitigate fluctuations. The party

⁷²¹ Ibid.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ Europas Versprechen Erneuern.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

continuously emphasized the importance of competition within the circular economy and social aspects, proposing measures such as imposing a tax on the import of non-green goods, eliminating non-green subsidies or social tariffs with “energy money.”⁷²⁶ In parallel, in the economic direction, environmental targets were also proposed in the VAT, the green GDP, the Green Finance Label, financing under the Horizon Europe, and the use of funds from the Future Fund for modernization. The party also advocated not only for leadership and investment, including through the EIB, but also for the protection of “livelihood” (liberal democracy, etc.), the well-being of residents in regions not responsible for the crisis, particularly women from Global South⁷²⁷.

The targets presented by the party included an increase in the share of renewable energy (45% by 2030, 100% by 2050), a reduction in emissions (55% by 2030), and an improvement in energy efficiency (40% by 2030). The Greens proposed reforming the Emissions Trading System by reducing the number of certificates and increasing their minimum cost. In non-covered sectors, the party suggested regulating fuel prices based on the specific weight of emissions. It was also proposed to introduce taxation for any type of pollution and resources.

In the transport sector, the Greens promoted the idea of the EU becoming a “world leader in clean mobility” and emphasized the importance of cycling (including e-bikes), public and rail transportation, and walking⁷²⁸. They planned to implement a wide range of measures in the fuel sector, including CO₂ pricing, the elimination of tax incentives, the rejection of palm oil admixture, and the establishment of quotas for trucks, helicopters, etc. to encourage the transition to renewable energy. The party also advocated for regional environmentally friendly production. Reforms in the railway and motor transport sectors were proposed focusing on standardization, industry changes, quotas for “clean” cars, and the expansion of infrastructure such as charging. In addition, it was proposed to exclude vehicles from city centers. Concerning air travel, the Greens promoted the idea of reducing short haul flights, researching alternative engines, expanding the Emissions Trading System and implementing a kerosine tax (as well as VAT on international flights).

On the protection of water resources and fisheries, the party advocated for “Emission Control Areas” without marine fuel oil and reducing overall dependence on unsustainable fuels, which would entail expanding LNG infrastructure and research⁷²⁹. In addition, the Greens also set targets of “less than 0.1% sulfur content in fuel or 80% reduction in nitrogen emissions from parking.”⁷³⁰

The migration direction was also considered through the prism of environmental values, therefore, “climate passports” were proposed for citizens of states affected by climate change. They also

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

supported financing and monitoring adaptation measures and efforts to overcome the consequences of climate change. Internationally, the greens did not refuse to cooperate with the United States, provided that environmental standards were included in free trade agreements, including the TTIP. In addition, in the context of the USA, support for the Under2 Coalition was also expressed, which comprises subnational governments working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The party also proposed the introduction of a “border carbon adjustment” in the international arena to address the uneven climate policies of different countries outside the EU.

Accordingly, the party's programme predictably illustrated that the greens, both in 2014 and 2019 placed environmental and/or climate priorities at the forefront. The Alliance 90/The Greens did not look at climate change through the prism of other ideological priorities, but, on the contrary, built their general political discourse through this topic. As a consequence, even though it was initially the most environmentally oriented among the major national parties in Germany, The Greens found ways to expand its programmatic provisions by promoting its Green New Deal. However, similar to the European Greens, it was challenging to deepen the targets further. The climate vector, even from the point of view of planning sections of the text, continued to dominate.

In fact, attention to the climate agenda can be reinforced by the words of S. Giegold at the Party Election Congress in November 2018: “I will make the European elections climate elections,” adding that: “...we, as German, are more not at the forefront when it comes to climate protection, but should be driven there by Europe.”⁷³¹.

In addition, similar to the Left, the Greens actively used the prefix “ecological and social” (instead of “social and ecological” by the Left)⁷³². S. Giegold, in an interview with Deutschlandfunk, remarked: “This [social sphere], by the way, has long been a green European policy. Over the course of many, many years, this has repeatedly figured in the election programmes of the Bundestag, as well as in the election programme in Europe.”⁷³³. However, when evaluating the intersections with the left, it can be assumed that the key difference lies in the popularity of the climate (as part of the environmental) section of politics before the elections to the European Parliament among the citizens of Germany, where the global problem of climate change took priority over the social aspect. Ultimately, it was the climate orientation that became the key to the success of many greens (not only from Germany) in the elections⁷³⁴. At the same time, the social direction⁷³⁴ is the traditional course of the parties, to the left of

⁷³¹ Quadbeck E. „Ich werde die Europawahl zur Klimawahl machen“ [Electronic resource] // Rheinische Post. 10.11.2018. Available at: https://rp-online.de/politik/eu/europawahl/gruene-fuer-europa-ska-keller-und-sven-giegold_aid-34404029 (accessed 16.08. 2022).

⁷³² Europas Versprechen Erneuern.

⁷³³ „Wir brauchen jetzt ein Europa der sozialen Sicherheit“ [Electronic resource] // Deutschlandfunk. 17.11.2018. Available at: <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/gruenen-politiker-sven-giegold-wir-brauchen-jetzt-ein-100.html> (accessed 18.08.2022).

⁷³⁴ Jacob K., Schaller S., Carius A. Populismus und Klimapolitik in Europa. In: Die Europawahl 2019: Ringen um die Zukunft Europas / M. Kaeding, M. Müller, J. Schmäler, eds. Wiesbaden: Springer. 2020. P. 302.

the center, including the greens. Accordingly, the party remained committed to sustainable development and addressed various items related to environmental transformation, such as the concept of “climate passports.”⁷³⁵.

The “good” category was formed by the SPD and the Left⁷³⁶.

Social Democratic Party of Germany

In 2014, the SPD proposed to reduce emissions by 40% by 2030, supporting the Emissions Trading System, as well as greater freedom for member states to expand renewable energy (for Germany, this is the development of the Renewable Energy Sources Act). In addition, they noted innovations and technologies (e.g., in transportation sector, these are alternative engines) and “reasonable industrial policy,” as well as the orientation in trade agreements (primarily the TTIP) towards environmental standards. The party promoted the ideas of a social market economy, social rights and other social issues, which was broadcast in combination with other provisions, because it was ambitiously indicated that “We [the SPD] want Europe to become the pioneer of a new union of environment, economy and labor.”⁷³⁷.

In their 2019 programme, the SPD expressed concern for the future generations and emphasized need to protect the climate and the environment. This also determined the place of the SDGs as the “main direction” of activity⁷³⁸. The party put forward targets for the EU to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030, improve energy efficiency by 32.5% by 2030, and achieve “climate neutrality” by 2050. This was followed by the standard set of points such as the promotion of renewable energy, innovation, research and investment, the importance of a secure energy market and supply, the expansion of the Emissions Trading System, and the abandonment of nuclear energy. Mostly, such judgments were often made in connection with the assessment of social consequences, including through the establishment of the just Transformation Fund.

In the adjacent transportation direction, priority was given to cycling, public and rail transport, as well as to pedestrian traffic and navigation. It is possible to distinguish judgments about alternative fuels and engines (hydrogen technology, electric mobility), replacement of materials (e.g., for aircraft) and route optimization. At the same time, restrictions, including those forcing work on innovations, on internal combustion engines were not rejected. Finally, on the international stage, the SPD advocated for “climate diplomacy” and the goals of the Paris Agreement, as well as the inclusion of chapters on sustainable development in trade agreements⁷³⁹.

⁷³⁵ Europas Versprechen Erneuern.

⁷³⁶ Unser Programm für...; Wen wählen für...

⁷³⁷ Europa eine neue...

⁷³⁸ Kommt zusammen und...

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

In fact, all provisions were accompanied by a more serious involvement of the third component of sustainable development – social, and not just environmental and economic. This emphasis is also determined by the general ideological basis of the party. In addition, due to a more meaningful programme, many provisions were indeed disclosed in more detail, compared to their 2014 text. At the same time, the party's target indicators were somewhat higher than those existing at the EU level, but were lower than those discussed by the supranational affiliation, as well as those set by ALDE or the European greens, which could be due to the close long-term cooperation of the party as a junior partner in the Grand coalition with the CDU/CSU⁷⁴⁰. In particular, the energy efficiency target of 32.5% has already been set at the EU level, while the current emission reduction target was only 40%⁷⁴¹.

Following the results of the campaign, K. Barley, admitted that “the theme of climate protection has played a huge role in recent days, and, in fact, throughout the campaign, and we, obviously, are not good enough at it yet.”⁷⁴². Her own rhetoric during the campaign only reinforced this statement. The politician did not include environmental protection and combating climate change as key topics in a number of her interviews (e.g., May 6, 2019, Deutscher Mittelstands-Bund)⁷⁴³. However, it cannot be said that K. Barley completely disregarded the topic, as she publicly praised the activism of young people in the Fridays for Future movement⁷⁴⁴. Meanwhile, in April 2019, during the presentation of the party's priorities for the election campaign by the presidium, U. Bullmann emphasized that “sustainable development, the fight against climate change and social issues are closely connected for us.”⁷⁴⁵. However, in total, the party outlined only five key measures, including European minimum wage, voting rights in companies (trade unions), equal pay for men and women, prospects for young people, and tax justice⁷⁴⁶.

The Left

In 2014, the Left expressed its traditional criticism of capitalism. The party viewed it as the primary cause of all environmental problems and even called for a revision of the founding agreements.

⁷⁴⁰ Göhrs M., Hubo C., Krott M. Political Parties' Influence on Environmental Policy in the Forest: Natura 2000 Forest Sites in Germany as a Case Study // *Environmental Policy and Governance*. 2021. Vol. 31, Issue 4. P. 381.

⁷⁴¹ Neue ehrgeizige Ziele für Energieeffizienz und erneuerbare Energien [Electronic resource] // Europäisches Parlament: [official website]. 13.11.2018. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/de/press-room/20181106IPR18315/neue-ehrgeizige-ziele-fur-energieeffizienz-und-erneuerbare-energien#:~:text=Bis%202030%20muss%20sich%20die,sollen%20bis%202023%20%C3%BCberpr%C3%BCft%20werden>. (accessed 25.08.2022).

⁷⁴² „Natürlich bin ich tief enttäuscht vom Ausgang dieser Wahl“ [Electronic resource] // *Die Welt**. 26.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/video194227767/Europawahl-2019-Katarina-Barley-Tief-enttaeuscht.html> (accessed 09.10.2021). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁷⁴³ Europawahl 2019: Interview mit Dr. Katarina Barley, SPD [Electronic resource] // *Deutscher Mittelstands-Bund*. 06.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.mittelstandsbund.de/en/themen/allgemein/europawahl-2019-interview-mit-dr-katarina-barley-spitzenkandidatin-spd/> (accessed 16.08.2022).

⁷⁴⁴ Wen wählen für...

⁷⁴⁵ Kommt zusammen für Europa [Electronic resource] // *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.spd.de/aktuelles/detail/news/kommt-zusammen-fuer-europa-2/29/04/2019/> (accessed 16.08.2022).

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid.

The party increasingly used the prefix “social and ecological” in its discourse, highlighting the importance of environmental concerns⁷⁴⁷. However, these references were often ideological rather than specific proposals. The statement “energy supply is part of public services and therefore organized by the public” is also relevant here, as well as the provision for the support of environmental human rights and the intention to join the revised European Social Charter⁷⁴⁸.

On climate and energy issues, the party advocated for new standards, revision of funding, a ban on fracking and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), and a pan-European rejection of nuclear energy. The party set several targets such as increasing the share of renewable energy (25% by 2020, 45% by 2030, 100% by 2050), reducing emissions (by 40% by 2020, by 60% by 2030, by 95% by 2050), and decreasing the share of primary energy consumption (by 20% by 2020, by 40% by 2030, by 60% by 2050).

In the transportation sector, rail transport became a priority, including the expansion of the night trains. The party also emphasized regional production with transportation options by rail or shipping. In addition, it was proposed to make public transport free, create car-free zones, tighten CO₂ emission rates for cars, and impose a tax on fossil fuels for air and water communications.

Finally, the left rejected any free trade agreements, the Emissions Trading System (preferring administrative intervention) and the privatization of energy supply. Instead, they advocated for decentralization and local level control⁷⁴⁹.

In 2019, the Left once again adopted a radical anti-capitalist stance, calling for changes to the founding agreements while supporting international environmental efforts. This was accompanied by the slogan prioritizing environmental issues over profit.

Regarding the energy balance, the left were supporters of renewable energy, while nuclear and coal energy were not seen as promising. In particular, they planned to phase out coal by 2030 and immediately close the “dirtiest” power stations⁷⁵⁰. The fate of gas was not much better, as the party rejected the new infrastructure and also opposed fracking. In general, they proposed abandoning the Emissions Trading System and the Euratom, while emphasizing proper disposal. The targets were again very specific: reducing primary energy consumption (by 40% by 2030 compared to 2000 and 60% by 2050), increasing the share of renewable energy with their sustainable production, especially bioenergy (45% by 2030, 100% by 2040), reducing greenhouse gas emissions (by 65% by 2030, by 95% by 2050).

In transportation, the left again prioritized rail connections and free public transport, as well as bike lanes. In addition, some ideas were promoted for tightening exhaust gas regulations and adjusting

⁷⁴⁷ Europa geht anders...

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁰ Europa nur solidarisch.

the Energy Taxation Directive, as well as controlling emissions from ships and water infrastructure. They opposed low-cost air travel and also offered a pan-European kerosine tax and VAT on air travel.

Finally, in terms of trade, they again talked about environmental standards, and at the UN level, the Compensation fund for the consequences of climate change and colonialism was proposed. In addition, the issue of the rights of environmental and climate refugees was raised. The party also discussed achieving a “neutral footprint” by 2050, rising raw material supply standards, improving industrial strategy and policy frameworks, regulating energy-intensive and non-energy production of cryptocurrencies, and upholding the precautionary principle⁷⁵¹. Accordingly, this also required new taxes, in particular, the Carbon Tax. However, the Left abandoned price increases in favor of renovating buildings and investing in companies that run on fossil fuels⁷⁵².

Thus, of course, the climate agenda was not the primary focus for the party, although the share of left-wing populism was clearly visible here. Ideologically, the Left remained in line with its traditional priorities, speaking about the need for protectionism and defining capitalism as the cause of environmental problems. The party expanded the range of topics covered, and also strengthened the correlation of the social and the ecological issues (with the social in the first place). If in 2014 this trend was just beginning to emerge, then in 2019 it was perceived as two, almost inseparable, parts. In addition, the party went even further in its targets, striving to surpass even the greens. However, it cannot be said that otherwise the rhetoric was unique and could offer some significant innovation, except for purely ideological proposals like the establishment of a Compensation fund for the consequences of climate change and colonialism. Accordingly, the proposals looked like a socialist version of the greens to some extent, where ecology still remained secondary.

The same was noticed in *Die Tageszeitung*. During joint interview with the lead candidates from the Left (M. Schirdewan and Ö. Demirel), a question was asked about the inclusion of a climate chapter in the 2019 programme and competition with the Greens, to which Ö. Demirel unconvincingly replied, stating that “socio-environmental change is an original leftist topic.”⁷⁵³ The desire to align national coal-free goals with European initiatives was also included here. The politician attempted to object to the content of the programme, indicating that the commitment to climate protection is “not new.”⁷⁵⁴ In turn, the *Frankfurter Rundschau*’s* publication defined the activities of the Left as “more radical, but not greener [in this case, it should be understood as more environmentally friendly]” compared to the Alliance 90/The Greens. Accordingly, one way or another, both parties were seen borrowing each other's

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

⁷⁵² Ibid.

⁷⁵³ *Lehmann A.* „Wollen eine Aufklärer-Partei sein“ [Electronic resource] // *Die Tageszeitung*. 18.02.2019. Available at: <https://taz.de/Linke-SpitzenkandidatInnen-ueber-EU-Wahl/!5570846/> (accessed 17.08.2022).

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid.

themes⁷⁵⁵. Later, in July 2019, S. Wagenknecht, who left the leadership of the party shortly before the elections, tried to justify the party by accusing the Greens of “arrogance” and “elitism,” which was explained by an attempt to solve the climate problem without holding corporations accountable, but rather at the expense of the middle class and the poor⁷⁵⁶. In fact, the problem that has arisen with the climate agenda is not new for the party, which is trying to spread the remnants of the East German “left culture” throughout the country, absorbing traditionally Western themes into its ideology. However, this entailed a loss of former popularity in the Eastern and more traditional parts of the country, while failing to yield significant dividends in the Western part, where other parties have already gained ground on popular topics including the global problem of climate change (in this case, the Alliance 90/The Greens)⁷⁵⁷.

Finally, the “very bad” category consisted of the FDP and the CDU/CSU, with the author of this study deciding include the AfD in this category as well⁷⁵⁸.

Free Democratic Party of Germany

Guided by the ideas of a social market economy (or to a greater extent, just a market economy), the FDP in 2014 advocated for affordable energy, an energy turnaround, a competitive increase in the share, and adaptation of renewable energy to geographical conditions as the party also called for reforming the German Renewable Energy Sources Act and implementing fracking based on European standards, subject to approval.

The Emissions Trading System has traditionally been a key climate tool for the FDP. The party was concerned about the issues of economic growth and employment, because competitive prices played a decisive role in energy-intensive industries as well. Whereas in the transportation sector, any changes were still proposed to be coordinated with the interests of supplier companies and other interested parties, which could also be considered as a protective measure. However, the party opposed any transport blockages that could harm competitiveness. Thus, the priority of the FDP focused on innovation, market competition, new technologies, and responsibility, rather than relying on bans and taxes, as well as concern for future generations. All this, like the promoted Emissions Trading System, clearly reflected the economic orientation and an attempt to balance between its traditional rhetoric and climate initiatives⁷⁵⁹.

⁷⁵⁵ Von Bebenburg P. Radikaler, aber nicht grüner [Electronic resource] // Frankfurter Rundschau*. 26.11.2018. Available at: <https://www.fr.de/rhein-main/radikaler-aber-nicht-gruener-10965499.html> (accessed 04.01.2019). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by the decision of the Sretensky District Court of the Trans-Baikal Territory.

⁷⁵⁶ Wendt A. „Die Klimadebatte, wie die Grünen sie führen, ist völlig verkürzt“ [Electronic resource] // FOCUS. 15.07.2019. Available at: https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/politik-die-klimadebatte-wie-die-gruenen-sie-fuehren-ist-voellig-verkuerzt_id_10898409.html (accessed 27.08.2022).

⁷⁵⁷ Pogorelskaya S.V. The German Left between the National Voter and the European Paradigm // European Parliament Elections 2019: National Responses to the Dilemmas of European Integration / Yu. Kvashnin, A. Kudriavtsev, N. Plevako, V. Shveitser, eds. Moscow: IMEMO RAS, IE RAS, 2019. P. 75-77.

⁷⁵⁸ Unser Programm für...; Wen wählen für...

⁷⁵⁹ Das braucht unser...

In 2019, following the principles of the social market economy, the liberal democrats prioritized innovation, investment (including the Horizon Europe or at least 500 billion euros by 2020 only at the expense of the European Investment Bank), technological openness, economic growth, and competition. This included support for small and medium businesses as well as the industry sector.

The SDGs, the Paris Agreement and further international cooperation were put at the forefront in the climate agenda of the party. It was the unilateral actions that were criticized by the FDP, so was the inappropriateness of the redistribution of emissions. It called for technological development, both within and outside the EU, and an increase in contributions in 2020. The priority Emissions Trading System was to be promoted internationally under the auspices of the ICAO and the International Maritime Organization. Within the EU, initially for the transportation and heating sectors, followed by forestry and agriculture, were prioritized, with emissions limit values being phased out by 2050.

The party supported nuclear power, subject to meeting all standards. It was also proposed to revise the limiting average annual value (40 mg/m³) of NO₂ (nitrous oxide) emissions in favor of possible mitigation. Finally, the importance of “modern and transparent free trade agreements” with “strong” chapters on sustainable development was identified⁷⁶⁰.

As a consequence, the party's rhetoric was unlikely to contain the same enthusiasm as its supranational affiliation, which was confirmed by the discourse of the lead candidate. N. Beer previously criticized the Greens for exaggerating the scale of the problem, in particular R. Künast on Twitter (with the hashtag #Fakenews) for replacing the concepts of “climate change” and “extreme weather conditions,” which, from the point of view of this liberal democrat, no longer existed⁷⁶¹. In an interview with *Die Tageszeitung*, she explained her position, expressing skepticism towards the IPCC reports, but stating that “such documents need to be read carefully, and not just select passages that fit into one’s own worldview.”⁷⁶². Meanwhile L. Köhler from the FDP promoted “10 ideas for innovative climate protection,” with the support of C. Lindner, albeit facing criticism from other parties (e.g., J. Flasbarth from the SPD referred to the difficulties of implementation). However, such criticism focused more on the methods rather than doubting the significance of the problem, as N. Beer did⁷⁶³. Party leader C. Lindner, while speaking at the Congress for the European elections in January 2019, extensively discussed other topics such as Brexit and populism, only touching on climate at the very end by criticizing the high cost of coal phase-out and reiterating the priority of the EU Emissions Trading System⁷⁶⁴.

⁷⁶⁰ Europas Chancen Nutzen...

⁷⁶¹ Pötter B. Mit Klima-Fake-News nach Brüssel [Electronic resource] // *Die Tageszeitung*. 26.01.2019. Available at: <https://taz.de/FDP-Generalsekretarin-Nicola-Beer/!5568038/> (accessed 16.08.2022).

⁷⁶² Ibid.

⁷⁶³ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁴ Lisenkova A.D. Adaptation of the European Union...P. 106; Europaparteitag der Freien...

In fact, the party continued to rely on economic priorities, and its rhetoric differed from a number of opponents. Thus, the FDP did not present any targets, and also supported nuclear energy, among other mitigations. Here it is possible to try to accuse the liberal democrats of inconstancy, because it was during their stay in the government, being a junior partner of the CDU/CSU, when the decision to phase out nuclear power was made. However, historically, even after the Chernobyl disaster, the party still remained committed to the atom (in particular, unlike the social democrats or the greens)⁷⁶⁵. In addition, C. Lindner commented on this issue: “There are a number of non-market instruments that we had to adopt here for coalition reasons.”⁷⁶⁶. It suggests that the decision was influenced by the senior partner within the coalition⁷⁶⁷.

Christian Democratic Union in Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria

In 2014, the CSU did not place various environmental issues (such as animal welfare, trade standards, or food safety) at the center of its rhetoric, but did talk about them. At the same time, the party opposed “excessive CO₂ emissions requirements for the German automotive industry or a ban on lower electricity prices for energy-intensive companies,” primarily due to concerns about job losses⁷⁶⁸.

In 2014, the CDU, relying on incentives and market-based instruments, prioritized the extension of the Emissions Trading System beyond the EU as a key mechanism. The international level was also touched upon in the context of the TTIP, as well as compliance with environmental standards and the EU's “leading role” in the global agreement. It would operate after the Kyoto Protocol, with obligations for developing and developed countries.

In the energy sector, the party addressed both energy independence and climate protection. As a consequence, it was not only about the domestic energy market with the convergence of energy supply, as well as a common energy network to reduce fluctuations, but also about “modern and easy-to-operate gas and coal-fired power plants with high efficiency.”⁷⁶⁹. At the same time, the party rejected fracking and nuclear energy, but supported the “profitable and economical” development of renewable energy sources aiming to harmonize the German Renewable Energy Sources Act with European legislation⁷⁷⁰. Finally, the target indicators included a 20% increase in energy efficiency by 2020, as well as a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. In the transportation sector, it was the development of alternative engines and fuels, infrastructure, and research. Whereas in the context of emissions from air

⁷⁶⁵ Nam H., Konishi S., Nam K.-W. Comparative Analysis of...P. 3-4.

⁷⁶⁶ FDP distanziert sich von der Energiewende [Electronic resource] // Die Welt*. *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁷⁶⁷ Lisenkova A.D. Adaptation of the European Union...P. 106.

⁷⁶⁸ Europaplan Bayern 2014-2019 [Electronic resource] // Christlich-Soziale Union: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <http://www.csu.de/programm/csu-europaplan-2014-2019/> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁷⁶⁹ Europapolitischer Antrag des...

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

transport, “competition-neutral” emissions trading and the Single European Sky initiative were mentioned separately⁷⁷¹.

In 2019, the CDU/CSU identified “intelligent technological progress” and “quality resource-saving growth” as its priorities, with the fight against climate change and biodiversity protection as central issues in the environmental realm⁷⁷². The preamble stated that “Europe is the driving force behind global climate protection.”⁷⁷³. In addition, the bloc recalled the European contribution to the Paris Agreement.

The energy vector was based on “safety, cleanliness and affordability,” which would have required the coal and nuclear phase-out and security of supply⁷⁷⁴. The CDU/CSU supported the energy market, diversification (above all, the spread of renewable energy), innovation and pricing of emissions at the international level, whereas in the transportation sector, the emphasis was on electric vehicles, public and railway transport. At the same time, the CDU/CSU defended the automotive industry, firmly rejecting the “ideological rejection of diesel” in favor of “development of a clean internal combustion engine.”⁷⁷⁵.

Basically, despite the general similarity, the 2019 programme of the CDU/CSU is closer to the views of the CDU in 2014 than to those of the CSU⁷⁷⁶. The text showed a focus on competitiveness, economic priorities and innovation. Thus, in 2019, the bloc was limited to more general and superficial phrases than the CDU in 2014, abandoning new and/or more ambitious targets. In particular, there was no mention of the planned reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and there was only an indirect reference to the Emissions Trading System. The climate direction itself stood out, but mainly by the set of general phrases and slogans, rather than by the deepening of provisions. This comparison confirms the activities of M. Weber, who, when speaking at the CSU Congress dedicated to the European elections, casually mentioned the global problem of climate change only in the context of cooperation with China, which was quite significant for a speech that lasted over half an hour⁷⁷⁷.

Alternative for Germany

The priorities of the AfD were mostly clear already in 2014: “In the future, all decisions should be made on the basis of rational factual analysis, and not ideological wishful thinking.”⁷⁷⁸.

In the climate and/or energy direction, the AfD did not deny the importance of the precautionary principle, competition, research, as well as market and “technologically neutral” mechanisms like the

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷⁷² Unser Europa macht...

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁶ *Wimmel A.* Europa-Lager im...P. 188.

⁷⁷⁷ Manfred Weber am Europa-Parteitag der CSU [Electronic resource] // Manfred Weber. 2019. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXx1ERHwIGc> (accessed 18.08.2022).

⁷⁷⁸ Mut zu Deutschland...

Emissions Trading System. However, the German Renewable Energy Sources Act, new targets for energy efficiency and renewable energy after 2020, as well as subsidizing any types of fuel were rejected by the AfD. Only international efforts to reduce emissions were seen as worthwhile, but the link between CO₂ emissions and climate change was questioned. On the international stage, the AfD also endorsed the Single European Sky, recognized the importance of the SDGs and the feasibility of environmental standards in the TTIP⁷⁷⁹.

In 2019, the AfD's rhetoric became even more hardened, as it criticized the climate agenda and the consequences of reforms in energy policy, particularly the restrictions on access to affordable energy. The AfD drew attention to the importance of CO₂ for photosynthesis and highlighted the existence of climate change throughout history. Consequently, right-wing populists rejected the Paris Agreement and any domestic regulations (e.g., on energy efficiency in construction), including the previously supported Emissions Trading System. On the contrary, the AfD defended coal and nuclear energy, but spoke out against a significant increase in “high-consumption materials and areas” (including natural landscapes) RE⁷⁸⁰. They supported initiatives like new LNG-terminals and Nord Stream 2, and advocated for the replacement of fossil sources with nuclear energy as “one of the safest technologies,” subject to competent disposal and innovation⁷⁸¹. Self-contradictory, the party has criticized wind power (as well as national parks) for cutting down forest land, while simultaneously promoting wood as a source of energy and building material. Finally, the AfD reaffirmed its commitment to environmental standards in trade agreements.

Without denying innovation in the fuel and propulsion aspect, the party defended German automotive industry. The economic feasibility of synthetic fuels and electric vehicles was questioned, although the latter was also criticized for the environmental damage from tires and brakes and the lack of real help in combating emissions. In addition, a 37.5% reduction in transport emissions by 2030 was also rejected, as was the need to blend conventional fuels with bioethanol.

Thus, despite being progressive in some environmental aspects in comparison with a set of opponents (such as proposing to reduce animal transportation time by 6 hours, while the SPD only proposed 8 hours), the climate rhetoric of the party was antagonistic. This topic was placed in a separate section, and the criticism in it was more aggressive than in 2014⁷⁸². For example, like a large number of initiatives to combat global climate change, even the Emissions Trading System, which was previously perceived favorably, was rejected⁷⁸³. Commenting on the party's election programme published in February 2019, among other things, J. Meuthen, as a lead candidate and co-chair, noted that “the EU has

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.; *Lisenkova A.D. Main Features of the Current...*P. 150-152.

⁷⁸⁰ *Lisenkova A.D. Main Features of the Current...*P. 152-154; *Unser Programm für...*

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ *Lisenkova A.D. Main Features of the Current...*P. 156.

failed in asylum and immigration policy as well as in climate and energy policy.”⁷⁸⁴. As part of the campaign, in an interview with *Der Spiegel* he also remarked: “We would be stupid to leave this topic alone,” and the party itself campaigned with “Save Diesel!” posters aimed at supporting the automotive industry, which helped the party to gain popularity with the district associations⁷⁸⁵. An example of unity on this topic is the statement in September of the same year (after the elections) by the co-chairman of the party A. Gauland: “After the euro and immigration, criticism of the so-called climate action policy is the third major issue for the AfD.”⁷⁸⁶.

To summarize, it is worth returning to the analytical classification with the categories “very good” (the Alliance 90/The Greens), “good” (the SPD and the Left), and “very bad” (the FDP, the CDU/CSU + the AfD)⁷⁸⁷. It can be determined that when divided into these three categories, in general terms, the parties continued to correspond to them, although there were some nuances.

Thus, the Alliance 90/The Greens remained the most progressive, although, in solidarity with the European Green Party, it stopped raising targets and instead focused on expanding mechanisms. The SPD could not claim greater climate involvement, being limited to cooperation with the CDU/CSU within the Grand coalition. This made adjustments to the party's definition of targets, and also created some distance from the supranational PES. While the Left, continuing to actively promote its climate populism and eco-socialism, tried to compete in terms of targets with the Greens. This could potentially place them closer to the Alliance 90/The Greens and higher in the rating compared to the SPD, whereas comparing its electoral rhetoric with the Party of the European Left, there was definitely a much greater climate involvement.

The FDP and the CDU/CSU were noticeably more moderate than the opponents presented above. Thus, both pursued economic goals, putting the Emissions Trading System, innovation and social market economy at the forefront. In addition, both refused to set specific targets, and the statements of their lead candidates did not give the impression of a high degree of climate orientation. Moreover, the Christian democrats were historically focused on protecting the auto industry, while the liberal democrats were skeptical about moving away from nuclear power. When comparing their supranational parties, the CDU/CSU's views aligned more closely with the EPP, while the FDP's discourse did not align with the climate progress of the ALDE. In fact, the FDP's rhetoric, including statements from N. Beer, positioned them even lower in the rankings than the CDU/CSU. Finally, the Alternative for Germany, placed by the author of this study in the “very bad” category, for its tactics probably deserved a separate and even more critical category (e.g., “really very bad”). The party defended the diversity of sources in the energy mix

⁷⁸⁴ Jörg Meuthen: AfD...

⁷⁸⁵ Müller A.-K. AfD setzt auf Zweifel am Klimawandel [Electronic resource] // *Der Spiegel*. 27.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/afd-setzt-auf-zweifel-am-klimawandel-im-wahlkampf-a-1264532.html> (accessed 17.08.2022).

⁷⁸⁶ Lisenkova A.D. Main Features of the Current...P. 152.

⁷⁸⁷ Unser Programm für...; Wen wählen für...

(including fossil fuels), rejected the Emissions Trading System, and was also skeptical about the anthropogenic impact on climate change in general. The AfD has no supranational affiliation, and it is not possible to compare its views with the most ideologically close and agenda-ignoring Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom. However, its national party members, as well as subsequent members of the Identity and Democracy Party, disagreed, as described in more detail in the previous section.

It is worth making a separate correlation with the second classification, which organized the parties' views as discussed in the previous section. In both cases, if the Alternative for Germany is not placed in a separate category “very bad”, the parties can be grouped into three categories: “defenders”, “delayers”, and “dinosaurs”, as well as “very good”, “good”, and “very bad”, respectively. Consequently, the national parties of Germany during the 2019 campaign can be provisionally distributed as follows:

- “defenders” (the Greens and the Left);
- “delayers” (the SPD);
- “dinosaurs” (the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the AfD)⁷⁸⁸.

From the point of view of social constructivism and sociological institutionalism, the divergence of views between transnational parties and their national member parties illustrates the author's thesis regarding the importance of national identity. So, despite the parallel construction of the fight against climate change as a shared value within the EU and Germany, at the national level, there were still some peculiarities (e.g., Germany's special position on nuclear energy), which were shaped by their respective institutions. Despite the unifying and harmonizing supranational role of these parties, in some cases there were discrepancies. They cannot be deemed significant, as they were not expressed as outright opposition, but rather as a matter of greater restraint on one level or another. National programmes were expected to be more detailed, which, among other things, was due to the lack of the need to harmonize the values of Germany with those of other national identities.

2.3. Results of the 2019 Election Campaign in the EU and Germany: Overall Results and the Influence of the Global Problem of Climate Change

This section outlines the overall results of the 2019 campaign for the main transnational parties and German national parties, as well as the influence of the global problem of climate change on them. The latter separately concerned the performance of some minor environmentally oriented parties in Germany and the Nordic Green Left Alliance and its national members.

To determine the impact of the global problem of climate change, first, it is necessary to characterize the overall results of the 2019 European elections. Thus, seven political groups were

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.; Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.

formed. These are the European People's Party (with 182 MEPs, 24.23%), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (154 MEPs, 20.51%), the Renew Europe (108 MEPs, 14.38%), the Greens/European Free Alliance (74 MEPs, 9.85%), the Identity and Democracy (73 MEPs, 9.72%), the European Conservatives and Reformists (62 MEPs, 8.26%), and the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (41 MEPs, 5.46%). 57 MEPs (7.59%) were the non-inscrits. For comparison, it is worth presenting the results of 2014. Thus, the European People's Party received 221 seats (29.43%), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats got 191 seats (25.43%), the European Conservatives and Reformists – 70 seats (9.32%), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe – 67 seats (8.92%), the European United Left/Nordic Green Left – 52 seats (6.92%), the Greens/European Free Alliance – 50 seats (6.66%), the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy – 48 seats (6.39%). The non-inscrits accounted for 52 seats (6.92%)⁷⁸⁹.

According to the calculations of the portal “Parties and Elections in Europe” by W. Nordsieck, who evaluated the results of transnational parties, the share of the European People's Party was 176 MEPs (instead of 211 in 2014), the Party of European Socialists was 142 MEPs (instead of 182), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe had 81 MEPs (instead of 49), the European Democratic Party gained 8 MEPs (instead of the same 8), the European Green Party with 55 MEPs (instead of 36), the European Free Alliance – with 7 MEPs (instead of 6), the Identity and Democracy Party had 59 MEPs (instead of 31), the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe was 55 MEPs (instead of 44), and the Party of the European Left was 20 MEPs (instead of 29)⁷⁹⁰.

The data presented on the portal is ambiguous, although it mainly reflects the general dynamics. The fact is that neither the European Parliament nor the transnational parties (mostly) provide such statistics. The probability of error is confirmed by discrepancies with the data of the European Green Party which had 58 seats (instead of 37 in 2014)⁷⁹¹.

The author of this thesis identified a set of main problems that challenges maintaining this type of statistics.

First of all, despite the proximity of transnational parties and the political groups they form, in some cases, national member parties do not join the latter (e.g., the New Flemish Alliance from Belgium is a member of the European Free Alliance, but traditionally belongs to the European Conservatives and Reformists)⁷⁹². Among other things, this is due to some fragmentation of views within the EFA, which is acceptable for party membership, but more critical when directly participating in political activities, for example, when voting⁷⁹³. Others change the group during the convocation, including due to

⁷⁸⁹ Comparative tool.

⁷⁹⁰ European Union. Group...

⁷⁹¹ Results of the...

⁷⁹² Comparative tool.

⁷⁹³ *Oskolkov P.V.* Ethnoregionalist Parties in the EU...P. 147.

freeze/exclusion (e.g., the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Alliance was expelled from the European People's Party – both group and transnational party – becoming the non-inscrit in 2021)⁷⁹⁴. Similarly, a suspension exclusion can be a reason for not considering in elections the results of a party in the overall standings of a transnational party (e.g., the Party of European Socialists suspended the membership of the Romanian Social Democratic Party in April 2019, at least until June of that year)⁷⁹⁵. Transitions can also apply to each individual deputy. The same can be implicated to the change in national party affiliation (e.g., B. Lucke, initially from the Alternative for Germany, left the national party in 2015)⁷⁹⁶. Also, some of the deputies are independent at the national level, which does not prevent them from being members in a transnational party (e.g., M. Harkin from Ireland, a member of the European Democratic Party)⁷⁹⁷. Data on such deputies by the transnational parties themselves are published extremely rarely and, in this case, it seems possible to track them only in third-party sources.

In addition, new national member parties occasionally appear (e.g., the Hungarian Momentum Movement has been a member of the ALDE since 2018)⁷⁹⁸, and some of the existing members change their titles (e.g., the Reload Bulgaria, formerly known as the Bulgaria Uncensored before reforming in 2017, as a member of the European Conservatives and Reformists Party)⁷⁹⁹. Parties may also cease to exist or merge (e.g., the Democratic Liberal Party and the National Liberal Party from Romania in 2014)⁸⁰⁰. Simultaneously, national parties often tend to participate in elections as part of a coalition (e.g., the Coalition for a Solidary Europe in Spain)⁸⁰¹, where their members can be both in different transnational parties (e.g., the Spanish party federation “Convergence and Union” had two members, where the Democratic Union of Catalonia belonged to the European People's Party⁸⁰², and the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia to the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe)⁸⁰³, and do not have a supranational affiliation at all (e.g., the French Agir as part of the Renaissance coalition, in which the Radical Movement – now the Radical Party – is part of the ALDE)⁸⁰⁴.

⁷⁹⁴ EPP Statement on...

⁷⁹⁵ European Socialists freeze relations with Romanian ruling party [Electronic resource] // Romania Insider. 12.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.romania-insider.com/european-socialists-freeze-relations-psd> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁷⁹⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 149.

⁷⁹⁷ Member of the EDP: Marian Harkin [Electronic resource] // European Democratic Party: [official website]. Available at: <http://www.democrats.eu/en/member/marian-harkin> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁷⁹⁸ ALDE Member Parties.

⁷⁹⁹ *Choreva A.* Barekov s nova partiya «Prezaredi – BG» i zabrani pogovorkata «Uchi, za da ne rabotish» [Electronic resource] // OFFNews. 07.01.2017. Available at: <https://offnews.bg/politika/barekov-s-nova-partia-prezaredi-bg-i-zabrani-pogovorkata-uchi-za-643805.html> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸⁰⁰ *Georgescu S.* PNL and PDL form the Christian Liberal Alliance (archived) [Electronic resource] // Nine O' Clock. 22.07.2014. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20160304120400/http://www.nineoclock.ro/pnl-and-pdl-form-the-christian-liberal-alliance/> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸⁰¹ Comparative tool.

⁸⁰² *Jansen E., Van Hecke S.* At Europe's Service...P. 49.

⁸⁰³ *Núñez L.* Nuanced Liberalism. The Weakness of Liberal Parties in Spain. In: *Liberal Parties in Europe* / E. van Haute, C. Close, eds. London: Routledge, 2019. P. 221.

⁸⁰⁴ ALDE Member Parties; Le Mouvement radical redevient Parti radical [Electronic resource] // Le Figaro. 02.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/le-mouvement-radical-redevient-parti-radical-20210902> (accessed 14.07.2022).

At the same time, some national parties have long-term cooperation with supranational parties, not becoming their members (e.g., the Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus and the Party of the European Left)⁸⁰⁵. Moreover, they can join a supranational affiliation almost immediately after the elections (e.g., the Spanish Voice joined the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe only in June 2019)⁸⁰⁶, not being part of during the elections. Up to the point where it allows one to take office already as part of a transnational party. Adding to the complexity of the statistics is the fact that references to national parties that have ceased to be members (especially if they no longer exist) are typically removed from the website and statutory documents of a transnational party and can only be accessed in archival versions which may not always be available. This also applies to cases where a national party does not simply acquire but rather changes from one supranational affiliation to another (e.g., the French Union of Democrats and Independents was the case, which was initially part of the European Democratic Party and then joined the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe)⁸⁰⁷.

Furthermore, the data from the European Parliament is also quite contradictory, which illustrates minor discrepancies in the main sources used by the author to compile the statistics. These sources include the Comparative tool of Electoral Results on the official website of the institutions⁸⁰⁸, which shows slight differences when compared to the List of Members of the European Parliament⁸⁰⁹. Additional documents, such as the European Elections 2014: List of Elected MEPs⁸¹⁰ and the Review of European and national election results were utilized. However, it should be noted that the compilers of these documents may have overlooked information on non-inscrits from Spain⁸¹¹. All of those sources were used for a more detailed interpretation of the results of specific deputies (primarily based by their last names) and parties (especially in the case of renaming or participation of coalitions).

The following materials were used separately for transnational parties:

1. European People's Party:

— The current list of member parties on the official website of the European People's Party, indicating the dates of their accession⁸¹²;

⁸⁰⁵ EL-Parties (archived) [Electronic resource] // European Left: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20140419014807/https://www.european-left.org/about-el/member-parties> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸⁰⁶ ACRE Member EU...

⁸⁰⁷ Parti Démocrate Européen (PDE) [Electronic resource] // Europe Politique. Available at: <https://www.europe-politique.eu/parti-democrate-europeen.htm> (accessed 14.07.2022); UDI France and...

⁸⁰⁸ Comparative tool.

⁸⁰⁹ Members of the...

⁸¹⁰ European Elections 2014...

⁸¹¹ Review of European and national election results. Update: September 2019 [Electronic resource] // European Parliament: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/beheard/eurobarometer/2019/review_of_european_and_national_election_results_2019/incoming_ep_2019.pdf (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸¹² Parties & Partners [Electronic resource] // European People's Party: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.epp.eu/parties-and-partners> (accessed 14.07.2022).

— Archived version of the website (April 2017)⁸¹³;

— Archived version of the website (May 2019)⁸¹⁴.

2. Party of European Socialists:

— The current list of member parties on the official website of the Party of European Socialists⁸¹⁵;

— Archived version of the website (April 2014)⁸¹⁶;

— Archived version of the website (February 2018)⁸¹⁷;

— “Europe, Our Common Future” Celebrating 20 years of the Party of European Socialists, where the main stages of its expansion until 2013 are listed⁸¹⁸;

— Activity Report of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament (2015), where the information on the members for that period are presented⁸¹⁹;

3. Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe:

— The current list of member parties on the official website of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, indicating the dates of their accession⁸²⁰;

— Decision of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations of 4 May, 2017 to Register Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party as a European Political Party⁸²¹;

— The current list of Members of the European Parliament from the Renew Europe⁸²².

4. European Democratic Party:

— The current list of member parties on the official website of the European Democratic Party⁸²³;

⁸¹³ Parties & Partners (archived) [Electronic resource] // European People’s Party: [official website]. 2017. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20170416043403/http://www.epp.eu/parties-and-partners/#> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸¹⁴ Parties & Partners (archived) [Electronic resource] // European People’s Party: [official website] 2019. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190526221011/https://www.epp.eu/parties-and-partners/#> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸¹⁵ Members [Electronic resource] // Party of European Socialists: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.pes.eu/en/members/> (accessed 14. 07. 2022).

⁸¹⁶ PES member parties (archived) [Electronic resource] // Party of European Socialists: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20140421081508/http://pes.eu/en/about-pes/pes-members/parties> (accessed 14. 07. 2022).

⁸¹⁷ Members (archived) [Electronic resource] // Party of European Socialists: [official website]. 2018. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20180218024516/https://www.pes.eu/en/members/> (accessed 14. 07. 2022).

⁸¹⁸ Krzypek A. «Europe, Our Common Future» Celebrating 20 years of the Party of European Socialists (archived) [Electronic resource] // Foundation for European Progressive Studies. 2013. Available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20200728082209/http://www.renner-institut.at/fileadmin/user_upload/images_pdfs/publikationen/pdfs/europe-our-common-future-celebrating-20-years-of-pes.pdf (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸¹⁹ Activity Report of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament [Electronic resource] // Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament: [official website]. 2015. Available at: https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/sites/default/files/SD_Activity_Report_June_2015_en_150610.pdf (accessed 14.07. 2022).

⁸²⁰ ALDE Member Parties.

⁸²¹ Decision of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations of 4 May 2017 to Register Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party as a European Political Party.

⁸²² Our MEPs [Electronic resource] // Renew Europe: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.reneweuropgroup.eu/who-we-are> (accessed 14. 07. 2022).

⁸²³ About us.

— Archived version of the website (July 2018)⁸²⁴.

5. European Green Party:

— Statutes of the European Green Party, as amended on December 4, 2021⁸²⁵;

— The current list of member parties on the official website of the European Green Party⁸²⁶;

— Archived version of the website (February 2014)⁸²⁷;

— Archived version of the website (May 2014)⁸²⁸.

6. European Free Alliance:

— The current list of member parties on the official website of the European Free Alliance⁸²⁹;

— Archived version of the site (April 2019)⁸³⁰;

— Party Manifesto from 2014, where all member and observing parties are mentioned⁸³¹.

7. European Conservatives and Reformists Party:

— The current list of member parties on the official website of the European Conservatives and Reformists Party⁸³²;

— Archived version of the website of the Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists (May 2014)⁸³³;

— List of member parties of the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (June 2019)⁸³⁴.

8. Party of the European Left:

— The current list of member parties on the official website of the Party of the European Left⁸³⁵;

— Archived version of the website (April 2014)⁸³⁶;

— List of member parties of the Party of the European Left (2017)⁸³⁷.

9. Identity and Democracy Party:

⁸²⁴ About us (archived) [Electronic resource] // European Democratic Party: [official website]. 2018. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20180709153553/https://democrats.eu/en> (accessed 14. 07. 2022).

⁸²⁵ Statutes of the...

⁸²⁶ Member Parties [Electronic resource] // European Greens: [official website]. Available at: <https://europeangreens.eu/map> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸²⁷ In Europe (archived) [Electronic resource] // European Greens: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20140208025902/https://europeangreens.eu/map> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸²⁸ Member Parties (archived) [Electronic resource] // European Greens: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20220514035541/https://europeangreens.eu/map> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸²⁹ Member Parties [Electronic resource] // European Free Alliance: [official website]. Available at: <https://e-f-a.org/member-parties/> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸³⁰ Member Parties (archived) [Electronic resource] // European Free Alliance: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190403215646/https://e-f-a.org/member-parties/> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸³¹ It's Time for...

⁸³² Member Parties & Regional...

⁸³³ The story of AECR (archived) [Electronic resource] // Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists: [official website]. 2014. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20140525045343/http://www.aecr.eu/> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸³⁴ ACRE Member EU...

⁸³⁵ Our Parties [Electronic resource] // European Left: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.european-left.org/our-parties/> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸³⁶ EL-Parties (archived).

⁸³⁷ List of Member...

- The current list of member parties on the official website of the Identity and Democracy Party⁸³⁸;
- Archived version of the website of the European Alliance for Freedom (August 2015)⁸³⁹;
- Archived version of the website of the Movement for Europe of Nations and Freedom (October 2015)⁸⁴⁰;
- Decision of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations of 14 September, 2017 to register the Movement for Europe of Nations and Freedom⁸⁴¹;
- Archived version of the website of the Movement for Europe of Nations and Freedom (June 2019)⁸⁴².

As a result, considering only the results of the members of transnational parties at the time of the elections (excluding frozen ones), the following data was extracted:

- European People's Party: 215 members in 2014 and 163 in 2019
- Party of European Socialists: 179 in 2014 and 133 in 2019
- Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe: 42 in 2014 and 73 in 2019
- European Democratic Party: 9 in 2014 and 11 in 2019
- European Green Party: 36 in 2014 and 58 in 2019
- European Free Alliance: 8 in 2014 and 10 in 2019
- Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe: 44 in 2014 and 47 in 2019
- Party of the European Left: 16 in 2014 and 9 in 2019
- Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom: 38 in 2014 and 59 in 2019.
- The rest (the European Christian Political Movement, non-inscrits, and independent at the European level): 164 in 2014 and 176 in 2019.

Germany's party statistics are more transparent.

The CDU/CSU – 28.9% and 29 MEPs (instead of 35.3% and 34 MEPs in 2014), the Alliance 90/The Greens – 20.5% and 21 MEPs (instead of 10.7% and 11 MEPs), the SPD – 15.8% and 16 MEPs (instead of 27.3% and 27 MEPs), the AfD – 11% and 11 MEPs (instead of 7.1% and 7 MEPs), the Left

⁸³⁸ Member Parties [Electronic resource] // Identity and Democracy Party: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.id-party.eu/> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸³⁹ Press Conference: Aftermath of the elections, a future for the EU or a future for Europe? (archived) [Electronic resource] // European Alliance for Freedom: [official website]. 2015. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20150812064727/http://eurallfree.org/?q=node%2F1574> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸⁴⁰ National Delegations (archived) [Electronic resource] // Movement for Europe of Nations and Freedom: [official website]. 2015. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20151022162042/http://www.menleuropa.eu/national-delegation/> (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸⁴¹ Decision of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations of 14 September 2017 to Register Mouvement pour une Europe des nations et des libertés [Electronic resource] // Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations: [official website]. 2017. Available at: https://www.appf.europa.eu/cmsdata/213533/00_Decision_2017_09_14_MENL_EN.pdf (accessed 14.07.2022).

⁸⁴² Member Parties (archived) [Electronic resource] // Movement for Europe of Nations and Freedom: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20190601191634/https://www.menleuropa.eu/> (accessed 14.07.2022).

– 5.5% and 5 MEPs (instead of 7.4% and 7 MEPs), the FDP – 5.4% and 5 MEPs (instead of 3.4% and 3 MEPs). In addition, the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative – 2.4% and 2 MEPs (instead of 0.6% and 1 MEP), the Free Voters – 2.2% and 2 MEPs (instead of 1.5% and 1 MEP), the Human Environment Animal Protection – 1.4% and 1 MEP (instead of 1.2% and 1 MEP), the Ecological Democratic Party – 1% and 1 MEP (instead of 0.6% and 1 MEP), the Pirate Party – 0.7% and 1 MEP (instead of 1.4% and 1 MEP), the Family Party of Germany – 0.7% and 1 MEP (similarly in 2014), the Volt Germany – 0.7% and 1 MEP (founded only in 2018). Finally, in 2014, the National Democratic Party of Germany also entered the European Parliament with 1% and 1 MEP.

As a result, at the supranational level, the European People's Party and the Party of European Socialists managed to maintain their leadership. Since the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, these political powers have traditionally been leading at the European level. Moreover, over the first 20 years (until 1999), the largest group was formed by the social democrats, after which these parties swapped places. In 2019, despite a significant deterioration in their positions, they continued to dominate⁸⁴³. Nevertheless, voting in the 2019 European elections resulted in the loss of their combined absolute majority⁸⁴⁴.

Germany's results deviated from European trends. The Social Democratic Party, which had consistently held the second place since 1979, lost to the Christian Democratic Union in Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria, and dropped to the third place. However, the CDU/CSU, despite a small increase in the CSU, also experienced a decline in their overall positions⁸⁴⁵. However, the SPD, for the first time in history of the European elections fell below the 2nd place, losing it to the Alliance 90/The Greens, gaining only 15.8% of the votes.

Despite a fairly wide geographical representation of the European social democrats, many leaders of the Party of European Socialists, such as the Labour Party of the United Kingdom, the Socialist Party of France, the Italian Democratic Party, etc., experienced a decline in their performance. However, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party was more successful. The geography of the European People's Party is no less extensive, with almost all EU member states being represented. As mentioned earlier, although the CDU/CSU remained the largest in the political group, they lost some votes. The same was the case for most of the leaders in the 2014 elections. In Spain, for example, the People's Party won 16 seats in 2014 but only 12 in 2019⁸⁴⁶.

The third most influential transnational party was the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, which almost doubled its previous results. However, the Free Democratic Party came only the

⁸⁴³ Comparative tool.

⁸⁴⁴ *Hobolt S. European Elections 2019...P. 16.*

⁸⁴⁵ Comparative tool.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.; Rabotyazhev N.V. Western European Social Democracy in...P. 138.*

sixth. The European Democratic Party, as a partner of the ALDE in the political group, and its national member, the Free Voters, showed a slight increase as well. A significant contribution to the success of the ALDE was made by the British Liberal Democrats, which showed the significant influence of national trends. However, it is worth noting that the Renew Europe, as a whole, includes the French Republic Forward!, which is not a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe or of the European Democratic Party)⁸⁴⁷.

Despite the Alliance 90/The Greens finishing second at the national level and the significant growth of the European Green Party overall, the latter came only fifth among the supranational parties. Their partner in the political group, the European Free Alliance, slightly strengthened its position.

It is worth noting the presence of Euroskeptics, far-right, and left-wing populists. If the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe improved their results, on the left flank the Party of the European Left experienced a significant decline in the performance. Similarly, the Alternative for Germany gained additional seats, while the Left lost some ground.

Speaking about the members of the modern transnational Identity and Democracy party, one can observe an improvement in the positions of the French National Rally, the Italian Lega, and the Belgian Flemish Interest. Moreover, the Lega and the National Rally won elections in their countries, and the Flemish Interest was close to this. For the first time, the Czech Freedom and Direct Democracy and the Conservative People's Party of Estonia also participated for the first time. The Freedom Party of Austria, on the other hand, experienced worse results. Outside of the party, but within the Identity and Democracy, the Dutch Party for Freedom (now a party member) and the Danish People's Party saw a decline, while the Finnish Party maintained its position and the Alternative for Germany improved. The presented review shows that these are mainly the parties from Western and Northern Europe. In comparison, the more moderate skeptics from the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe have strong representation in Eastern Europe, which can be justified by the differentiation in the level of economic development of different EU member states. Moreover, the representative of the Czech Republic, J. Zahradil, was nominated as a candidate for the President of the European Commission.

Taken together, the new convocation of the European Parliament has become more fragmented, with the growth of Euro-optimistic, Euro-skeptic, and right-wing populist political parties at European level that serve as alternatives to the two leading parties. This fragmentation was compounded by a significant increase in non-inscrits. However, when looking exclusively from the positions of transnational parties, the growth of alternative Euro-optimists is more noticeable. Even without considering each national party/independent MEP among the non-inscrits in detail, the difference

⁸⁴⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* Adaptation of the European Union...P. 104; Comparative tool.

between the results of all groups (including non-inscrits) is enough to determine the greater success of the alternative Euro-optimists compared to the Euro-skeptics⁸⁴⁸.

Regarding the influence of the global problem of climate change, the results can be characterized in various ways. First of all, in most cases, the increasing place of the global problem of climate change in the political agendas of parties should be considered as a favorable factor. This is driven by the high level of public concern about the global problem of climate change, as discussed in detail in the section 1.2. of Chapter 1, dedicated to the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany. However, aspects such as orientation towards non-traditional, in some sense, even marginalized voters or regional specificities are also relevant. This is evident in the cases of the Alternative for Germany, the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom, and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe. In particular, due to its critical attitude to the global problem of climate change, the AfD's tactics have been more popular in the poorer federal states of Germany, where the issue is less relevant and meets with more skepticism⁸⁴⁹.

At the European level, a dominant silence or even certain criticism of the mechanisms for solving the problem of the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe, helped to maintain their high positions in poorer Eastern Europe (e.g., Poland or the Czech Republic, while the results of the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom are quite difficult to evaluate by this component. The positions of its members are too fragmented, although they have a tendency to admit the significance of the global problem of climate change. This is most likely based on fears of losing positive-minded voters of the party, which is widely represented in Western Europe. The evidence for this hypothesis can be found in the worsened results presented together with the Identity and Democracy Party in the same group with the Alternative for Germany in 2021⁸⁵⁰, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

However, during the 2019 elections, as already mentioned in section 1.2. of Chapter 1 focused on the features of the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany, among national and supranational problems, immigration issues also ranked the top⁸⁵¹. This, in many ways, allowed the national party to improve its previous results. In addition, the AfD and the Greens were not only opposition parties, whose key topics were just important for voters, but they also had quite polarized views on each other's priorities⁸⁵².

Criticism of the AfD is also relevant for both the European People's Party and the CDU/CSU. The latter, like the SPD, its partner in the Grand coalition, subsequently admitted his insufficiently

⁸⁴⁸ Comparative tool.

⁸⁴⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* COVID-19: Influence on the Political Agenda of Alternative for Germany // *Contemporary Europe*. 2022. №4 (111). P. 206; *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 153.

⁸⁵⁰ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 146.

⁸⁵¹ Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 8.

⁸⁵² *Franz C., Fratzscher M., Kritikos S.A.* Grüne und AfD als neue Gegenpole der gesellschaftlichen Spaltung in Deutschland // *DIW Wochenbericht*. 2019. Vol. 86, Issue 34. P. 592.

serious attitude to global climate change⁸⁵³. On the other hand, the more comprehensive approach of the Party of European Socialists did not provide significant advantages to it over many other Euro-optimistic parties⁸⁵⁴. This can be partly explained by the fairly stable party position on environmental issues, which did not undergo any significant progressive transformation, as seen in the case of the ALDE. Meanwhile, although F. Timmermans was the most active on the climate issue, resulting in a significant improvement in the performance of his national party in the Netherlands, a number of the most influential national parties, including the SPD, chose less successful tactics.

As indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.2., which discusses the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany, the Alliance 90/The Greens and the Greens/European Free Alliance were recognized as the most competent by in addressing the global problem of climate change. In this sense, both the European Green Party and its national member from Germany achieved record results for themselves in the European elections.

Thus, for the first time in its history, the Alliance 90/The Greens took the 2nd place in Germany. In addition, this party had the highest representation (21 MEPs, 20.5%) both in the Greens/European Free Alliance and directly among the national parties-members of the European Green Party. Although there may be a discrepancy with the large German delegation in the European Parliament, when looking at the percentage terms, France has an indicator of 8.48%, the United Kingdom has 11.78%, and the future (at the time of the election) member of the European Greens from Denmark has 13.23%. Geographically, the greens are predominantly represented by Western European states, such as Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, and Northern European states such as Finland, but not Southern and Eastern.

Simultaneously, several environmentally and/or climate-oriented parties without supranational affiliation, namely the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative, the Human Environment Animal Protection and the Ecological Democratic Party received seats in the German delegation. In all three cases, as shown in the aforementioned statistics, these parties performed better in 2019 than in 2014. However, not all of them joined the Greens/European Free Alliance. Thus, the Human Environment Animal Protection, for instance, traditionally aligned with the European United Left/Nordic Green Left, while the representation of the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative was divided between the European United Left/Nordic Green Left and non-inscrits. For comparison, in 2014 one deputy from this party was among those who did not join.

Neither the European United Left/Nordic Green Left nor the Party of the European Left saw any gains. The same can be said about the German Left, despite its climate populism and its attempt to

⁸⁵³ *Lisenkova A.D.* Adaptation of the European Union...P. 103.

⁸⁵⁴ Comparative tool.

occupy the niche to that of the greens, for example, such as setting the highest targets. As already mentioned earlier, such tactics have proven unsuccessful and can lead to a loss of one's own identity. In addition, within the Party of the European Left, despite growing eco-socialist sentiments, more traditional views still persist. This creates a certain fragmentation, that prevented the transnational party from making a strong declaration during the election race (e.g., in its election manifesto) regarding the global problem of climate change, similar to the Left in Germany. However, there are some positive developments in the cumulative result of the Nordic Green Left Alliance, whose representatives mainly (except for the Socialist People's Party of Denmark) joined the European United Left/Nordic Green Left. The combined results of the Swedish, Finnish, and Danish parties allowed it to secure 5 seats at once, instead of 3 as in 2014⁸⁵⁵.

Other traditionally Euro-optimistic parties represented at the supranational level have significantly increased their attention to the global problem of climate change. In terms of performance, the EFA, a traditional partner of the European Greens, saw a slight increase. However, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe proved to be the most active in this regard. The ALDE's improved results, along with its partner in the political group, the European Democratic Party, were notable. Subsequently, the VoteWatch Europe noted the overall environmental orientation of the Renew Europe, although it did not rank among the leaders in the previous convocation. However, it is important to note that this cannot be directly compared to the national level, where the FDP pronounced economic-oriented rhetoric pushed the global climate change to the background. If there was any correlation between the FDP's election results and the issue of climate change, it was more on the negative side⁸⁵⁶.

Finally, to sum up, based on the principles of social constructivism and sociological institutionalism, the material problem, which is hardly perceptible for the average citizen, has gained significant importance through active climate discourse and the interplay between agency and structure. As a result, it has become a value that empowers citizens to influence the outcomes of the 2019 European elections at both the national and European levels.

2.4. The Main Non-Climatic Factors that Influenced the Results of the 2019 Election Campaign

The global problem of climate change, although actively featured in the political agenda and influencing European parties, was not the only factor that affected the election results. Accordingly, this section examines the main non-climatic factors that influenced on the 2019 European elections, encompassing both national and supranational trends were characterized.

⁸⁵⁵ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 206-207, 212-213, 215; Comparative tool.

⁸⁵⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* Adaptation of the European Union...P. 105, 107.

First and foremost, it is important to acknowledge the gradual change of political elites, which is a natural and evolutionary process. This is the replacement or relegation of leaders within parties, primarily driven by factors such as age. Such changes may affect the popularity of the latter, either positively or negatively. Before elections, if the party is directly in power and attracts significant attention (e.g., A. Merkel remained as Chancellor until 2021, but already in 2018, she stepped down as the head of the CDU), such transformation may provoke a shift in ideological preferences of voters, due to the presence of more popular and/or promising candidates from other parties. However, views are also gradually changing outside the context of changing leaders, influenced by broader historical trends. This is not only typical for the EU member states, but also for the union as a whole⁸⁵⁷. The social democrats, for example, who traditionally dominated the European Parliament since 1999, lost the lead to the Christian democrats⁸⁵⁸.

The crises of social democracy and Christian democracy in 2019 were not something new phenomena for Europe and Germany. Since the beginning of the second half of the XX century, these two political forces have been dominant. Thus, as previously mentioned, since the first direct elections to the European Parliament at the supranational level, they have consistently ranked first and second places – until 1999 – it was the social democrats, and after 1999 – the Christian democrats. In Germany, until 2019, the CDU/CSU consistently secured victory, while the SPD never fell below the second place (until 2019, when the Alliance 90/The Greens became the second)⁸⁵⁹. In comparison, in national elections in Germany from 1949 to 2021, the social democrats managed to win only four out of 20 campaigns (in 1972, 1998, 2002, 2021)⁸⁶⁰.

Transnational parties faced the same crises. One of the key factors was ideological reorientation. Thus, the general decline in the attractiveness of the social democrats since the 1990s, as described by B.P. Guseletov, was attributed to a lack of new progressive ideas and a closer alignment with conservative forces. Under the pressure of neoliberalism, they accepted the further spread of market economy.⁸⁶¹ Moreover, in the wake of the economic crisis, they could not offer any real alternative to the ruling Christian democrats, resorting to rather abstract arguments about “new socialism.”⁸⁶². Christian democracy has also shifted from its original foundations. From the point of view of M. Duverger, initially, the success of Christian democracy was associated with its centralization, mass character and competent organization. All this was highly relevant after the end of the Second World

⁸⁵⁷ *Shweitzer V.Y.* European Parliament Elections in 2019...P. 46.

⁸⁵⁸ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 129.

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid.* P. 128-129; Comparative tool.

⁸⁶⁰ *Bundestagswahlergebnisse seit 1949.*

⁸⁶¹ *Guseletov B.P.* European Social Democracy: Is There a Chance of Revival? // Scientific and Analytical Bulletin of the IE RAS. 2019. №6. P. 37-38.

⁸⁶² *Rabotyzhev N.V.* Western European Social Democracy in...P. 137.

War, when a serious crisis of parliamentarism emerged due to the problems of pre-war parties⁸⁶³. G.T. Sardaryan added to these points the promotion of the only real alternative to the left forces, emphasizing Christian values (with the support of the Vatican), democracy, and a flexible ideological basis that allowed timely and adequate response to current political issues.⁸⁶⁴ Unlike the working-class and the labour union-oriented social democrats⁸⁶⁵, the Christian democrats tried to appeal to all segments of the population and involve them in the decision-making process⁸⁶⁶.

Departing from its origins, in Germany, the SPD (during G. Schröder's chancellorship) found itself somewhere in the middle between democratic socialism and neoliberalism, aligning with economic interests but blurring the party's identity. This led to an ideological shift towards new segments of the population, such as small and medium-sized businesses, managers, etc., along with reforms that reduced the role of the state in the economy⁸⁶⁷. As a consequence, the SPD has been criticized for shifting its focus to the middle-class business interests, which correlated weakly with social justice provisions⁸⁶⁸.

Similarly, the Christian democrats can also be partially blamed for the loss of their original ideological path, some version of conservatism (although this niche at the supranational level is more occupied by Euroskeptics) and “austerity” measures⁸⁶⁹. In this context, it was not surprising that the more radical AfD once seceded from the CDU/CSU, and the predecessors of the European Conservatives and Reformists coexisted with the European People's Party in the same group⁸⁷⁰.

The Christian democrats faced a religious problem at the stage of the first enlargements of the EU and had to adapt to the inclusion of Protestant countries and their respective political systems and forces. As a result, it was necessary to gradually shift both from the priority of Catholicism and religion in general. In Germany, the CDU/CSU was criticized for changing attitudes towards Christian traditions during the migration crisis, including concessions in favor of Muslims in schools, bans on cultural events, etc. This led to the popularization of the ideas of multiculturalism⁸⁷¹. The SPD also faced consequences in this regard, because it promoted reforms to facilitate the acquisition of second citizenship for migrants. Notably, T. Sarrazin, who criticized the wave of migration, was even expelled from the party⁸⁷².

⁸⁶³ *Duverger M.* Political Parties.

⁸⁶⁴ *Sardaryan G.T.* Features of the Transition to...P. 62.

⁸⁶⁵ *Guseletov B.P.* European Social Democracy: Is...P. 37.

⁸⁶⁶ *Sardaryan G.T.* Causes of the Christian Democracy Crisis in Western Europe // Political Science Issues. 2019. Vol. 9, № 6(46). P. 1168.

⁸⁶⁷ *Rabotyzhev N.V.* Western European Social Democracy in...P. 135.

⁸⁶⁸ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 146.

⁸⁶⁹ Frenzy in Firenze: 4 takeaways from EU lead candidate debate [Electronic resource] // Politico. 03.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.politico.eu/article/frenzy-in-firenze-4-takeaways-from-eu-lead-candidate-debate/> (accessed 29.08.2022).

⁸⁷⁰ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 148; Comparative tool.

⁸⁷¹ *Sardaryan G.T.* Causes of the Christian Democracy Crisis...P. 1170, 1173.

⁸⁷² *Rabotyzhev N.V.* Western European Social Democracy in...P. 140.

The systemic crises of the parties were supplemented by other trends of their time. In Germany, back in 2018, it was announced that A. Merkel would no longer serve as Chancellor⁸⁷³, while at the European level, a rather controversial candidate M. Weber was nominated for the President of the European Commission. In particular, he was criticized for his lack of leadership experience, his support for Eurosceptic V. Orban, and even for ignoring the debates in Maastricht, which he had been warned about a year in advance⁸⁷⁴. There was both a natural fatigue from the combined Christian democratic and social democratic dominance at both levels, and an association of current crises with their governance. The discord among parties within the coalition government in Germany further exacerbated this perception.

F. Timmermans, the candidate from the Party of European Socialists, despite his initial popularity and relevant experience both in the government of the Netherlands and the European Commission, became a victim of the situation. After serving as the First Vice-President of the European Commission during J.-C. Juncker's term, he became associated with the bureaucracy of the EU and even received the nickname "Brusselmans."⁸⁷⁵ Additionally, in the countries of Eastern Europe he earned personal unpopularity by representing the interests of Brussels in the confrontation over the rule of law⁸⁷⁶.

The CDU/CSU and the SPD have also been criticized in Germany for their role in implementing the Directive on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market into national law⁸⁷⁷. The attitude towards the European elections as the second-order national elections also played a significant role. In the line with the provisions of the concept, described in more detail in the dedicated theoretical basis for studying the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of modern European parties (a case of Germany) section 1.4. of Chapter 1, the Alliance 90/The Greens, as a small party, performed well, while the members of the ruling coalition represented by the CDU and the SPD saw a decline in their results⁸⁷⁸. It should be added that the CSU's error can be justified by the nomination of their member as a candidate for the President of the European Commission from the European People's Party⁸⁷⁹.

⁸⁷³ *Bondarenko M.* Merkel explains her decision to leave politics [Electronic resource] // RBC. 01.11.2018. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/01/11/2018/5bdb3cdd9a79477132471fb4> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁸⁷⁴ *Banks M.* Manfred Weber hits back at criticism of his suitability to be next European Commission president [Electronic resource] // The Parliament. 06.06.2019. Available at: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/news/article/manfred-weber-hits-back-at-criticism-of-his-suitability-to-be-next-european-commission-president> (accessed 03.01.2023); *Brzozowski A., Radosavljevic Z.* First Spitzenkandidaten debate...

⁸⁷⁵ *O'Leary N.* Frans Timmermans' greatest...

⁸⁷⁶ Timmermans: Multilingual Dutchman aiming to be 'face of Europe' [Electronic resource] // France 24. 28.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.france24.com/en/20190528-timmermans-multilingual-dutchman-aiming-be-face-europe> (accessed 06.06.2022).

⁸⁷⁷ Kritik von allen Seiten [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 03.02.2021. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/urheberrechtsreform-uploadfilter-101.html> (accessed 05.06.2023).

⁸⁷⁸ European Parliament election 2014; European Parliament election 2019 [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/europawahlen/2019/ergebnisse/bund-99.html> (accessed 12.04.2022).

⁸⁷⁹ Manfred Weber am Europa-Parteitag...

However, it would be too early to dismiss both forces (the Christian democrats and the social democrats), because despite the crises, citizens continued to vote for them, although some of the votes also began to go in favor of left-wing and right-wing radical parties, relatively moderate Euroskeptics, as well as the greens or the regional separatists⁸⁸⁰. This trend was most relevant among the 60+ age group in Germany, while the Alliance 90/The Greens gained support from the 18-24 age group. At the same time, both the Christian democrats and the Greens were more popular in the West and South of the country. By comparison, support for the SPD was fairly even distributed across Germany, without a pronounced east-west divide⁸⁸¹.

A major contribution to the results of the Greens was made on May 18, 2019, by a YouTube blogger Rezo's video "The destruction of the CDU," which garnered 16 million views, became the most popular video in Germany in 2019. In it, Rezo criticized not only the CDU/CSU but also the SPD, the AfD, and the FDP. Given the focus on the global problem of climate change, in many ways, his video could be seen as the Alliance 90/The Greens propaganda, although this was denied. Other topics that the blogger considered in it were propaganda to the detriment of young people (his main target audience), participation in military conflicts, the gap between the rich and the poor, the education system, etc. Taken together, the impact on young voters was even called "Rezo-effect."⁸⁸²

All this means that the Christian democrats, the social democrats, the liberal democrats and the conservatives could lose their positions not only to each other, but also to other parties. As a result, the most pressing issues on the agenda, such as the global problem of climate change, the migration crisis, the imbalance among member states (especially in the context of past enlargements), changes in relations with other world leaders (e.g., Russia), etc. have contributed to increasing fragmentation at both the European and national levels⁸⁸³.

In characterizing individual crises, it is important to mention the migration crisis, as it ranked first among the supranational problems for European Union citizens⁸⁸⁴. Since 2015, there has been a sharp increase in the number of people crossing the border with Europe, as well as the number of failed attempts with a fatal outcome. In 2015 alone, thousands of them died while trying to cross the sea.

⁸⁸⁰ *Babynina L.O.* The Tendencies of the Development...P. 86; *Guseletov B.P.* The Victory of the Social Democrats in Finland as the Beginning of the Revival of Social Democracy in Europe // *The European Union: facts and comments.* 2019. №96. P. 65.

⁸⁸¹ Europawahl 2019. Heft 4. Wahlbeteiligung und Stimmabgabe nach Geschlecht und Altersgruppen [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 2019. Available at: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressekonferenzen/2019/Repr-Wahlstatistik-2019/Heft4.pdf%3F__blob%3DpublicationFile (accessed 05.06.2023); So hat Deutschland gewählt [Electronic resource] // FUNKE. 2019. Available at: <https://interaktiv.waz.de/europawahl-deutschland/> (accessed 06.06.2022).

⁸⁸² *Dambeck H.* Der Rezo-Effect – echt...; Die Zerstörung der CDU [Electronic resource] // Rezo ja lol ey. 2019. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Y11ZQsyuSQ> (accessed 03.01.2023).

⁸⁸³ *Shweitzer V.Y.* European Parliament Elections in 2019...P. 39-40, 42-43.

⁸⁸⁴ Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 14.

Finally, the crisis in migration management has undermined European unity and security⁸⁸⁵, placing the Dublin system and the Schengen Area at risk⁸⁸⁶. In addition, a number of member states, due to their coastal geographical position, such as Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, have faced exceptional attacks⁸⁸⁷. Within the European Union itself, Germany has become the most attractive country for migrants, with Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria accounting for approximately half of the migrant population, countries that have been plagued by conflicts on their territory⁸⁸⁸.

In fact, by 2019, migrant flows began to decline. According to the European Commission, in 2015 the number of migrants was about 1.8 million people, and in 2019 there were only 142,000⁸⁸⁹. However, the consequences of previous influxes of migrants, as well as the significant number of asylum seekers in the EU, in the elections played in favor of right-wing populists and nationalists who criticized the common migration policy of the European Union (border security, various aspects of the security of Europeans in contact with migrants, the distribution of arrivals among member states, etc.)⁸⁹⁰. Additionally, there was a heightened wariness among citizens towards those who arrived from Muslim states, first of all, after a series of terrorist attacks in a number of European countries⁸⁹¹. Statements by far-right and right-wing populists sometimes resorted to rather harsh racist and xenophobic rhetoric, accompanied by a desire for less delegation of leadership to the European level and protectionism. This concerned not only the migration department⁸⁹², but also, for example, the economic one⁸⁹³. It is worth noting that it is terrorism, according to the Eurobarometer, that turned out to be the second most important supranational problem for EU citizens⁸⁹⁴.

By emphasizing anti-immigration provisions, the AfD also supported the anti-integration attitude of the far-right, which contributed to its rather positive results⁸⁹⁵. At the same time, the party's rhetoric did not enjoy the same success across the country predominantly dominated in the less wealthy Eastern states⁸⁹⁶. However, heterogeneity was inherent within many parties. For example, the Greens were more

⁸⁸⁵ *Bosilca R.-L.* The Refugee Crisis and the EU Border Security Policies. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of EU Crises* / M. Riddervold, J. Trondal, A. Newsome, eds. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2021. P. 469-470.

⁸⁸⁶ *Potemkina O.Yu.* Migration crisis and the European Union Policy // *Current Problems of Europe*. 2016. №4. P. 39.

⁸⁸⁷ *Karpovich O.G., Zvereva T.V.* The EU's Migration Policy...P. 95-96.

⁸⁸⁸ Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015 [Electronic resource] // Pew Research Center. 02.08.2016. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/> (accessed 03.06.2022).

⁸⁸⁹ Common European Asylum System [Electronic resource] // European Commission: [official website]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/migration-and-asylum/common-european-asylum-system_en (accessed 03.06.2022).

⁸⁹⁰ *Pogorelskaya S.V.* European Elections...P. 12.

⁸⁹¹ *Mudde C.* The 2019 EU...P. 25.

⁸⁹² *Zonova T.V.* Elections of 2019...P. 64.

⁸⁹³ *Klinova M.V.* Nationalism vs Europeanism...P. 126.

⁸⁹⁴ Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 14.

⁸⁹⁵ *Babynina L.O.* The Tendencies of the Development...P. 86.

⁸⁹⁶ Deutschland. Europawahl 2019...

popular in medium and large cities, while the AfD and the CDU/CSU found stronger support in medium-sized cities and rural areas⁸⁹⁷.

A special case of Euroscepticism was the aforementioned Brexit, which also became a fairly significant factor that influenced the moods in the EU, and not only in the UK. Thus, disintegration sentiments appeared in other member states as well. Italy, with a government made up entirely of Eurosceptic and populist parties, the Lega and the Five Star Movement, was seen as one of the most likely followers of the Brexit scenario⁸⁹⁸. However, similar sentiments were also encountered, for example, in Germany, where the country's exit from the EU was supposed by the Alternative for Germany⁸⁹⁹.

The results of the UK itself in the European elections and the subsequent balance of power were of fundamental importance, with Brexit becoming the central topic. Thus, according to Statista, in 2019 the issue of Brexit/EU worried 47% of citizens, compared to the closest follower, the National Health Service (7%)⁹⁰⁰. First of all, this was reflected in the impressive results of the Brexit Party, which placed the mentioned topic at the core of its rhetoric. As a consequence, the failure of the Conservative Party greatly contributed to the decline of the European Conservatives and Reformists from the 3rd place among political groups. The general rise in Eurosceptic sentiments and the overall increase in the position of the transnational party allowed it to exceed the previous result, but this success mainly compensated for the failure of the British party, and did not lead to a significant increase in influence.

The split in the UK Independence Party not only led to the formation of the Brexit Party, but also contributed to the demise of the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe and the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy. Consequently, in the new convocation, the Brexit Party decided to remain among the non-aligned. In addition, the Labour Party of the United Kingdom also lost some of its seats, which affected the decline in the influence of the Party of European Socialists and their group, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats⁹⁰¹. The second place in the elections in the UK after the Brexit Party was taken by the Liberal Democrats, a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe that formed the Renew Europe. It staunchly opposed Brexit and insisted on another referendum.

⁸⁹⁷ So hat Deutschland...

⁸⁹⁸ Zonova T.V. Elections of 2019...P. 63; Piccolino G., Angelucci D., Isernia P. What Brexit has Taught Italy about its Own Prospects of Leaving the EU [Electronic resource] // The London School of Economics and Political Science. 06.06.2019. Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2019/06/06/what-brexit-has-taught-italy-about-its-own-prospects-of-leaving-the-eu/> (accessed 04.06.2022).

⁸⁹⁹ Baloge M. From Brexit to...P. 553.

⁹⁰⁰ What do you...

⁹⁰¹ Babynina L.O. The Impact of Brexit on...P. 70, 72; Walker P. Gerard Batten quits as Ukip leader [Electronic resource] // The Guardian. 03.06.2019. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/jun/03/gerard-batten-quits-as-ukip-leader> (accessed 08.04.2022).

The topic became the centerpiece of their campaign rhetoric⁹⁰², while the Labour Party and the Conservatives appeared as more indecisive forces⁹⁰³.

Separately, it is worth discussing the results of the left, which combines the communist and socialist parties, increasingly transforming in their ideological perception into “left-green” perspectives. Many parties in Northern Europe have embraced eco-socialism and leftist populism⁹⁰⁴, with a focus on working people and socially vulnerable groups. From the point of view of S.V. Pogorelskaya, their failure can be justified both by inappropriate internationalism regarding the migration crisis and unmet expectations of citizens⁹⁰⁵. In the past, thanks to the left-populist rhetoric relevant in the context of the global economic crisis, their popularity, on the contrary, increased in countries such as Greece – Syriza, Spain – Podemos and the United Left in 2014 or their coalition in 2019. They capitalized on hopes for economic growth and reduced unemployment during the global economic crisis. Even despite a small increase at the supranational level for the classic left-green parties, often their results (the Danish Red–Green Alliance, the Finnish Left Alliance, the Swedish Left Party) were lower compared to national elections. Moreover, according to G. Ivaldi, the wave of left-wing populism against the backdrop of the economic crisis is over primarily evident only in Western European states⁹⁰⁶. On the other hand, R.V. Kostiuk focuses on the surge of leftist forces in Southern Europe, which suffered the most from the economic crisis⁹⁰⁷. In turn, for the former states of the socialist bloc this ideology is marginal⁹⁰⁸. In Eastern Germany (the former German Democratic Republic or GDR), the Left is more popular than in the western states⁹⁰⁹. However, the party was losing relevance in Eastern Germany, which is associated both with a natural change of generations (the death of citizens who founded the GDR) and with a serious ideological shift of the party towards feminist, environmental and other values⁹¹⁰. While the Left Party was the most represented national party in the European United Left/Nordic Green Left in the European Parliament from 2004 to 2014, it first lost this position to Spain in 2014 and then shared it with France in 2019⁹¹¹.

⁹⁰² *Vasilopoulou S.* Brexit and the 2019 EP Election in the UK // *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 2020. Vol. 58, Issue 51. P. 80, 84.

⁹⁰³ *Anderson M.* 4 Takeaways from The European Parliament Election Results [Electronic resource] // NPR. 27.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/27/727293356/4-takeaways-from-the-european-parliament-election-results> (accessed 04.06.2022).

⁹⁰⁴ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 207, 211; *Pogorelskaya S.V.* European Elections...P. 12.

⁹⁰⁵ *Pogorelskaya S.V.* European Elections...P. 12.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ivaldi G.* Populist Voting in...P. 74.

⁹⁰⁷ *Kostiuk R.V.* European Left: Awakening from Sleep? // *Alternatives*. 2016. №1. P. 110.

⁹⁰⁸ *Ivaldi G.* Populist Voting in...P. 74.

⁹⁰⁹ Deutschland. Europawahl 2019...

⁹¹⁰ *Candeias M.* What Now, Die Linke? [Electronic resource] // Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung*: [official website]. 2019. Available at: <https://www.rosalux.de/en/publication/id/41070/what-now-die-linke> (accessed 04.06.2022). *In accordance with the order of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, it was excluded from the register of branches and open representative offices of international organizations and foreign non-profit non-governmental organization.

⁹¹¹ Comparative tool.

At the same time, despite the gradual transition to eco-socialism, from a European point of view, the left-wing parties have not achieved the necessary level of homogeneity. Among them there are both Euro-skeptics and Euro-optimists, and the mass media talk about their unity “only in defeat.”⁹¹² One consequence of the fragmentation was the Now the People movement, formed by the Spanish Podemos, the France Unbowed and the Portuguese Left Bloc in 2018 the formation of, which united a number of Europopulist parties. However, this did not bring about order, because some of them were also members of the Party of the European Left⁹¹³ and the Nordic Green Left Alliance.

The case of the Left showed that the working class and socially vulnerable groups of the population do not share the progressive environmental values and policies towards migrants emphasized by the party representatives⁹¹⁴. This divergence led to a split when the co-chairman of the faction in the Bundestag, S. Wagenknecht, who is more critical of migration and popular among voters, founded the “Get Up!” movement in 2018 and tried to lure voters away from the AfD⁹¹⁵. The politician intended to attract supporters of leftist views from other parties (primarily, the Alliance 90/The Greens and the SPD), however, despite the initial success, the initiative soon faced skepticism. S. Wagenknecht herself in March 2019 stepped down from leadership⁹¹⁶ and announced her intention not to seek re-election as co-chairman of the faction in the Bundestag⁹¹⁷.

The success of the liberal democrats at the supranational level was also quite understandable. First of all, if talking about the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, apart from a significant environmental shift and the nomination of one of the most charismatic candidates for the President of the European Commission (M. Vestager, the European Commissioner for Competition at that time) among all transnational parties, this is the most the traditionally influential pro-European alternative to the Christian democrats and the social democrats. The latter, under the influence of significant crises in the European Union, as well as a number of national trends and the population's natural fatigue from the permanent dominance of traditional leaders, began to lose their positions gradually⁹¹⁸. This explains why

⁹¹² *Beucker P.* Vereint nur in der Niederlage [Electronic resource] // Die Tageszeitung. 27.05.2019. Available at: <https://taz.de/Linke-bei-der-Europawahl/!5598099/> (accessed 04.06.2022).

⁹¹³ *Kolomatskaya D.A.* Problems of European Integration in Ideology and Strategy of Radical Left Parties // Bulletin of Moscow Region State University. 2021. № 1. P. 83; *Kostiuk R.V.* *Kostiuk R.V.* Left Alternatives in...P. 64.

⁹¹⁴ DIE LINKE muss radikaler werden und offensiver! [Electronic resource] // MARX21.DE. 04.07.2019. Available at: <https://www.marx21.de/buchholz-christine-die-linke-klima-europawahl/> (accessed 04.06.2022).

⁹¹⁵ *Müller J.-W.* What's Left of the Populist Left? [Electronic resource] // Project Syndicate. 21.02.2019. Available at: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/populist-left-wrong-political-strategy-by-jan-werner-mueller-2019-02/russian> (accessed 06.06.2022).

⁹¹⁶ *Fitzpatrick M.* New German leftist movement wobbles as co-founder retreats [Electronic resource] // Yahoo Life. 10.03.2019. Available at: <https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/german-leftist-movement-wobbles-co-founder-retreats-112012089.html?guccounter=1> (accessed 06.06.2022).

⁹¹⁷ Wagenknecht kandidiert nicht mehr als Fraktionsvorsitzende [Electronic resource] // Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 11.03.2019. Available at: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/wagenknecht-kandidiert-nicht-mehr-als-linke-fraktionsvorsitzende-16083230.html> (accessed 06.06.2022).

⁹¹⁸ *Lisenkova A.D.* Adaptation of the European Union...P. 103-104; *Forthomme C.* European Elections 2019: A Watershed for Europe [Electronic resource] // Impakter. 30.05.2019. Available at: <https://impakter.com/european-elections-2019-watershed-europe/> (accessed 05.06.2022).

other pro-European parties, although less influential, such as the European Green Party (rather for climate reasons), the European Democratic Party or the European Free Alliance were also in demand⁹¹⁹. As a result, EU citizens sought alternatives not only among Euroskeptics but also among representatives of Euro-optimism.

Regarding the lead candidate, however, there are also some nuances to consider. In particular, during the debates in Florence G. Verhofstadt stated that the party was protesting against the opponents' refusal to accept transnational voting lists and that it was nominating a "Team Europe" consisting of 7 candidates⁹²⁰, including N. Beer from the FDP⁹²¹. However, in reality, only G. Verhofstadt and M. Vestager participated in the debate, which made it possible to follow the path of other parties that appointed two lead candidates of different genders. In addition, it was M. Vestager who participated in the key meeting. Nevertheless, even with two candidates, it remains unclear which of them would ultimately assume the position, thus diminishing the significance of the Spitzenkandidat phenomenon⁹²².

In Germany, the Free Democratic Party slightly improved its results in 2014. The same can be said for the Free Voters, a member of the European Democratic Party. The latter are traditionally most popular in Bavaria, while the FDP has more support in most of West Germany⁹²³. Overall, the ALDE and the EDP are fairly well represented, but Southern Europe is an exception. On the other hand, the European Greens also have problems in Eastern Europe⁹²⁴, while in Germany they are more popular in the Western states⁹²⁵. In addition, it was Germany that presented the lead candidate for the Presidency of the European Commission from the European Green Party and received the largest representation in the party, and according to the results of the elections which, however, is also related to the overall size of the German delegation⁹²⁶.

To a greater extent, citizens who were concerned about economic issues voted for the FDP, but the CDU/CSU was recognized as more competent in this area, with only 11% compared to 47%⁹²⁷. Even criticism from the FDP towards the CDU/CSU for ignoring the interests of small business did not help here⁹²⁸. On the other hand, according to political scientist M. Debus: "The liberalization of the CDU complicates the life of the FDP, in the middle it became crowded for the FDP."⁹²⁹

⁹¹⁹ European Union. Group...

⁹²⁰ Frenzy in Firenze...

⁹²¹ Team Europe.

⁹²² Debate of the...

⁹²³ So hat Deutschland...

⁹²⁴ Comparative tool.

⁹²⁵ So hat Deutschland...

⁹²⁶ Comparative tool.

⁹²⁷ Europawahl 2019. Umfragen Kompetenzen.

⁹²⁸ Germany's FDP rejects women's quota, elects new general secretary [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 24.08.2019. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-fdp-rejects-womens-quota-elects-new-general-secretary/a-48521534> (accessed 27.10.2021). *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁹²⁹ *Starzmann P.* Die FDP wirkt machtlos...

N. Beer, the lead candidate from the party, was accused of having connections with Eurosceptic V. Orban. Her desire to become both the Deputy Leader of the party and get a seat in the European Parliament remained incomprehensible⁹³⁰. M.-A. Strack-Zimmerman, a popular person in the FDP who has been Deputy Leader since 2013, refused to fight for re-election with N. Beer, arguing that this was in the interests of the party⁹³¹. As a result, only 58.6% of the members supported N. Beer⁹³². In addition, the 60+ generation, as well as women, traditionally have little interest in the party⁹³³. The FDP was accused of reluctance to introduce gender quotas⁹³⁴, but shortly before the elections, a woman L. Toiteberg became the General Secretary of the party. In her inaugural speech, she separately sympathized with the poor which, although not typical of the traditional rhetoric of the party, did not help the situation⁹³⁵.

Turning to the provisions of the spatial theory of party competition, also it is possible to emphasize a few aspects. First of all, when speaking of proportional features, there is an ideological justification for the results of several parties. Thus, the influence of immigration and other Eurosceptic sentiments, led to improved results for the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom, the Alternative for Germany and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (even considering the ideological justification behind Brexit). Moreover, in the case of the AfD, the migration crisis has further consolidated its position, particularly in Germany where a historical far-right ideological niche was free. The climate rhetoric of the European Green Party and the Alliance 90/The Greens, as well as the ideological weakness of the European Left and the Left (e.g., on migration issues) played a role. The European Democratic Party saw only slight improvement, which can be argued by its unfavorable centrist position. On the other hand, the European Free Alliance, with its specific thematic niche, was not expected to achieve high indicators. Some error was introduced by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, which not only adapted its tactics to the current challenges, but also fielded a strong candidate. However, the leadership factor does not contradict the provisions of the theory, but may be considered as concomitant. Finally, speaking of majoritarian features, the European People's Party and the Party of European Socialists, similar to the CDU/CSU and the SPD in Germany, strongly depended not only on their traditional positions and the arguments of the concept of second-order national elections, but also on the role of leaders. As already mentioned in the section 1.4., Chapter 1,

⁹³⁰ Ibid.

⁹³¹ FDP-Vize Strack-Zimmermann verzichtet auf erneute Kandidatur [Electronic resource] // Die Welt*. 14.04.2019. Available at: <https://www.welt.de/regionales/nrw/article191884373/FDP-Vize-Strack-Zimmermann-verzichtet-auf-erneute-Kandidatur.html> (accessed 06.06.2022). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

⁹³² Reeh M. Quote diskutiert, Ziele vereinbart [Electronic resource] // Die Tageszeitung. 28.04.2019. Available at: <https://taz.de/FDP-Parteitag-in-Berlin/15588065/> (accessed 06.06.2022).

⁹³³ Starzmann P. Die FDP wirkt machtlos...

⁹³⁴ Reeh M. Quote diskutiert, Ziele...

⁹³⁵ Starzmann P. Die FDP wirkt machtlos...

focusing on the theoretical basis for studying the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of modern European parties (a case of Germany), according to a YouGov/dpa poll, of all the leading candidates in Germany, K. Barley from the SPD was the most popular. For M. Weber, who was simultaneously nominated as the leader of both the EPP and the CDU/CSU, this was less relevant⁹³⁶. In comparison, F. Timmermans was much more famous in the European Union, weakening the Christian democrats. However, it is worth noting that the EPP and the PES were not bound by the obligations of the Grand coalition, although the representatives of Germany hold significant positions in the delegations of both parties in the European Parliament. This is because the difference between the center-right and the center-left, including their interpretation of the issue of the global problem of climate change at the supranational level, is still more noticeable.

In this chapter, the author conducted a study on the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of European parties. The election campaign for the European Parliament in 2019 was analyzed as a case study. Based on its results, the current composition of the institution was formed. The choice was justified by the greatest visibility of changes in the rhetoric and other activities of parties and their leaders during the pre-election race, while the results of voting clearly demonstrate how favorably this transformation was received by voters. In addition, the case of national parties in Germany allowed for the examination of differences in the characteristics of European parties at the two levels, as well as for the study of the national characteristics of the EU leading state, Germany. Finally, key non-climatic factors that influenced the election results were separately taken into account in order to avoid errors.

The global problem of climate change had a significant impact on the transformation of European parties in the framework of the election campaign to the European Parliament in 2019. First of all, it influenced their rhetoric, where topics related to the Paris Agreement, as well as the Emissions Trading System, RE and others became more clearly noticeable. The parties also talked a lot about the correlation of the issue with transport, to a lesser extent with agriculture, fisheries, trade and many others. Across all environmental areas, they talked about innovation, investment, and the circular economy.

As a result of the vote, the greens were unequivocally successful at both levels. According to the spatial theory of party competition, their ideology played a decisive role in the results. In addition, German minor parties such as the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative, the Human Environment Animal Protection Party, and the Ecological Democratic Party also entered the European Parliament. However, not all of them joined the Greens/European Free Alliance. Thus, Human Environment Animal Protection Party to the European

⁹³⁶ Europawahl: Jeder Zweite...

United Left/Nordic Green Left, the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative split between the Greens/European Free Alliance and non-inscrits⁹³⁷.

The European Greens' partner in the political group, the European Free Alliance provided a more detailed programme compared to 2014. The same can be said for the European Democratic Party. However, based on the spatial theory of party competition, it can be determined that they initially had little chance of significant success. Accordingly, the results of the EFA and the EDP are more logically viewed in relation to their senior partners in the political groups – the EGP and the ALDE.

In fact, at the supranational level, three parties at once emerged as the most active; the European Green Party, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, and the Party of European Socialists. Moreover, while the latter has long been associated with some level of climate progressiveness, the transformation of the ALDE was the most notable innovation. It is worth assuming that the combination of the party's climate modernization with an alternative pro-European position yielded a positive result in the elections. Thus, only the ALDE and the European Greens have proposed targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions higher than those already set, although, at least within the PES, discussions on this matter have also taken place⁹³⁸.

These trends have not spread to the national level. The SPD clearly remained under the influence of its more conservative partner in the Grand coalition⁹³⁹, and the FDP (as well as separately N. Beer, unlike M. Vestager) showed themselves to be completely unprepared for climate change. This characteristic is not decisive in evaluating the effectiveness for the future of the country, however, in the context of the perception of citizens, it was erroneous.

The Party of the European Left and the Left experienced a decline in their results. Eco-socialism, populist tactics of copying and adopting green positions (mostly for the Left), the lack of real unity, as well as insufficient climate activity at the supranational level (among the PEL) were not successful. Some positive dynamics were shown by the Nordic Green Left Alliance, whose representatives (except for the Socialist People's Party of Denmark) also joined the European United Left/Nordic Green Left. The combined results of the national parties of the Alliance were positive⁹⁴⁰.

The European People's Party, the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe, and the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom were the least active on the global problem of climate change. The CDU/CSU can be characterized similarly, but the Alternative for Germany chose a different path. The party actively criticized government actions, questioning their effectiveness. While M. Weber

⁹³⁷ Comparative tool.

⁹³⁸ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 209-210; *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 132.

⁹³⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 133.

⁹⁴⁰ Comparative tool.

and J. Zahradil diligently avoided any environmental issues⁹⁴¹, J. Meuthen, on the contrary, rejected the fight against global climate change⁹⁴². On the other hand, the EPP slightly increased its attention to the problem, which cannot be said about the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe and the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom that neglected the issue. In the latter case, the party simply ignored it, because they did not have a manifesto). The CDU/CSU presented a relatively small programme, where the main topics were treated superficially⁹⁴³. In contrast, the Alternative for Germany was the most critically active in the fight against global climate change. However, such tactics are very questionable in terms of productivity, as they criticize one of the most popular topics in the EU and Germany. It is worth suggesting that if in the case of all other parties their silence and ignoring, as well as low targets, were rather not successful in attracting the positive attention of the majority of the population (except for some regions), the good results of the Alternative for Germany are more associated with its migration agenda rather than its climate criticism. On the other hand, Eurosceptics kept silent, probably to avoid excessive criticism for their skepticism about the expediency of solving the problem, especially in terms of financing, and to avoid contradicting traditional ideology, where environmental issues did not hold a prominent place due to economic reasons. As a result, they could afford some ignorance without much harm to the results, which is not the case for the traditionally leading and yet Euro-optimistic Christian democrats. The disinterest of citizens in other environmental initiatives has also become important here, because the positive attitude of the AfD towards a number of areas was ignored.

Thus, using the analytical classification from the Climate Action Network, the transnational parties in the 2019 elections could be divided into “defenders” (the European Green Party, the Party of European Socialists, and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) and “dinosaurs” (the European People's party, the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe, the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom). The Party of the European Left, the European Democratic Party (conditionally closer to the “defenders”) and the European Free Alliance (conditionally closer to the “delayers”) occupied an intermediate position between the “defenders” and the “delayers”⁹⁴⁴. At the national level, according to the same classification, as well as the one from the Deutscher Naturschutzring and the Climate Action Network, the author proposed classifying the German parties into “very good” and “defenders” (the Alliance 90/The Greens, the Left), “good” and “delayers” (the Social Democratic Party), as well as “very bad” and “dinosaurs” (the Christian Democratic Union in Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria, the Free Democratic Party of Germany and the Alternative

⁹⁴¹ Debate of the...

⁹⁴² „Die EU macht...

⁹⁴³ Unser Europa macht...

⁹⁴⁴ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.

for Germany, respectively). In addition, the AfD could even be placed in a separate and more radical category (“really very bad” as well as “dinosaurs”)⁹⁴⁵.

From the point of view of social constructivism and sociological institutionalism, owing to the elevation of the fight against global climate change to the rank of leading value compared to other materialistic problems (including environmental ones), one could notice a significant impact of the climate agenda on the elections to the European Parliament in 2019 through the creation of norms and discursive interpretations. Thus, thanks to institutional, legal and other transformations, as well as the transmission of ideas about the importance of climate policy, citizens gradually accepted this value and began to influence the future fate of institutions by voting in elections. Parties at both levels transformed their tactics to align with these trends and, in some cases, even harmonized them with each other, thanks to institutional, legal, and ideological transformations. Finally, to accurately assess the results of the campaign, it is important not to overlook non-climatic factors. At both levels, quite similar processes took place, and the same general problems were also present, in particular, migration or Euroscepticism with the peak being the Brexit. In addition, the systemic crises of the Christian democrats and the social democrats have been going on for more than one year, as along with the natural transformation of the ideological preferences of citizens. All this was supplemented by not the most popular political decisions (e.g., the implementation of the Directive on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market)⁹⁴⁶. It is worth noting that both in the European Union (the EPP and the PES) and in Germany (the CDU/CSU and the SPD), the Christian democrats and the social democrats continued to be the two leading political forces. This associative responsibility for the events and their relative stability supports the spatial theory of party competition. Furthermore, the role of political elites within the parties was a serious factor here, including the upcoming departure of A. Merkel and the varying success of lead candidates from national and/or transnational parties, ranging from dubious (e.g., M. Weber or N. Beer) to successful (e.g., M. Vestager). The attitude of citizens to the elections as the second-order national elections also had an influence, the result of which could have been a decline in the positions of the CDU and the SPD, and the rise of the Alliance 90/The Greens. Regional and sub-regional preferences, as well as local factors like the “Rezo-effect,” also played a role⁹⁴⁷.

Overall, the election clearly showed the dominance of Euro-optimism over Euroscepticism. However, the Christian democrats and the social democrats performed worse at both levels, which resulted in the latter even losing second place in the German elections. On the contrary the liberal democrats and right-wing populists experienced contrasting fortunes. However, in contrast to the

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid.; Unser Programm für...; Wen wählen für...

⁹⁴⁶ Kritik von allen...

⁹⁴⁷ Dambeck H. Der Rezo-Effect – echt...

European level, in Germany both forces performed worse than the Greens, and the FDP received fewer seats than the AfD. Finally, the left was not successful in either case⁹⁴⁸.

⁹⁴⁸ Comparative tool.

Chapter 3. The Influence of the Global Problem of Climate Change on the Transformation of European Parties in the 2021 Bundestag Election Campaign: Key Trends

In this chapter, the author analyzes the main trends regarding the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of political parties within the framework of the election campaign to the Bundestag. To accomplish this, the provisions of the election programmes of the main German national parties in 2021 were characterized. In addition, to determine the positive or negative dynamics of the development of climate provisions, as well as their adaptation to European and national political trends, similar texts from 2017 were used as a basis for comparison. Additionally, publications on the official websites of the parties, as well as recordings of debates, interviews, podcasts, and other public speeches (including party Congresses) featuring lead candidates, leaders, and other active representatives of the parties, were analyzed. Based on the results, the main features of interpretation and priorities in the fight against global climate change through the prism of various ideologies were derived from the results. Progress/regression in the deepening and/or expansion of climate provisions was analyzed. Subsequently, the overall results of the elections were characterized, taking into account the impact of the global problem of climate change, the transnational context, and the perception of the experience of 2019. Furthermore, the main non-climatic factors that also affected the 2021 campaign in Germany were identified. Therefore, this chapter is necessary for a comprehensive explanation of the results of the 2021 election campaign in Germany, with an emphasis on a combination of aspects related to the global problem of climate change and influencing them (public opinion, party rhetoric, political events, etc.).

3.1. The Global Problem of Climate Change in the Political Agenda of the Main German National Parties in 2021

In this section, the author analyzes the political agenda of the main national parties in Germany, through the lens of the global problem of climate change. The analysis is based on the content of election programmes, podcasts, interviews, and the participation of their leaders in debates and other significant events. The listed sources ensured a comprehensive characterization of both the transformation of the parties and their ideological interpretations of the topic under study.

Before comparing the provisions of the political programmes of the parties, it is worth identifying the priorities announced by the lead candidates prior to the 2021 elections. They allowed to notice the most prominent features of the interpretations of party representatives on the global problem of climate change and highlight those parties that were most engaged with the topic.

Thus, the candidates for the post of Chancellor met repeatedly in televised debates during the 2021 campaign. A set of TV Triels were held, where O. Scholz (SPD), A. Laschet (CDU/CSU), and A. Baerbock (Greens) took part. All three parties had realistic chances of winning, as evidenced by those pre-election surveys presented in section 1.2. of Chapter 1 which is dedicated to the features of the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany, as well as the data reviewed in the 2019 EU and German election campaign results in Chapter 2.

The first meeting, which took place on August 29, 2021, was broadcast by n-tv (Nachrichtenfernsehen/News broadcasting) and RTL (Radio Television Luxembourg/Radio Television Luxembourg). As expected, climate issues were given a separate heading, while other less popular environmental topics were of little interest to both presenters and candidates. Among the candidates, only A. Baerbock independently touched upon the climate direction, talking about “neutrality” in her opening monologue and emphasizing “real climate protection before it's too late” in the final part of the debate⁹⁴⁹. In the second case, O. Scholz joined her, declaring the need to “stop anthropogenic climate change” in relation to concerns for the future⁹⁵⁰. On the other hand, A. Laschet conspicuously ignored this topic in both cases.

In a feature heading, A. Laschet spoke out against the restrictions and excessive regulation burdening the industry. In comparison, A. Baerbock talked about the enlargement of renewable energy, the allocation of 2% of the country's territory for wind energy, the installation of solar panels on all roofs, the promotion of cars with zero emissions or the coal phase-out by 2030. She also expressed concern about the significance of the climate agenda for future coalition negotiations. O. Scholz also supported the expansion of renewable energy sources and a “powerful electricity grid” for a “carbon-neutral economy by 2045.”⁹⁵¹. A. Laschet focused on the need to speed up procedures and reduce bureaucracy, promote innovation and highlight the importance of the power grid's capabilities. Ultimately, all candidates resorted to mutual accusations, whether it was about seating too high goals or, on the contrary, being too slow, as well as debating the industrial or social consequences. As a representative of the Greens, who are traditionally the most concerned with environmental issues, A. Baerbock was expectedly more progressive than her opponents in climate topic. However, such rhetoric, faced with counterarguments, could also be perceived negatively due to legitimate fears of excesses⁹⁵².

The second meeting was held on September 12, 2021, and was broadcast by ARD (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland/Association of Public Broadcasting Corporations in the Federal Republic of Germany) and

⁹⁴⁹ Bundestagswahl 2021 LIVE: Das Triell - Baerbock | Laschet | Scholz [Electronic resource] // n-tv Nachrichten. 2021. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDBITm3eumE> (accessed 03.10.2022).

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁵¹ Ibid.

⁹⁵² Ibid.

ZDF. This time, addressing their voters in the final part, all three candidates remembered the climate agenda. A. Laschet mentioned the need for Germany to become a “climate neutral industrialized country,” O. Scholz talked about the importance of making the right subsequent decisions to stop “anthropogenic climate change,” and A. Baerbock even stated, “The next government is the last one that can still actively influence the climate crisis, and I am deeply convinced of this.”⁹⁵³. Even at the very beginning of the meeting, the representative of the greens did not forget to mention the importance of the global problem of climate change, along with digitalization and social sphere. She also mentioned the climate in the context of tax fraud. However, when the discussion shifted directly to the climate, its role became secondary, because the main debate with mutual accusations (including activities within the Grand coalition) unfolded between O. Scholz and A. Laschet. Among other things, O. Scholz again talked about renewable energy and industrial reconstruction, while A. Laschet discussed the abolition of the tax on renewable energy sources (EEG-Umlage) and the KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau/Credit Institute for Reconstruction) programme for the development of solar energy. A. Baerbock was quite unambiguous in her proposals, including investments of 50 billion euro per year, coal phase-out by 2030, specific climate targets in the transport sector and “energy money.”⁹⁵⁴.

The third debate took place on September 19, 2021, and this time it was hosted by ProSieben/Sat.1 and Kabeleins. At the very beginning of the discussion, and when asked what he could offer to voters, O. Scholz spoke about fair wages, industrial modernization, and the fight against the global problem of climate change. A. Laschet mentioned a return to economic growth and, investments, creating a “carbon-neutral” industry, achieving climate goals without harming employees, and ensuring security⁹⁵⁵. A. Baerbock focused on social justice and climate protection. In fact, all three candidates finally recognized the significance of one of the most “important” or “pressing” topics of this campaign, as subsequently indicated by the presenters⁹⁵⁶. In their closing monologues, all three candidates outlined the same priorities. In the thematic column, O. Scholz emphasized the immediate need to make the industry “carbon-neutral,” further develop solar and wind energy, and modernize legislation⁹⁵⁷. A. Laschet stressed upon the need of global efforts, the problems of Germany in balancing industrial development and the rejection of coal and nuclear power, the need for energy cooperation and, like M. Weber before, about innovation and the abolition of the tax on renewable energy sources. Moreover, the rejection of nuclear energy was perceived with some skepticism, because it has less CO₂ emissions than coal. A. Baerbock again determined that “the next federal government should be a climate government,”

⁹⁵³ Das Triell – Dreikampf ums Kanzleramt | Baerbock, Laschet, Scholz [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 2021. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUOR5y5ldDo> (accessed 04.10.2022).

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁵ Das TV Triell mit Annalena Baerbock, Armin Laschet und Olaf Scholz | ProSieben [Electronic resource] // Galileo. 2021. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9-CA_BmhKA&t=7s (accessed 13.10.2022).

⁹⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid.

emphasizing the necessity to expand the production of solar and wind energy, including with solar panels on each roof, the transition to “zero” cars by 2030, the transformation of agriculture, and the coal phase-out by 2030⁹⁵⁸.

On the one hand, there were a succession of candidates and consistent climate accents at all three meetings. On the other hand, the last discussion was the most productive. The candidates seemed to have finally realized the priority of the topic. Also, with fewer recriminations and more consistent judgments, it was this meeting that became the most conducive to evaluating their discourse. In fact, A. Baerbock was the most environmentally friendly candidate, but her rhetoric was somewhat adamant and aggressive, which was expressed in the promotion of bans. At the same time, A. Laschet's counterbalance did not look like a favorable alternative, but rather an illustration of conservatism. O. Scholz was more balanced, taking a middle position, which could have a potentially positive effect on the audience's perception⁹⁵⁹.

However, the debate was not limited to these three meetings. On September 13, J. Wissler (Left), A. Weidel (AfD), M. Blume (CSU), and W. Kubicki (FDP) met live on ZDF. When asked, “How do you want to ensure effective climate protection?” A. Weidel questioned the belief in anthropogenic climate change and argued through the prism of international efforts⁹⁶⁰. In addition, she defended the energy and automotive industries, jobs, and opposed taxation. Her views were met with skepticism and simultaneous rejection of coal and nuclear energy, as well as the reliability of wind energy. W. Kubicki, supporting market mechanisms and the Emissions Trading System, called his programme “the most ambitious.”⁹⁶¹. J. Wissler, in turn, outlined the “ambitious” target of “carbon neutrality” by 2035, the coal phase-out by 2030, the expansion of renewable energy, improvements in railway communication and public transport, the cessation of deforestation, and industrial modernization⁹⁶². The politician emphasized her absolute belief in the scientific evidence of anthropogenic climate change. M. Blume discussed increasing commuter travel allowances, prioritizing innovations over restrictions. Overall, this meeting was a classic example of the opposition of parties to the right and left of the center. Accordingly, the former acted more reservedly (especially the CSU), except for the most antagonistic AfD. Despite the bold statements from the FDP, their list of proposals remained rather limited. The Left, on the contrary, tried to offer the most progressive ideas⁹⁶³.

Finally, on September 23, 2021, ARD and ZDF hosted a Round Table discussion, which was attended by representatives of all major parties. These were O. Scholz (SPD), A. Laschet (CDU), A.

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁰ Bundestagswahl Schlagabtausch – AfD, FDP, Die Linke, CSU [Electronic resource] // ZDFHeute Nachrichten. 2021. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSXAG19Xkqw> (accessed 17.10.2022).

⁹⁶¹ Ibid.

⁹⁶² Ibid.

⁹⁶³ Ibid.

Baerbock (Greens), C. Lindner (FDP), A. Weidel (AfD), J. Wissler (Left), and M. Söder (CSU). The participation of a CSU representative in these meetings seemed somewhat unusual, considering A. Laschet's nomination as the joint candidate. However, there were no radical environmental differences between the "sister" parties.

In terms of climate, there were no new judgments expressed. C. Lindner continued to support the Emissions Trading System and opposed prohibitions in favor of technological development. A. Laschet and M. Söder agreed with him. If the representative of the CDU spoke about the need for industrial transformation, the CSU leader also mentioned his personal efforts to consume less meat and travel to the meeting by train. In turn, A. Baerbock noted that she used a bus, not a plane, also indicating that the Alliance 90/The Greens had a 100-days Emergency Climate Programme for each individual sector. J. Wissler supported an accelerated phase-out of coal, along with improvements in public transport and rail connections, including discussions on lowering ticket prices, expanding infrastructure and speed limits on freeways. O. Scholz advocated for innovation, particularly in expanding renewable energy sources and achieving "climate neutrality," A. Weidel, as expected, maintained a skeptical stance and expressed support for coal and nuclear energy⁹⁶⁴.

In comparison, similar meetings took place in 2017. On September 4, a TV Duel between A. Merkel (CDU) and M. Schulz (SPD) was broadcasted on ZDF, RTL, ARD, and ProSieben/Sat.1. Environmental and/or climate issues were of little concern for the Chancellor candidates. However, during the meeting, A. Merkel was nevertheless forced to comment on climate and transport issues, where she advocated for "moderation," "medium," as well as "sustainable solutions" and saving jobs in the automotive industry⁹⁶⁵. In fact, both candidates rejected a ban on internal combustion engines and diesel, but expressed their high concern about the "diesel scandal" related to emissions fraud⁹⁶⁶. However, M. Schulz accused A. Merkel of defending manufacturers who abused their trust⁹⁶⁷.

On September 5, 2017, J. Herrmann (CSU), S. Wagenknecht (Left), C. Lindner (FDP), A. Weidel (AfD), and C. Özdemir (Greens) also participated in a discussion on Das Erste. The politicians were primarily focused on other priorities and touched upon the global problem of climate change, when posing questions to each other. Moreover, the word "climate"/"climatic" was never mentioned directly, and the issue itself was considered within the context of energy. Other ecological topics did not excite the participants either. As expected, the green candidate turned to the problem as a whole, trying to unjustifiably accuse J. Herrmann from Bavaria of using coal energy. Another topic was again the issue of diesel fuel, with C. Özdemir speaking in favor of its ban by 2030. C. Lindner disagreed, proposing to

⁹⁶⁴ Wahlkampf: Schlussrunde der...

⁹⁶⁵ TV-Duell zwischen Angela Merkel und Martin Schulz mit Gebärdensprache am 03.09.17 [Electronic resource] // Phoenix. 2017. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDXEjSN0MOY&t=5073s> (accessed 22.10.2022).

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid.

define new “limit values” for emissions, and also agreed with S. Wagenknecht on the need for car manufacturers to modernize their vehicles⁹⁶⁸. A. Weidel even called the “limit values” “political.”⁹⁶⁹.

Thus, the presented dynamics clearly demonstrate a significant increase in attention to the climate agenda in 2021 compared to 2017. This increase was facilitated by the experience of the 2019 campaign for the European Parliament, the sustained high interest in the topic among voters, and the ongoing transformations in the EU and Germany, such as the introduction of the European Climate Law and amendments to the national Climate Change Act. However, differences in views still existed, which indicated the absence of an exclusively progressive vision of the problem. Nevertheless, all parties became more concerned about this topic and developed their own interpretation. At the same time, discursively, the issue ceased to be exclusively associated with the greens, as some of their opponents also presented relatively advanced approaches.

The positions of the main six parties are more comprehensively presented in their programmes. For clear illustration of the dynamics, the main provisions of their programmes are considered below, not only for 2021 but also for 2017. It is also necessary to determine the classification for this purpose. For example, characterizing the programmes of the parties, WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk/West German Radio) Quarks created the following climate rating: the Left, the Alliance 90/The Greens, the SPD, the CDU/CSU, the FDP, and the AfD⁹⁷⁰. However, in order to harmonize with Chapter 2, the author decided to stick with the already used classification of the Deutscher Naturschutzring and the Climate Action Network. Thus, in 2019, they divided the German national parties into three categories: “very good” (Alliance 90/The Greens), “good” (SPD and Left), and “very bad” (FDP and CDU/CSU). Consequently, the AfD could also be included in the latter category. Based on the results of the study in Chapter 2, for 2019, the author proposed to consider the dynamics of the Left as falling into the “very good” category, and the Alternative for Germany could even be classified in a separate category (e.g., “really very bad”). Finally, it would be more logical to swap the FDP and the CDU/CSU in this group. At the end of this section, the relationship between this classification and the one used for transnational parties (“defenders”, “delayers”, and “dinosaurs”) will also be presented.

Therefore, it is most logical to start the analysis of programmes with the “very good” category, which, according to the new input data, included the greens and the left⁹⁷¹.

⁹⁶⁸ Der Fünfkampf nach dem TV Duell AfD CSU FDP Grüne Linke Bundestagswahl 2017 YOUTUBE [Electronic resource] // IL Canale Politico. 2017. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn3rVC2Koe0> (accessed 20.10.2022).

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁰ *May N.* Vom Gewinner zum Verlierer degradiert: FDP-Anhänger regen sich über WDR-Wissenschaftsredaktion auf [Electronic resource] // RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland. 02.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.rnd.de/politik/parteien-im-quarks-klimaschutz-ranking-fdp-anhaenger-empoert-ueber-wdr-wissenschaftsredaktion-JZJCK6Q3OFACHKE3HXDRC32LHI.html> (accessed 05.12.2022).

⁹⁷¹ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4; Unser Programm für...; Wen wählen für...

Alliance 90/The Greens

As defined in the preamble of their 2017 programme, “due to environmental crises and, more importantly, the climate crisis, humanity is facing no less a problem of existence.”⁹⁷². The first section of it was devoted to a wide range of environmental issues. There were also standard mentions of education, research, investment, innovation, control, digitalization, financing, revising subsidies, circular economy, modernization, etc.

Regarding energy and climate, the party advocated for decentralization in energy supply, energy modernization of houses, the promotion of self-sufficiency and the use of renewable energy at the communal level. It was assumed that it was necessary to reduce the cost of RE and achieve energy supply solely from renewable sources by 2050, not only for buildings but also heating in industry and mobility. In addition, the promotion of the European Energy Union with its transformation into a “climate union,” the coal phase-out by 2030 (based on the Mining Law and the Coal Phase-Out Act, including the immediate shutdown of the 20 dirtiest stations), the nuclear phase-out by 2022 (to end subsidies while respecting safety and finding the best possible waste repository) were pursued⁹⁷³. This would require adaptation and, ideally, withdrawal from the Euratom.

Finally, the party called for environmental and/or climate standards in trade agreements, adherence to the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, inter-regional cooperation, reform of the World Trade Organization (WTO), support for the Global South with the elimination of reasons for flight, the reduction of emissions at the EU level by 2050 by 95%, increase in the cost of carbon certificates, as well as the removal of redundant ones together the termination of free ones). Their targets included expanding the share of renewable energy in electricity up to 100%. It was determined that the climate contribution should be not only from the energy sector, but also from industry, agriculture, transport, and construction. In addition, the greens discussed establishing a green Pact for the Future with African countries and allocating 2 billion euros per year for development and international climate protection.

In the field of transport, they promoted the following: the adoption of the Future Public Transport Programme, the expansion of rail connections, public transport, electromobility, and bike paths, the increase of freight traffic by rail and water, transitioning shipping from oil to alternative fuels, the electrification and to the use of alternative fuels in railways, reduction of emissions, modernization of the automotive industry at the expense of manufacturers, speed limits on highways of 120 km/h, a ban on new non-zero emissions cars from 2030, the elimination of breaks on kerosene for airlines, and modernization of the automotive industry, among other measures.

In public administration, the party discussed the appointment of a “green” Federal Minister for the Environment and incorporating the level of sustainability of companies regarding investments and

⁹⁷² Zukunft wird aus...

⁹⁷³ Ibid.

changing the way they do business. They aimed to save €12 billion by redirecting climate subsidies, promote sustainable consumption, green public procurement, forcing companies' accountability in terms of sustainable development indicators, support video conferencing, and provide assistance to small and medium-sized businesses and self-employed people. Additionally, at the European level, it was also planned to create a Future Fund, which would allocate public investments, including for environmental needs.

Finally, the Greens also addressed topics, such as social and environmental standards in the context of sporting events, the Sustainable Investment Pact under the Green New Deal, the environmental and social Rent Law, and “cleanliness” of indoor air, climate subsidy for energy upgraded apartments, etc.⁹⁷⁴.

In the preamble to their 2021 programme, the Greens emphasized both “carbon neutrality” and “socio-ecological market economy.”⁹⁷⁵ The text's structure primarily focused on environmental issues, aligning with the party's thematic orientation. The issues of research, innovation, investment, digitalization, financing, liability (for example, corporations), taxation, the elimination of “harmful” subsidies, and infrastructure, were present in almost every subsection⁹⁷⁶.

In the climate vector, the emphasis was on the SDGs, the European Green Deal, the Paris Agreement. They aimed to incorporate these commitments into the Basic Law, alongside the nuclear phase-out and the recognition of ecology as a “basic principle.”⁹⁷⁷ The agenda also involved improving the Climate Change Act and launching an Immediate Climate Protection Programme with the establishment of a Transformation Fund to support regions, handicrafts, and small and medium-sized businesses, as well as increasing the participation of enterprises in decision-making processes. At the same time, it was supposed to generate revenues from the emissions' policy, as well as to gain an additional 15 billion euros from the reallocation of subsidies. On the energy front, the party talked about renewables, energy efficiency, decentralization, the European Energy Union, the end of fracking, the revision of the Renewable Energy Sources Act, the reform of the Emissions Trading System and the increase in CO₂ prices in transport and heat supply to 60 euro by 2023, the return of “energy money” to citizens, implementation of carbon contracts and many other things⁹⁷⁸. High ambitions were declared to increase the capacity of wind and solar energy annually, as well as to allocate 2% of the countryside area in to renewable energy sources, while encouraging their own solar panels, protecting species from the use of wind energy and simplifying the process of replacing turbines with more powerful ones. The party

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁵ Deutschland. Alles ist drin. [Electronic resource] // BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN: [official website]. 2021. Available at: https://cms.gruene.de/uploads/documents/Wahlprogramm-DIE-GRUENEN-Bundestagswahl-2021_barrierefrei.pdf (accessed 04.01.2023).

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.

advocated for a coal phase-out by 2030, supported the Nord Stream 2 project, the construction of new terminals only if they utilized hydrogen. They also advocated for a nuclear phase-out, including the promotion of this idea at the EU level. In the case of the latter, they emphasized the importance of finding an optimal place for storing waste, the importance of the disposal of stations, the reform of the Euratom. Finally, the greens planned to reduce emissions by 70% by 2030 and bring the share of renewable energy to 100% by 2035.

In the transport sector, the agenda included various measures such as promoting public transport, cycling, and walking. This involved creating infrastructure, including doubling bike lanes by 2030, cars with “zero” emissions, speed limits on motorways to 120 km/h (with up to 130 km/h), restoration and expansion of railway communication⁹⁷⁹. In the case of the latter, investments in the amount of 100 billion euros were assumed until 2035. Regarding road transport, only “clean” cars were required from 2030, which would exclude the possibility of registering other types of vehicles, whereas, the purchase of “clean” cars was supposed to be encouraged by stopping subsidizing diesel fuel. It was also supposed to change the taxation of company cars, to increase the share of electric vehicles to 15 million by 2030, followed by the expansion of charging infrastructure. However, all this did not cancel the support of the automotive industry.

In addition, it was planned to ban short-haul flights by 2030 in favor of rail transport. The aviation sector was expected to transition to new technologies and renewable energy, along with a review of the subsidies and taxation of kerosene within the EU. This would also imply a refusal to expand airports. Likewise, it was planned to transfer freight transport to the railroad and to eliminate emissions from trucks eventually. Mandatory emission reduction targets were also envisaged for shipping, with the inclusion of this sector in the Emissions Trading System. The issue of air travel and shipping, as well as industry, was affected by aspects of hydrogen and synthetic fuels, which were considered necessary to be used only in those areas where they were deemed necessary. Additionally, it was proposed to abandon the cruise liners. There have also been alternative solutions to transport, such as improving remote work or using video conferencing, as well as increasing the proportion of green spaces on highways, reducing car traffic in cities, and paying more attention to regional cycles.

Reconstruction was envisioned not only in the context of buildings but also cities, with a focus on expanding “green” spaces to improve quality of life⁹⁸⁰. Regarding building efficiency levels, the KfW 40 standard for new buildings and KfW 55 for refurbished buildings was mentioned in the plan, while heating replacement would be permitted only with renewable energy, which would involve an investment programme to produce two million high-efficiency heat pumps by 2025. In addition, the use of wood was supported.

⁹⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid.

On the international stage, the party advocated for the inclusion of environmental and social chapters in trade agreements, the Supply Chain Act in the EU and Germany, but against “harmful” free trade areas and agreements⁹⁸¹. They called for the reform of the WTO, the creation of sustainable trade with the Global South with an awareness of responsibility to these countries, as well as the support for high-tech products. At the same time, relations with Russia, China, Brazil, and the United States were also viewed through the lens of climate and environment, as well as the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which was seen as crucial for resisting authoritarian regimes and combating the global problem of climate change. Finally, it was declared that improving living conditions in the countries of the Global South would also contribute to the reduction of migration.

The party also proposed the establishment of the Green Culture Foundation as a funding mechanism in the cultural sphere and advocated for organizing “environmentally neutral” major sporting events⁹⁸². Finally, concerns about the relationship between emissions and health care were expressed⁹⁸³.

Thus, it is unlikely that anyone could compete with the greens at this stage, which was shown by the data presented in Chapter 1, section 1.2., dedicated to the features of the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany. Setting aside the populism of the Left, which is certainly evident to most voters, the Alliance 90/The Greens has no environmental competitors, just like in the 2019 elections. With each new programme, the party continues to expand and/or deepen its positions, detailing and proposing new directions. The only trap of such actions could be insufficient attention to other components of sustainable development and/or excesses, which were criticized both in 2021 with A. Baerbock and in 2019 with S. Keller.

Another interesting fact was the lack of a positive impact from the flood that hit Germany in the summer of 2021. According to Infratest dimap, the party's rating continued to fall, although one of the key causes of the natural disaster could be linked with the global problem of climate change⁹⁸⁴.

The Left

In 2017, in the preamble, the left had already talked a lot about saving the climate, as well as the harmful effects of social injustice and neoliberal capitalism. This was supported by arguments about the impossibility of achieving climate goals by 2020, as well as the need for changes to some of the EU founding treaties. A range of fairly standard provisions were included in the programme, be it the support for the SDGs, research, rejection of capitalism and increased state control, digitalization, revision of subsidies, and investments, among others.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid.

⁹⁸² Ibid.

⁹⁸³ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁴ Sonntagsfrage Bundestagswahl [Electronic resource] // Infratest dimap. Available at: <https://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/sonntagsfrage/> (accessed 03.11.2022).

The Left set several targets: a 40% reduction in emissions by 2020, 60% by 2030, and 95% by 2050, as outlined in the Climate Change Act. They aimed for a 43% share of RE in the electricity sector by 2020, 70% by 2030, and 100% by 2040 with a total RE share of 45%. Additionally, they targeted a 40% reduction in primary energy consumption by 2030 compared to 2000, and a minimum of 20% regenerative heat in heat supply by 2020.

They talked about tightening the Climate Action Plan 2050, transforming or replacing the Renewable Energy Sources Act, and banning fracking, as well as carbon capture and storage. The nuclear phase-out was envisaged at the international level, with the simultaneous withdrawal from the Euratom. The party emphasized the responsibility of companies for waste disposal, the expansion of public participation, and the enshrining these measures in the Basic Law of the country. For the coal energy industry, the Federal Mining Act, the Coal Phase-out Act together with the coal phase-out by 2035, a ban on the construction of new stations and the creation of a Structural Change Fund with funding of 250 million euros per year for industry employees were planned.

In the transport sector, the Left prioritized transportation, cycling, and walking, as well as public transport, with the promotion of electromobility. They called for a speed limit of 120 km/h on motorways and 30 km/h in living areas, as well as the elimination of subsidies on aviation fuel, diesel and biofuels. They promoted reducing VAT on railway tickets and eliminating exemptions for international air tickets. Other measures were also proposed to change tax incentives for company cars, increase the fare for trucks on all roads, limit the CO₂ emissions content in cars to below 60 mg from 2025 (and allowing only “clean” cars from 2030), etc. Only ships powered by diesel fuel or cleaner engines would be allowed to enter EU territorial waters, and government subsidies to airports would need to be eliminated. Moreover, the Left proposed a single tax on kerosene in the EU, halting the expansion of flights, and imposing a ban on them from 22:00 to 6:00 in the Federal Aviation Security Act.

In addition, the Left advocated for supporting of communes, implementing uniform federal standards, incorporating a climate component in housing benefits, abolishing “unauthorized industrial” discounts on environmental taxes, and promoting emissions trading, among other measures⁹⁸⁵. Simultaneously, “climate housing money [should] have been designed to safely prevent energy poverty when consumed wisely.”⁹⁸⁶.

Finally, in the international arena, the party was expressed concerns about human rights, including environmental ones. A Compensation fund for the consequences of climate change and colonialism under the auspices of the UN was proposed to establish, free trade agreements were rejected, and Germany itself had to pay 7 billion euros by 2020 for climate finance and cooperation. To assist the

⁹⁸⁵ Die Zukunft, für die wir kämpfen: Sozial. Gerecht. Frieden. Für alle [Electronic resource] // DIE LINKE: [official website]. 2017. Available at: https://www.die-linke.de/fileadmin/download/wahlen2017/wahlprogramm2017/die_linke_wahlprogramm_2017.pdf (accessed 04.01.2023).

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid.

Global South, the Left planned to use a tax on financial transactions and ban the import of biofuels. In the construction sector, the promotion of environmentally friendly methods with materials (including thermal insulation), the reconstruction of buildings and infrastructure (including sports facilities) were listed⁹⁸⁷.

The already mentioned eco-socialism and populism of the Left were further developed in 2021, as reflected in the programme titled “It's Time to Act! For Social Security, Peace and Climate Justice!”⁹⁸⁸. Similar to previous iterations, the preamble contained many ideological and/or environmental references, whether it was “social, democratic and ecological economics,” criticism of capitalism, or even the rejection of the Green Deal in favor of public investment⁹⁸⁹. This rhetoric often led to the addition of the epithet “ecological” in the maximum possible and not always appropriate places⁹⁹⁰. From the general provisions, the programme also touched upon topics such as digitalization, investments (including through the public Transformation Fund), new technologies, changes in training programmes, increased public participation and responsibility of corporations, the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement, among others.

In the climate-energy direction, it was planned to reduce emissions by 80% by 2030, include environmental and climate protection in the Basic Law, expand the Emissions Trading System to the heating and transport sectors, reduce the electricity tax for private consumers and control prices. In addition, it was supposed to create 100,000 jobs by 2030, support regions and communes, ban the import of biofuels, realize the coal phase-out plan by 2030 and the nuclear phase-out plan immediately, including in the international arena and withdrawal from the Euratom⁹⁹¹.

The left also wanted to ban new coal plants and plants from the discovery and expansion of deposits, as well as reform the Federal Mining Act and the Renewable Energy Sources Act. The party supported powering tenants from their own photovoltaic systems, making solar power mandatory for new buildings, and “by 2025 [...] install at least 10 gigawatts (GW) of photovoltaic installations per year, as well as 7 GW of onshore wind and 2 GW on the shelf.”⁹⁹². Meanwhile, bioenergy was not considered “clean” by the party. Finally, it was seen as expedient to abandon gas, the Energy Charter Treaty, as well as fracking and carbon capture and storage. It was assumed that even “green” hydrogen should be used only where other renewable energy sources are unavailable.

The transport direction was also disclosed in sufficient detail. This included a reduction in dependence on exports, the expansion of railway and public transport, the maximum rejection of personal transport by 2030, the development of bicycle system (even electronic cargo bikes, among

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁸ Zeit zu handeln!..

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹⁹² Ibid.

others) and footpaths with parking, the creation of a Pan-European sleeper train, electrification and the promotion of hydrogen in rail transport, the rejection of highway expansion and the privatization of transport infrastructure with a speed limit of 120 km/h on highways, 80 km/h on country roads, 30 km/h in urban areas; the development of electromobility (including in public transport), increase in fares for trucks and prohibition of their passage on federal/rural roads if there is a highway as an alternative, exclusion of cars from city centers, the phase-out of fossil fuel vehicles by 2030 (including export and re-registration), hydrogen fuel research and battery production/recycling. Finally, the party proposed a general reduction in air travel and a ban on flights shorter than 500 km and up to 5 hours, as well as a ban on flights from 6 to 22 hours with the decommissioning of scarce regional airports. Additionally, the elimination of subsidies for biofuels, diesel and aviation fuel together with phasing out government funding for drones and flying taxis were envisioned. In shipping, it again concerned the possibility of entering the EU territorial waters only on diesel or eco-fuel (but not oil) transport. Even a ban on the advertising of cars with excessive emissions and the promotion of online conferences were elaborated.

Plans were in place for nationwide building inspections by 2025 and “carbon-neutral development” by 2035⁹⁹³. It was proposed to immediately reconstruct post-war housing (1949-1978). Finally, the Left announced the need to move away from fossil fuel heaters, use sustainable building materials (such as wood, which did not override the priority of its economical use) wherever possible, and rent 250,000 eligible apartments per year. They also emphasized the evaluation of new projects in terms of their life cycle, as well as to reconstruct sports facilities.

In the international arena, assistance to the Global South was envisaged, including through the UN-level Compensation fund for the consequences of climate change and colonialism and a tax on financial transactions. There was also a commitment to refuse the import hydrogen from these countries and limit the operation and transfer of production. Finally, they advocated for environmental standards in trade and the extension of the rights of refugees to include environmental and climatic factors.

Ultimately, the Left emphasized the need to decriminalize climate activists, reallocate money from military spending to climate protection, avoid diverting funds from other areas due to COVID-19 spending, consider the gender aspect, change lifestyles, provide opportunities to receive specialized degrees (e.g., in landscape planning), the promotion of environmental theories in economic research, the observance of standards in public procurement, and the creation of the European Community for the promotion of renewable energy and energy conservation. In addition, they proposed loan programmes from the European Central Bank for a “zero” economy by 2035, a strengthening of the Just Transition Fund, government subsidies, over 20 billion euros from the Industrial Transformation Fund and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

⁹⁹³ Ibid.

Thus, the Left could participate in the 2021 elections even with the provisions of its ambitious 2017 programme, remaining more progressive compared to many other parties. However, in their climate populism and eco-socialism, they went further, even calling the party's programme "It's Time to Act! For Social Security, Peace and Climate Justice!"⁹⁹⁴. Moreover, the rhetoric of the party was filled with numerous repetitions, slogans, and, in some cases, the inappropriate use of environmental epithets in the provisions of the text. Traditionally popular in the more conservative federal states of East Germany, the party continued to absorb and further develop the values of the western part of the country as well. In the context of the ecological discourse, it still looked like an attempt to surpass the greens in terms of indicators, superimposing social values also developed by the SPD and adding a unique feature – criticism of the capitalist system. In reality, the Left was in a trap from which there is hardly a way out. A change in the system is unlikely, yet it duplicates and exaggerates the ideological foundations of the two opponents⁹⁹⁵. Thus, the party wanted to achieve "climate neutrality" faster while avoiding an increase in CO₂ prices, which is hardly possible to achieve simultaneously⁹⁹⁶. Obviously, the historically traditional conservative electorate of the left is not satisfied with the current reorientation. As observed in practice, they are increasingly turning towards the Alternative for Germany⁹⁹⁷.

The inconsistency of the party was also evident in the desire to eventually abandon natural gas. However, in practice, D. Bartsch, the co-chairman of the Left faction in the Bundestag, expressed support for the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline in Germany, stating that its completion would lead to lower gas prices and meet the current high demand⁹⁹⁸. During the final stages of the pipeline's construction, the politician described calls to halt the construction of the nearly finished gas pipeline as "absurd."⁹⁹⁹.

The category "good" was formed by the SPD¹⁰⁰⁰.

Social Democratic Party of Germany

The social democrats, in the preamble of their 2017 programme, determined that "economic strength, the desire for innovation, technological progress, sustainability and the conservation of natural resources are the basis of the future of Germany and Europe."¹⁰⁰¹. The party was concerned with issues

⁹⁹⁴ Lisenkova A.D. The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.144-145; Die Zukunft, für...; Zeit zu handeln!..

⁹⁹⁵ Die Zukunft, für...; Zeit zu handeln!..

⁹⁹⁶ Pötter B. Klimapolitik der Linken...

⁹⁹⁷ Lisenkova A.D. The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146; Lisenkova A.D. COVID-19: Influence on...P. 206.

⁹⁹⁸ Emendörfer J. Nord Stream 2 macht Gas für Verbraucher billiger [Electronic resource] // RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland. 03.02.2021. Available at: <https://www.rnd.de/politik/nord-stream-2-macht-gas-fur-verbraucher-billiger-GKXXG2IEXRDJLOK2C7ILSDOAYA.html> (accessed 08.09.2021).

⁹⁹⁹ Schwarz S. Linke Probleme [Electronic resource] // Klimareporter. 06.02.2021. Available at: <https://www.klimareporter.de/deutschland/linke-probleme> (accessed 08.09.2021).

¹⁰⁰⁰ Unser Programm für...; Wen wählen für...

¹⁰⁰¹ Zeit für mehr Gerechtigkeit [Electronic resource] // Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands: [official website]. 2017. Available at: https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Regierungsprogramm/SPD_Regierungsprogramm_BTW_2017_A5_RZ_WEB.pdf (accessed 04.01.2023).

such as the circular economy, funding for research and development, social and technical innovation, support for small and medium-sized businesses, etc.

The SPD planned to reduce emissions by 40% by 2020, with “maximum neutrality possible” by 2050¹⁰⁰². Expressing a desire to increase public engagement, the party stated, “We will make Germany the most energy efficient economy in the world,” and also supported the Climate Action Plan 2050¹⁰⁰³. At the same time, the SPD rejected nuclear energy and fracking, supporting the Emissions Trading System, decentralization of supplies and the expansion of renewable energy (with an emphasis on the heating and transport sectors, not just electricity), yet without rejecting the importance of gas, provided it meets the necessary standards.

By supporting the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and environmental standards in trade agreements, the party aimed to provide assistance to the countries of the Global South (including financial assistance – \$100 billion per year), and promote the development of the UN and a sustainable EU foreign policy. The party touched upon social, environmental, and other aspects in the context of maintaining peace, which would require the establishment of European climate diplomacy.

Calling for a “Union for Affordable and Sustainable Mobility,” the SPD promoted public transport, cycling, and electromobility. The party advocated for supranational emission control, the development of charging infrastructure (including for electric bicycles), and research on alternative fuels. It was supposed to transfer cargo transportation to rail transport and water as much as possible, and to develop alternative fuels for aviation, among other initiatives¹⁰⁰⁴.

In the first section of the 2021 programme, the SPD posed the question, “Will we manage to change our life and economy in such a way as to stop anthropogenic climate change?”¹⁰⁰⁵. The party divided their programme into four missions of the future, focusing on climate, mobility, digital technologies, and healthcare. The first mission was “Climate neutral Germany.”¹⁰⁰⁶. The SPD again spoke about investments, innovations, social and environmental restructuring of the economy towards a circular economy, technology exports, infrastructure, and more.

In support of the Emissions Trading System, the Sustainable Development Strategy, and the Paris Agreement, the party emphasized climate leadership and proposed a set of targets: achieving “neutrality” by 2045, reducing emissions by 65% by 2030, and completing the transition to renewable energy by 2040 in the electricity sector. In addition, points such as the coal and nuclear energy phase-out, improving the energy efficiency of buildings, transitioning to “carbon-neutral” industry and all building materials by 2030, and becoming a “leading market for hydrogen technologies” (“clean” hydrogen) by

¹⁰⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Aus Respekt vor...

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ibid.

2030 for transport, air travel, and steel production¹⁰⁰⁷. Finally, it was proposed to reject the Renewable Energy Sources Act, equipping 5 million homes with innovative heating and energy systems by 2030, and increasing public engagement.

The mission “Transport transition by 2030” was also quite close to the issue of climate change¹⁰⁰⁸. This included affordable public transport and the Mobility Plan 2030. Finally, it was supposed to make buses and trains “clean,” to electrify 75% of the railway network by 2030, to develop freight transport by rail and water, and produce 15 million electric vehicles by 2030. Additionally, they talked about the domestic battery production and recycling, the expansion of charging stations, a speed limit of 130 km/h, as well as the implementation of projects to reduce emissions from aircraft, ships, and trucks.

The SPD also planned to support environmentally responsible production, public procurement, and financing by the Credit Institute for Reconstruction for strategically important industries. They acknowledged the importance of environmental sustainability in the postal industry, emphasized environmental standards in trade agreements, expressed support for adaptation in the Global South, and highlighted the significance of environmental cooperation with China¹⁰⁰⁹.

Thus, the prioritized missions in the SPD programme visually emphasized the global problem of climate change. At the same time, the ideological social foundations were evident, however, other key instruments traditionally offered by all parties were not denied. The Emissions Trading System, for example, was recognized by both the FDP and the SPD. However, unlike the liberal democrats, the rhetoric of the social democrats showcased a larger number of proposed tools and mechanisms. At the same time, the party avoided falling into climate populism like the Left but aligned itself more closely with its supranational affiliation – the Party of European Socialists. The party’s long stay in the Grand coalition as a junior partner, of course, left its mark, as reflected in the targets already adopted. The party could not offer something completely different, because it would have discredited its time in power. However, well-placed priorities in its programme prevented a sense of inadequacy in the party's rhetoric. Ultimately, just like O. Scholz in the debates, the party’s programme created the impression of moderation and appropriate accents¹⁰¹⁰.

However, the climatic aspect of O. Scholz's participation in the campaign was not without challenges. B. Hoffmann, for example, the lead candidate of the Alliance 90/The Greens from Hessen, gave six arguments against Scholz’s candidacy for Chancellor. These are O. Scholz's past support of coal energy and in the run-up to elections (e.g., the support for the construction of a coal-fired power

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid.; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 144, 146; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 133; *Mariin E.V.* Implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement...P. 42.

plant in Hamburg or the decision to limit this type of energy only from 2038), insufficient desire to expand solar energy, “harmful” subsidies led by O. Scholz as Minister of Finance, approval of the Nord Stream 2, rejection of more significant restrictions on reducing emissions from transport¹⁰¹¹. In fact, most of the arguments rested on the subordinate position of the entire SPD in the Grand coalition, as already mentioned above.

Finally, the category “very bad” consisted of the CDU/CSU and the FDP, and the author of this study, based on the logic of the authors of this classification, tentatively decided to include the AfD in this category with the acknowledgment that it would be more appropriate to consider the Alternative for Germany separately as “really very bad.”¹⁰¹²

Christian Democratic Union in Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria

In 2017, the CDU/CSU determined already in its introductory part that “Germany is a stable country [...] with freedom, internal and external security, growth and competitiveness, social security, a good education, a strong infrastructure and an untouched environment.”¹⁰¹³. The bloc's rhetoric clearly demonstrated a priority for combining of environmental and economic priorities, e.g., growth and prosperity.

The alliance emphasized cutting-edge technology and protecting the automotive industry while also leading in terms of “cleanliness” and the production of alternative drives¹⁰¹⁴. In addition, they promoted fair and equitable taxes and the development of rail transport. The CDU/CSU also supported the Paris Agreement, deploring the US withdrawal; they acknowledged the decision of the G7 (Group of Seven) summit to decarbonize global energy production by the end of the century. At the national level, the bloc was a supporter of the Climate Action Plan 2050 and the national Sustainable Development Strategy. The Christian democrats criticized the movement of production to countries with lower environmental standards, highlighting Germany's leadership in the Green-Tec and the importance of helping developing countries¹⁰¹⁵.

In 2021, climate protection and mitigation were discussed, as well as responsibility towards the environment and future generations were discussed already in the preamble of the bloc's programme. In this, the Christian democrats focused on research, innovation, technology, investment, digitalization, social and digital circular market economy, and education, as well as the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal.

¹⁰¹¹ 6 Gründe, warum...

¹⁰¹² Unser Programm für...; Wen wählen für...

¹⁰¹³ Für ein Deutschland...

¹⁰¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid.

The bloc has set a series of targets such as achieving carbon-neutrality by 2045 and international “neutrality” by 2050, reducing emissions by 65% by 2030 and 88% by 2040¹⁰¹⁶. In addition, they planned to achieve these targets through the expansion of the Emissions Trading System (for mobility, heat supply, and shipping), as well as the Climate Adaptation Act. In renewable energy, cross-border cooperation on wind energy, the abolition of the RE tax, the simplification of the approval process for photovoltaic systems, and the use of storage to compensate for fluctuations were promoted. Simultaneously, the slogan “Make Germany the №1 hydrogen country” was put forward¹⁰¹⁷. This required the strengthening of the national Hydrogen (H₂) Agency, the creation of a European Hydrogen Backbone, and the development of the H₂ Global financing concept.

The CDU/CSU once again supported the automotive industry by lifting the ban on diesel and speed limits on motorways, which did not exclude modernization. They also promoted the development of rail and public transport with “cross-border networks and infrastructure.”¹⁰¹⁸. Moreover, the creation of jobs throughout the country was seen as a tool to eliminate traffic flows. They also talked about the expansion and standardization of the network of charging stations, “neutral” taxis, research and development in the fields of aviation and synthetic fuels, the promotion of electricity and hydrogen in shipping, as well as the construction of a new LNG-terminal, among others¹⁰¹⁹.

On the international stage, the CDU/CSU called for assistance to developing countries, global emissions trading, the need to “reset” the EU-US relationship, environmental cooperation with Russia, and compliance with environmental standards when trading with the United Kingdom¹⁰²⁰. Finally, the importance of empowering the UN and the Glasgow Conference was noted. The bloc also advocated for the WTO-led Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, the Carbon Contracts for Difference, and the CCS. Finally, the global problem of climate change has been cited in areas such as adaptation of fisheries, allocating 1.5 billion euros for forest policy (including restoration, climate change adaptation), providing tax incentives for energy renovation of buildings, as well as promoting commercial investments for energy efficiency¹⁰²¹.

Thus, in 2021, the CDU/CSU demonstrated advancement in their views, by not only supporting its their ideological priorities, but also by including targets or slogans. A certain commitment to innovation and new technologies can be traced in the bloc’s programme. There was a priority to support the domestic automotive industry, which gave the impression of hindering progress in climate rhetoric.

¹⁰¹⁶ Das Programm für Stabilität und Erneuerung. Gemeinsam für ein modernes Deutschland [Electronic resource] // Christlich-Soziale Union: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://www.csu.de/common/download/Regierungsprogramm.pdf> (accessed 04.01.2023).

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰²¹ Ibid.

It is significant that in presenting the programme of emergency actions 13 days before the elections to the Bundestag, A. Laschet spoke about the “Six Post-Crisis Reset Packets”, one of which was directly dedicated to the global problem of climate change. As specific actions, for example, an interest-free loan for equipping rooftops with solar panels was proposed¹⁰²². This rhetoric became a significant distancing from the approach of M. Weber, who deliberately ignored the climate agenda during the 2019 European elections¹⁰²³.

However, the bloc was still hardly a climate leader. Despite the subordinate position of the SPD in the former Grand coalition and the need to make some concessions the presence of the SPD likely acted as a catalyst for progress. The situation would have been worse in partnership with the FDP or the AfD (if such a partnership was even possible)¹⁰²⁴.

At the same time, A. Laschet got into a scandal that quickly developed under the hashtag #JungeFrau (#YoungLady). In response to criticism of his own climate course, as well as the question about the perception of floodings in North Rhine-Westphalia, according to several television viewers, the politician made an inappropriate condescending remark, saying, “Forgive me, young lady. Because now is such a day, you can't change politics.”¹⁰²⁵. Finally, the “Rezo-effect” once again had an impact. The blogger compared the bloc to “holders of tin foil hats” and accused them of being close to the energy RWE (Rheinisch-Westfälisches Elektrizitätswerk/Rhenish-Westphalian Power Plant) company¹⁰²⁶. Moreover, only A. Laschet refused to participate in the TV Triel moderated by this blogger¹⁰²⁷.

Free Democratic Party of Germany

In 2017, the FDP criticized the Grand coalition already in the preamble, stating, “Instead of using the market and competition for the benefit of the people, it uses both in the euro, energy and the economy.”¹⁰²⁸. In the programme, the party argued in line with its traditional ideological priorities, putting efficiency and competitiveness, innovation and a circular market economy at the forefront.

Supporting the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, international cooperation and assistance to the least developed countries, as well as the removal of trade barriers based on environmental security, the

¹⁰²² *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.144; Sechs Pakete für...

¹⁰²³ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 210.

¹⁰²⁴ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 133; *Gründler K., Hackenberger A., Heil P., Potrafke N., Ruthardt F.* Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung nach der Bundestagswahl: Wird es darauf ankommen, wer regiert? // Ifo Schnelldienst. 2021. Vol. 74, Issue 10. P. 86.

¹⁰²⁵ Armin Laschet im WDR: Chaos-Interview zur Flutkatastrophe – „Entschuldigung, junge Frau“ [Electronic resource] // Der Westen. 15.07.2021. Available at: <https://www.derwesten.de/politik/armin-laschet-flutkatastrophe-ueberflutung-nrw-wdr-chaotisch-interview-aktuelle-stunde-id232802689.html> (accessed 27.10.2022).

¹⁰²⁶ *Akkoyun N.* YouTuber Rezo attackiert Union erneut – und appelliert an Wählende [Electronic resource] // NHA. 07.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.hna.de/politik/rezo-cdu-csu-union-youtube-video-zerstoerung-bundestagswahl-armin-laschet-klimakrise-hna-zr-90962391.html> (accessed 02.11.2022).

¹⁰²⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁸ Denken wir neu: Das Programm der Freien Demokraten zur Bundestagswahl 2017: Schauen wir nicht länger zu [Electronic resource] // Freie Demokratische Partei: [official website]. 2017. Available at: <https://www.fdp.de/sites/default/files/import/2017-08/4598-20170807-wahlprogramm-wp-2017-v16.pdf> (accessed 04.01.2023).

party proposed the development of global emissions trading (including expansion into the transport and housing sectors). However, it was called to reduce the tax on electricity, cut down the subsidies under the Renewable Energy Sources Act, to abolish the Climate Action Plan 2050 and reject the forced introduction of electric vehicles. Their reasoning was based on the belief that these measures hindered technological development. This did not exclude the general development of the transport network, as well as the need for an additional legal framework in aviation and shipping. Finally, it was proposed to produce energy in the least expensive places and consider renewable energy sources as “systemic sources” responsible for their security of supply¹⁰²⁹.

In 2021, the FDP again criticized the Grand coalition, saying, “Instead of combining prosperity and resilience, growth and climate policy, economic power and environmental responsibility, it has relied on prohibition and leadership.”¹⁰³⁰. Collectively, the liberal democrats advocated for a circular social market economy, modernization, digitalization, research, technology, faster decision-making, and information.

The only specific target was “carbon neutrality” by 2050, and the key instrument across all sectors was the expanded Emissions Trading System. Additionally, they proposed to reduce the tax on electricity and, over time, to repeal the Renewable Energy Sources Act. The liberal democrats did not deem it expedient to phase out coal and nuclear power, instead promoting “carbon-neutral” hydrogen and the establishment of the European Hydrogen Union¹⁰³¹. Other priorities of the party included a pan-European Energy Supply System, the expansion of the electricity storage system and the Carbon Direct Removal with a target of achieving 5% negative emissions.

In the transport sector, the party rejected unilateral subsidies and preferences, as well as bans, instead supporting the development of “clean” engines and alternative fuels, including synthetic¹⁰³². They also advocated for the expansion and standardization of the charging network for electric vehicles. In addition, the FDP addressed maritime policy, focusing on the sustainability and “environmentally friendly” expansion of the port system¹⁰³³. Finally, the party supported the development of a national Sustainable Development Strategy, “social and environmental criteria” for doing business, among other initiatives¹⁰³⁴.

Thus, the FDP supported the tendencies of parties ideologically leaning towards the right of the center. Despite its ambitious slogans, the party’s only true priority can be more accurately described as the social market economy, or simply the market economy. In its rhetoric, this party is closest to the

¹⁰²⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁰ Nie gab es mehr zu tun [Electronic resource] // Freie Demokratische Partei: [official website]. 2021. Available at: https://www.fdp.de/sites/default/files/2021-08/FDP_BTW2021_Wahlprogramm_1.pdf (accessed 04.01.2023).

¹⁰³¹ Ibid.

¹⁰³² Ibid.

¹⁰³³ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁴ Ibid.

radical Alternative for Germany, defending certain energy industries or setting relatively modest targets. In particular, apart from the AfD, 2050 was mentioned only by the FDP as a target for achieving “neutrality.”¹⁰³⁵. Even the CDU/CSU bloc was more progressive. Considering voter perceptions (YouGov poll for August 2021), supporters of the far-right were more inclined to believe in the potential harm of climate policies to the economy or prioritize innovation¹⁰³⁶. It is therefore not surprising that the AfD was thinking about possible coalition cooperation with the FDP and the CDU/CSU, the next in the list of the least climate-interested parties¹⁰³⁷. However, the liberal democrats did realize the significance of the climate agenda for voters, that is why, in 2020, the party identified “starting points for the new decade” and solutions for key issues, which included climate change¹⁰³⁸.

C. Lindner as the lead candidate, was unambiguous not only during the debates but also in an interview with *Die Tageszeitung*. He reiterated his support for the market economy and the development of technology, speaking out against prohibitions that hinder progress. The politician nevertheless tried to create the appearance of the historical ecological orientation of the party, reminding that the first climate programme of the government was presented in the 1970s by the minister from the FDP, H.-D. Genscher¹⁰³⁹. However, for some reason, C. Lindner did not mention that it was a pan-European and even world trend during that period.

Alternative for Germany

As with the campaigns for the European Parliament, in 2017 the AfD expressed critical views. Thus, they discussed pre-industrial cases of climate change and argued against the scientific basis of anthropogenic influence, as well as the need to abandon the Paris Agreement, the Renewable Energy Sources Act, the Climate Action Plan 2050, etc.

The AfD supported international research projects as well as modern gas, coal, and nuclear power plants, with a focus on proper waste management and technical limitations for the latter. Their position on wind energy was notable. On the one hand, the party did not oppose the use of wind turbines yet the party argued that these should not have been used in forests and protected areas, observing a minimum distance from residential buildings of ten times the height of the very wind turbines. In addition, concerns have been expressed about the harm from wind energy to people, animals, and the landscape. Accordingly, wind turbines would be harmful absolutely everywhere due to damage, for example, to birds or bats. Regarding transport, the AfD did not reject market-based electromobility, but they did not

¹⁰³⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁶ Bergmann K., Borgstedt S., Diermeier M., Niehues J. Klimaschutz und Parteipräferenz: Einigkeit in der Sache, Unterschiede in den Maßnahmen // IW-Kurzbericht. 2021. № 67. P. 1-2.

¹⁰³⁷ Ruhose F. Die AfD vor...P. 18.

¹⁰³⁸ Lisenkova A.D. Adaptation of the European Union...P. 106; Beschluss des Bundesvorstands...

¹⁰³⁹ Kalarickal J., Unfried P. „German engineered Klimaschutz...“

support the phasing out of diesel engines and criticized the implementation of “ubiquitous speed limits on highways” and “unfortunate ecological zones.”¹⁰⁴⁰

In 2021, the AfD called for the protection of children from what they perceived as ideological “climate hysteria.”¹⁰⁴¹ The party emphasized the importance a market economy, international research and technological progress, rejecting regulatory climate documents, initiatives, and organizations. The AfD supported the SDGs as well as centers of excellence to explore waste disposal and raw material recovery techniques.

Consequently, the party supported new gas stations and the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, as well as nuclear energy. For the latter, only technical limitations were assumed, the restoration of disconnected safe stations, the processing of waste and the abandonment of the search of nuclear waste storage facility. It was considered suitable in the commune of Gorleben.

The party called for an increased distance of at least 2.5 km between wind turbines and residential buildings, in addition to being ten times the height of the turbines. There was also a dissonance about the influence of installations on animals, people, and the landscape. In addition, subsidies for this type of energy were rejected. The AfD supported the promotion of wood as a building material and energy source, but rejected energy crops, the hydrogen economy, and microclimate-heating photovoltaic systems. For a party that denies anthropogenic influence, the last point was somewhat controversial. Finally, in defense of the automotive industry, the Alternative for Germany criticized the intention to phase out diesel fuel, introduce speed limits on motorways and an air travel tax, as well as set “unrealistic targets” to reduce emissions¹⁰⁴². This time, electromobility was criticized for the environmental impact of batteries, whereas synthetic fuel and hydrogen were allowed if they proved to be profitable¹⁰⁴³.

As a result, there was a clear and consistent emphasis on promoting innovation and manufacturability in the rhetoric of right-wing populists. The climate agenda was given a key place, which was even expressed in both cases (2017 and 2021) by placing it separately from the environment¹⁰⁴⁴.

“In fact, along with the currency crisis and migration, the topic of energy supply was on the list of fundamental problems for the party already in 2017. In 2019 [after the elections to the European Parliament], A. Gauland, the co-chairman of the party, summed up, stating, ‘After the euro and immigration, criticism of the so-called climate action policy is the third major issue for the AfD.’”¹⁰⁴⁵.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 150-152; Programm für Deutschland [Electronic resource] // Alternative für Deutschland: [official website]. 2017. Available at: https://www.afd.de/%20wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/06/2017-%2006-01_AfD-Bundestagswahlprogramm_%20Onlinefassung.pdf (accessed 04.01.2023).

¹⁰⁴¹ Deutschland. Aber normal [Electronic resource] // Alternative für Deutschland: [official website]. 2021. Available at: <https://www.afd.de/wahlprogramm/> (accessed 04.01.2023).

¹⁰⁴² *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 153-154; Deutschland. Aber normal.

¹⁰⁴³ Deutschland. Aber normal.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Programm für Deutschland; Deutschland. Aber normal.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 152.

“Two years later, this was developed in the AfD’s environmental initiative ‘Stop Greens – Protect the Environment!’, where the party pointed to the “5 sins” of the current environmental policy of the state and the European Union, saying, ‘Destruction of bats, birds and insects by wind turbines; a similar effect of solar panels on insects; monocultures of rapeseed and corn (with the release of bioenergy); the deforestation needed to build wind turbines; and the high level of land use for wind turbines and solar panels compared to traditional energy sources.’”¹⁰⁴⁶. For voters with the most climate skepticism, this party may have been the preferred option¹⁰⁴⁷. On the other hand, its popularity decreased among the flood victims in North Rhine-Westphalia in the summer of 2021, because they immediately tried to connect these incidents with climate change¹⁰⁴⁸.

Thus, returning to the classification of the Deutscher Naturschutzring and the Climate Action Network, which divided the parties into three categories (“very good”, “good”, and “very bad”), it is possible to draw the following conclusions. Definitely, the Alliance 90/The Greens rightfully remained in the “very good” category, and now the Left can be added with much more certainty. However, the priority of the greens was not entirely unambiguous. The potential of opponents who successfully adapted their rhetoric to the popular agenda and avoided extreme positions, as well as those who were progressive in other popular political directions, was high. In this case, excluding the Left again, the SPD had the most favorable rhetoric. On the other hand, the right flank, despite some progress compared to 2019, remained less active, which is clearly unacceptable considering the most popular topic in the elections.

The SPD, distancing itself from cooperation with the CDU/CSU, has moved closer to its supranational affiliation and made some progress, now being rather between “good” and “very good”¹⁰⁴⁹. This was facilitated by the favorable (without excesses) rhetoric of O. Scholz, and well-placed emphasis in the programme. However, despite differences in discourse, all Chancellor candidates were not always consistent in their approach to climate action. For instance, since the end of August 2021, climate activists had been holding the Hunger Strike in Berlin, but none of the three candidates agreed to meet with the protesters. Even A. Baerbock refused¹⁰⁵⁰.

However, the situation had not changed since the 2019 elections. Despite the fact that the parties tried to increase attention to the climate agenda, this was common for all of them, resulting in a balanced outcome. In fact, the rhetoric of the CDU/CSU and the FDP has lacked ambitious targets, had

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibid. P. 152.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Wurthmann L.C., Bäuerle J.* Eine:r von uns? Kandidierende und Wähler:innen zur Bundestagswahl 2021 im Vergleich // *Easy social sciences*. 2022. № 67. P. 68.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Holub F., Schündeln M.* Pro-Environmental Voting when...

¹⁰⁴⁹ Deutschland. Aber normal; Wen wählen für..

¹⁰⁵⁰ Drei weitere Teilnehmende beenden Hungerstreik [Electronic resource] // *Die Zeit*. 22.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2021-09/hungerstreik-klima-aktivisten-berlin-aufgeben-radikale-klimawende-hannah-luebbert> (accessed 05.06.2023).

inappropriate silences and/or statements or a limited range of instruments. As a result, the CDU/CSU, the FDP, and the AfD remained in the “very bad” category, with the possibility of considering the far-right, which continued to deny anthropogenic impact on climate change, as a separate “really very bad” category¹⁰⁵¹.

Returning to the second classification of the Climate Action Network, it is possible to summarize that the categories in 2021, according to the author of this study, were as follows: “defenders” (greens, left), the SPD with a rather intermediate position between “defenders” and “delayers”, as well as “dinosaurs” (CDU/CSU, FDP, AfD). Accordingly, the most noticeable were the changes in the position of the SPD, which approached the “defenders” and its transnational affiliation through the PES¹⁰⁵².

From the perspective of social constructivism and sociological institutionalism, the main conclusion is the notable transformation of identity in Germany, as evidenced by the gradual cumulative deepening of party positions from 2017 and 2019, as well as the heightened level of citizens’ interest. Correspondingly, this was reflected in the detailed climate provisions put forward by the parties, influenced by the institutional development of climate-related themes in the EU and Germany. Which was a classic example of the mutual influence of the agency and the structure. Thus, the interest of voters in climate issues was the result of the adaptation of party rhetoric. This was reflected in the detailed climate provisions put forward by the parties, influenced by the institutional development of climate-related themes in the EU and Germany 2019 campaign.

3.2. Results of the 2021 Election Campaign in Germany: Overall Results, Application of Transnational Experience, and the Influence of the Global Problem of Climate Change

This section outlines the overall results of the 2021 campaign for the main German national parties, as well as the impact of the global problem of climate change on them. Within the framework of the latter, the indicators of some minor environmentally oriented parties in Germany are also considered separately. In addition, the 2019 and 2021 results are compared through the prism of applying transnational experience, as well as the success of correcting errors.

According to the results of the 2021 elections, 736 seats were allocated in the Bundestag (compared to 709 in 2017), the Social Democratic Party received 206 seats (compared to 153 seats in 2017), the Christian Democratic Union got 152 seats (200 seats in 2017), the Christian Social Union earned 45 seats (46 seats in 2017), the Alliance 90/The Greens secured 118 seats (67 seats in 2017), the Free Democratic Party of Germany won 92 seats (80 seats in 2017), the Alternative for Germany

¹⁰⁵¹ Deutschland. Aber normal; Wen wählen für...

¹⁰⁵² Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.

obtained 83 seats (94 seats in 2017), the Left received 39 seats (69 seats in 2017), and the South Schleswig Voters' Association got only 1 seat (the party did not participate in 2017).

In percentage terms, according to the second votes, the results were as follows: 25.7% for the SPD (instead of 20.5% in 2017), 18.9% for the CDU (instead of 26.8% in 2017), 5.2% for the CSU (instead of 6.2% in 2017), 14.8% for the greens (instead of 8.9% in 2017), 11.5% for the FDP (instead of 10.7% in 2017), 10.3% for the AfD (instead of 12.6% in 2017), 4.9% for the Left (instead of 9.2% in 2017), and 0.1% for the SSW. As for the first votes, the results were 26.4% for the SPD (instead of 24.6% in 2017), 22.5% for the CDU (instead of 30.2% in 2017), 6.0% for the CSU (instead of 7.0% in 2017), 14.0% for the greens (instead of 8.0% in 2017), 8.7% for the FDP (instead of 7.0% in 2017), 10.1% for the AfD (instead of 11.5% in 2017), 5.0% for the Left (instead of 8.6% in 2017), and 0.1% for the SSW¹⁰⁵³.

Accordingly, several trends could be observed. Firstly, there was a stable composition of six parties that retained their membership since the previous convocation: the Christian Democratic Union in Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria, the Social Democratic Party, the Alliance 90/The Greens, the Free Democratic Party, the Alternative for Germany, and the Left. The only exception was the South Schleswig Voters' Association, which had not previously participated in elections for many years but had special rights to do so, as discussed in more detail in section 1.3. of Chapter 1, which is devoted to the features of the functioning of political parties and election campaigns at the supranational and national levels (cases of the European Parliament and the Bundestag). In terms of power distribution, the situation remained relatively stable. The CDU/CSU and the SPD continued as the traditional leaders.

At the same time, the social democrats managed to win the Bundestag elections for the first time since 2002. Another success was made by the Alliance 90/The Greens, which achieved record results for itself and, as mentioned in section 1.2. of Chapter 1, devoted to the features of the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany, which even had a chance of winning at a certain stage. On the other hand, both right-wing and left-wing populists, represented by the Left and the Alternative for Germany, lost some of their votes. Meanwhile, the center-right Free Democratic Party, as the second (together with the Alliance 90/The Greens) most stable and attractive alternative to the two traditional leaders during the historical period under consideration, slightly increased the number of seats compared to the previous convocation.

Voter preferences in the 2021 Bundestag elections were quite strongly divided along geographical lines. In the south of the country, the CDU/CSU was more popular, while in the north the SPD had greater support. At the same time, the parties divided the northwestern part of Germany among themselves, while the SPD became more popular in the northeast. However, in several eastern states, the

¹⁰⁵³ Bundestag election 2017; Bundestag election 2021.

AfD gained significant popularity, gradually taking more and more of the traditional target audience of the Left. The Alliance 90/The Greens had a different pattern in this regard, being successful locally in various districts across the country, but mostly in its western part. Their support was predominantly in cities rather than rural areas. The FDP did not appear as a clear leader in any part of Germany, although there was a greater interest of the inhabitants of the western part of the country compared to the eastern¹⁰⁵⁴.

As a result, the CDU won only in Baden-Württemberg, and the CSU won in Bavaria. At the same time, according to the second votes, the Alternative for Germany became the best in Saxony and Thuringia, and in all other states the SPD won the elections. In terms of first votes, the CDU still outpaced the SPD in Saxony-Anhalt, and the social democrats scored the same number of votes as the Alternative for Germany in Thuringia.

The Left did not overcome the 5% barrier in almost a half of the lands, which included almost all parts of the former Western Germany: Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hesse, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Schleswig-Holstein. The exceptions were Bremen, Hamburg, and Saarland. Moreover, in Bremen and Hamburg, the Left even outstripped the Alternative for Germany, which left them behind in all the eastern states¹⁰⁵⁵ (except for Berlin)¹⁰⁵⁶, and overcame 5% throughout Germany. Regarding the best result in the second votes, the Left achieved it in Berlin (11.4%) and Thuringia (similarly). However, it should be noted here that the pinpoint success in the eastern federal states is very disproportionate compared to the rest of the country, which allowed the AfD to be only in the fifth place in terms of overall indicators in the states (10.3%), with the Left ranking sixth (4.9 %) ¹⁰⁵⁷.

The FDP and the Alliance 90/The Greens also had no problem in overcoming the threshold in all states, although due to the violation of several procedural grounds, second votes were not counted for the greens in Saar, as decided by the Federal Elections Committee¹⁰⁵⁸. However, the party achieved its best results in second votes in Berlin (22.4%), Bremen (20.9%), and Hamburg (24.9%). In turn, the results of the FDP were more modest, and its best performance was in Baden-Württemberg (15.3%), Hesse (12.8%), and Schleswig-Holstein (12.5%)¹⁰⁵⁹.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Bundestagswahl 2021: Map Views of the German Federal Election [Electronic resource] // Views of the World. 10.10.2021. Available at: <https://www.viewsoftheworld.net/?p=5833> (accessed 18.07.2022); Germany's election results in charts and maps [Electronic resource] // Financial Times. 27.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/501b1f94-67e7-4418-b2e9-eee6022bb12c> (accessed 19.07.2022).

¹⁰⁵⁵ Bundestag election 2021.

¹⁰⁵⁶ From the point of view of the traditional division into East and West Germany, culturally and economically, Berlin would be more correctly to attribute to the western federal states, but geographically it is still located to the east. In addition, the federal state has historical ties not only with the FRG, but also with the GDR.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Bundestag election 2021.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Saar-Landesliste der Grünen bleibt ausgeschlossen [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 05.08.2021. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/btw21/saarland-gruene-bundestagswahl-101.html> (accessed 19.07.2022).

¹⁰⁵⁹ Bundestag election 2021.

From the perspective of transformation under the global problem of climate change, the results of the Alliance 90/The Greens became the most apparent indicator. On the one hand, they failed to repeat its success in the European elections, where the party came second and gained a higher percentage of votes (20.5%)¹⁰⁶⁰. On the other hand, despite the fact that historically the greens already took the third place in the Bundestag elections (in 1994, 1998, and 2002), this result was their best in terms of percentage¹⁰⁶¹. As shown by the evaluation of the data and the characteristic of the party's transformation, made in Chapter 1, section 1.2., dedicated to the features of the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany, it can be concluded that the greens remained consistent and the most climate-oriented on its agenda from those represented in the Bundestag. Moreover, given the popularity of the topic in the 2021 Bundestag elections, the party, whose ideological basis is focused on protecting the environment and the fight against the global climate change, held an advantage over its key opponents (similar to the EGP in 2019).

Further, it is most logical to examine the results of environmentally/climate-oriented minor parties, which, however, did not secure seats in the Bundestag. The Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative gained 1.2% (+0.6%) in the first votes and 1% in the second (similar to 2017). The Human Environment Animal Protection Party received 0.4% (+0.3%) and 1.5% (+0.6%). The Ecological Democratic Party won 0.3% (similarly in 2017) in the first votes and 0.2% (-0.1%) in the second, respectively. Finally, the Animal Protection Alliance obtained 0% in both cases, as in 2017¹⁰⁶². Therefore, the presented results showed more positive than negative dynamics when comparing 2017 and 2021.

As already mentioned in section 1.4. of Chapter 1, which focuses on the theoretical basis for studying the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of modern European parties (a case of Germany), it is more logical to compare the alignment in the European elections, with the second votes in the national ones. Accordingly, the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative experienced a decline (2.4% in 2019), as did the Ecological Democratic Party (1%) and the Animal Protection Alliance (0.2%). The exception was the Human Environment Animal Protection Party (1.4%). Moreover, in 2019, tenths of a percent were also accumulated by other minor election participants, such as the Action Party for Animal Welfare (0.3%)¹⁰⁶³. Primarily, all of this was explained¹⁰⁶⁴ by the great attention to the global

¹⁰⁶⁰ Comparative tool.

¹⁰⁶¹ Bundestag election 1994 [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 1994. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/1994.html> (accessed 01.11.2022); Bundestag election 1998 [Electronic resource] // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 1998. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/1998.html> (accessed 01.11.2022); Bundestag election 2002 // Der Bundeswahlleiter: [official website]. 2002. Available at: <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/bundestagswahlen/2002.html> (accessed 01.11.2022).

¹⁰⁶² Bundestag election 2021.

¹⁰⁶³ European Parliament election 2019.

problem of climate change at the supranational level. This can be explained by the fact that less pressing everyday issues are given more attention in less significant elections, along with the preference for addressing environmental concerns through regional or international efforts. In addition, supporting arguments included the provisions of the concept of second-order national elections and the difference in minimum thresholds for two-level elections for German voters. The latter implies a greater willingness to vote for a minor party, as the chances of getting representation in the European Parliament is higher than in the Bundestag. The first two arguments were also relevant for the Alliance 90/The Greens.

Similarly, to the 2019 elections, the eco-socialism and populism of the Left did not gain recognition, and the party continued losing votes, jeopardizing its representation in the Bundestag. The party performed worse than in the 2017 and 2019 elections. Even the party's ambitious efforts to combat climate change, including exceeding the declared green targets, as well as endowing the speak-for-itself name "It's Time to Act! For Social Security, Peace and Climate Justice!" in the election programme did not prevent this decline¹⁰⁶⁴. The paradox of the Left was the presence of an indirect correlation of its results with an increase in the attention to environmental problems in the party's rhetoric, but this trend had a rather negative effect. Two reasons can be identified for this. Firstly, there were exaggerations in their declared priorities, driven by competition with the greens. The latter are also forced to make increasingly ambitious promises, each time balancing on the verge of what is acceptable. At the same time, a more important problem stems in the historical continuity of the party, whose roots go back to the era of the GDR. Switching from eastern to western values, the Left lost their traditional electorate, while other priority topics were already occupied by more popular parties that did not radically reject capitalism as a phenomenon. In this case, there were the Alliance 90/The Greens as the leading environmental power and the SPD as the social leader among the main parties in Germany. Accordingly, this argument was relevant for the 2019 European elections and remained so for the results of the Bundestag campaign in 2021. It is particularly intriguing that the Party of the European Left gradually began to broadcast the climate agenda more and more after 2019, following the example of its member parties, much like the Left¹⁰⁶⁵.

On the opposite ideological flank was the Alternative for Germany, which was also significant in the context of the global problem of climate change. Based on the results of this campaign, it could be seen how the overall environmental involvement and, somewhere, even the progressiveness of the party was irrelevant when it came to the party's critical assessment of climate change itself in the official discourse¹⁰⁶⁶. Such tactics, regarding the most popular topic not only in the environmental realm but in general, did not receive approval from citizens. Accordingly, the far-rights failed to develop a climate

¹⁰⁶⁴ Zeit zu handeln!..

¹⁰⁶⁵ Alternatives to the...

¹⁰⁶⁶ Deutschland. Aber normal.

discourse by analogy with migration, for example, and earn additional votes this way. In fact, why it worked in one case and failed in another is fairly evident. If the popularity of migration issues was due to the dissatisfaction of citizens with the crisis that arose triggered by the arrival of individuals from different cultures in the country, in the climate direction the situation was completely opposite. Influenced by the rhetoric of national and supranational institutions, active representatives of civil society, and the transformation of legislation, citizens genuinely believed that climate change was a problem that needed to be addressed immediately. From the perspective of social constructivism and sociological institutionalism, this created a new value for voters. In contrast, the Alternative for Germany tried to suggest the opposite, which did not garner support, as it did with the migration crisis. Accordingly, the hope of additional popularity by criticizing costly and inadequately substantiated climate measures were not justified. Other national parties, members of the Identity and Democracy, recognized this problem a little earlier and gradually began to adapt their agenda. However, the Alternative for Germany chose not to follow their example¹⁰⁶⁷.

Two other parties, ideologically located as center-right, also faced the problem of adaptation. These are the Christian Democratic Union in Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria and the Free Democratic Party. Having gained the experience of the 2019 campaign, both parties tried to transform themselves by showing their commitment to the popular agenda. However, in both cases, the attempts did not yield significant success.

The FDP remained closest to the radical Alternative for Germany, and did not undergo a substantial transformation as the ALDE in 2019. Despite increased attention to the global problem of climate change, the core of the discourse did not change significantly. The priority of the market economy, the limited choice of mechanisms for the implementation of specific actions and the skepticism about the rejection of certain energy sources remained unchanged¹⁰⁶⁸. Furthermore, as in the case of the AfD, other environmental issues did not play a key role. The party improved its results, but it is unlikely that their success can be directly attributed to climate rhetoric. On the other hand, its position was much more articulate than that of the Christian democrats, being economically and innovatively progressive, but not radical like that of the far-right. However, for the most of voters who do not have the appropriate professional climate or political competencies, this did not become a compelling argument.

On the other hand, the CDU/CSU departed from their silence tactics with the EPP, which was noticeable in the 2019 European elections, but this did not make the bloc progressive. Indeed, the programme contained deeper climate provisions, and the Chancellor candidate tried to refer to the problem, emphasizing its priority. However, when it came to particular actions, the excessive restraint

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* Transformation of the Climate Change Agenda...P. 52-53.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Nie gab es...

of the Christian democrats became evident. It created the impression that the topic was only raised due to its popularity among voters, without being a true priority for the bloc. Moreover, the repeated references to the automotive industry only deepened these concerns. The party lost the election due to various reasons, but this approach to this key topic could not fail to contribute.

At the same time, A. Merkel's refusal to participate as a candidate for the post of Chancellor from the CDU/CSU, in many ways, contributed to increased attention towards the independent rhetoric of the social democrats, O. Scholz in particular¹⁰⁶⁹. As shown by the surveys presented in section 1.2. of Chapter 1, which is dedicated to the features of the transformation of public opinion on the global problem of climate change in the EU and Germany, the party was received favorably from an environmental point of view. Previously, there was a noticeable discrepancy between the transnational PES and the less progressive SPD, which was largely due to the SPD's significant dependence on the senior partner in the Grand coalition¹⁰⁷⁰. In order to protect their own reputation, a certain amount of adherence to the joint decisions still remained. However, already in the course of the election campaign, the SPD was much closer to the greens and even the Left than to the CDU/CSU. One of these illustrative examples of discrepancies is the climate vector, because the SPD looked much more progressive compared to its former partner. This became a rather positive example of adaptation to the key priorities of citizens. The SPD immersed itself in the topic requested by voters while maintaining moderation and avoiding obvious excesses. In addition, unlike the greens, the SPD definitely was not solely associated with this topic, which was attractive given the wide range of its proposals¹⁰⁷¹. As a result, the SPD won the election, and its climate rhetoric was undoubtedly one of the concomitant reasons.

3.3. The Main Non-Climatic Factors that Influenced the Results of the 2021 Election Campaign

The global problem of climate change, which had a significant impact on the political agenda and influenced the German national parties, was not the only factor that affected the election results. Therefore, this section discusses the main non-climatic factors that influenced the 2021 Bundestag elections.

Mostly they were similar to the factors relevant for the 2019 European elections. In 2021, the results were also mainly influenced by the successful (or unsuccessful) tactics of the lead candidates and/or leaders or parties in general, the accompanying crises (e.g., in 2021 this was a decrease in migration flows, many restrictions were imposed due to the COVID-19, etc.), as well as historical

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Romashenko S.* Angela Merkel steps down as CDU leader [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 29.10.2018. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/ru/меркель-уходит-с-поста-председателя-хдс-но-остаётся-канцлером-до-2021-года/a-46068560> (accessed 24.06.2021). *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 133.

¹⁰⁷¹ Bundestagswahl 2021. Welche...

continuity (traditional leadership of the CDU/CSU and the SPD, as well as the systemic crisis affecting them with their forced gradual ideological transformation)¹⁰⁷².

In fact, the issue of political leadership became one of the key issues in 2021. While in 2019 A. Merkel announced that she would no longer apply for the position of Chancellor, while remaining in power, in this campaign it was already unequivocally clear that the CDU/CSU would nominate a different candidate¹⁰⁷³. Moreover, after the decision of the Chancellor and the resonant results of 2019, it became evident that the three parties that really had chances of winning would be the CDU/CSU, the SPD, and the Alliance 90/The Greens. As already mentioned, A. Laschet, O. Scholz, and A. Baerbock were identified as candidates for the post of Chancellor. Each of them deserves special attention. A. Baerbock and A. Laschet were officially approved on April 19¹⁰⁷⁴, while O. Scholz was nominated back in August 2020¹⁰⁷⁵, however, the SPD officially approved his candidacy only on May 9, 2021¹⁰⁷⁶.

In August 2021, the popularity ratings of politicians in Germany were published by Forsa. According to them, M. Söder (CSU, 53 points) held the second place in popularity in the country (after A. Merkel with 65 points). Choosing between him and the less charismatic A. Laschet (CDU), the bloc preferred the latter. He occupied only the 11th place with 29 points, behind both O. Scholz (SPD, 3rd place, 51 points) and A. Baerbock (Greens, 5th place, 33 points). However, he lost even to the representative of the right wing of the CDU F. Merz (9th place, 31 points)¹⁰⁷⁷, with whom he had previously competed for the position of party leader and, in fact, a candidate¹⁰⁷⁸. A similar trend was observed in the Alliance 90/The Greens. A. Baerbock was one of the two co-chairs of the party, making up a duet with R. Habeck (4th place, 43 points), who was more popular back in August. The latter was the second lead candidate from the Greens, but not a candidate for Chancellor. O. Scholz became the

¹⁰⁷² *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146.

¹⁰⁷³ *Romashenko S.* Angela Merkel steps down as CDU leader [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Grüne nominieren Annalena Baerbock als Kanzlerkandidatin [Electronic resource] // Die Zeit. 19.04.2021. Available at: https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2021-04/gruene-nominieren-annalena-baerbock-als-kanzlerkandidatin?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F (accessed 09.09.2022); *Naumann F., Schmid A., Ahnefeld A.-K.* Kanzlerkandidat steht fest: Merkel äußert sich intern zu Laschet-Kür - Söder-Unterstützer lenken ein [Electronic resource] // Merkur.de. 23.04.2021. Available at: <https://www.merkur.de/politik/soeder-laschet-kanzlerkandidat-merkel-cdu-csu-union-berlin-bayern-entscheidung-zr-90466150.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁷⁵ SPD-Spitze nominiert Scholz als Kanzlerkandidaten [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 10.08.2020. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/de/spd-spitze-nominiert-scholz-als-kanzlerkandidaten/a-54508448> (accessed 08.05.2021). *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Dafür steht SPD-Kanzlerkandidat Olaf Scholz [Electronic resource] // Deutschlandfunk. 09.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/bundestagswahl-2021-dafuer-steht-spd-kanzlerkandidat-olaf-100.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146; Bundestagswahl 2021: die Spitzenkandidaten der Parteien [Electronic resource] // Bundestagswahl 2021. 2021. Available at: <https://www.bundestagswahl-2021.de/spitzenkandidaten/#habeck> (accessed 09.09.2022); Laschet fällt aus Top 10, Scholz legt deutlich zu [Electronic resource] // n-tv. 25.08.2021. Available at: <https://www.n-tv.de/politik/Laschet-faellt-aus-Top-10-Scholz-legt-deutlich-zu-article22761294.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Khorolskaya M.V.* The Main German Parties...P. 26.

most popular of the three candidates¹⁰⁷⁹. By comparison, according to Forsa, back in May 2021, A. Baerbock (51 points) was in the third place after A. Merkel (63 points) and M. Söder (53 points). In turn, O. Scholz had only 42 points, while A. Laschet received 37 points¹⁰⁸⁰. Accordingly, it is possible to trace the dynamics of how the future Chancellor O. Scholz overtook A. Baerbock, becoming the most popular of the three candidates.

According to one of the published Infratest dimap ratings, one can observe the dynamics of the popularity of parties before and after the candidates were appointed. On April 16, the Christian democrats were in the lead with a rating indicator of 28%, the greens had 21%, followed by the social democrats at 15%. As of May 6, the Alliance 90/The Greens (26%) was more popular, the CDU/CSU fell to the second place (23%), and the SPD remained the third (14%). However, the situation began to change radically. The greens no longer returned to the first place, and by the pre-election poll (September 16), they had dropped to the third with 15%. The Christian democrats were the second with 22% and the SPD secured the first place with 26%. Moreover, the Alliance 90/The Greens experienced a gradual decline in popularity, yet with small bursts, since May 2021. The CDU/CSU, in contrast, reached their peak at 29% on July 23, but steadily declined afterward. The SPD, on the other hand, began to consistently gain strength starting from June 10. On August 20, the party was already ahead of the greens (21% versus 17%), and by September 2 surpassed the CDU/CSU (25% versus 20%)¹⁰⁸¹.

The peak of the popularity of the greens indeed occurred when A. Baerbock was appointed as their candidate. Being a young and ambitious candidate, she was seen as a symbol of change compared to her opponents. This was facilitated by the reputation of a modern politician, including an external stylish outfit selected for performances such as a leather jacket¹⁰⁸². Furthermore, she was not responsible for the crises of the previous coalition¹⁰⁸³. However, the rating began to fall as a series of scandals directly related to the candidate and actively covered in the mass media emerged after her appointment. New stories that portrayed A. Baerbock in a negative light appeared regularly. In particular, as part of a journalistic investigation, it was revealed that her published resume contained facts that did not meet the reality. So, she was not a member of the German Marshall Fund of the United States or the UN Refugee

¹⁰⁷⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146; Bundestagswahl 2021: die...; Laschet fällt aus...

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Wiersch K.* Deutsche vertrauen vor allem Merkel, Söder und Baerbock [Electronic resource] // Nordbayern. 12.05.2021. Available at: <https://www.nordbayern.de/politik/deutsche-vertrauen-vor-allem-merkel-soder-und-baerbock-1.11067326> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁸¹ Sonntagsfrage Bundestagswahl...

¹⁰⁸² Why the German Greens' Annalena Baerbock disappointed many [Electronic resource] // The Economist. 10.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2021/09/10/why-the-german-greens-annalena-baerbock-disappointed-many> (accessed 05.06.2023).

¹⁰⁸³ *Vishnyakova V.* Battle of Personalities: How the Actions of Candidates for Chancellor Affect the Parliamentary Elections in Germany [Electronic resource] // RIAC. 26.08.2021. Available at: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/bitva-lichnostey-kak-deystviya-kandidatov-v-kantslery-vliayut-na-parlamentskie-vybory-v-frg/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

Fund, as she claimed before¹⁰⁸⁴. In addition, in June 2021, A. Baerbock published the book “Now: How we renew our country,” to which S. Weber, a plagiarism specialist from Austria, stated that there were a significant number of borrowings from the publications of the Federal Agency for Civic Education¹⁰⁸⁵. A. Baerbock also failed to timely declare her additional income in 2018-2020, including Christmas payments, rewards for success in the European elections, etc.¹⁰⁸⁶. The hashtag #VerdienenwieBaerbock (#EarnLikeBaerbock) further exacerbated the situation. Opponents from the Christian democrats were suspected of spreading it¹⁰⁸⁷. The politician was also accused of not justifying a 40,000-euro doctoral scholarship/grant from the Heinrich Böll Foundation* from 2009 to 2012. In particular, it is assumed that such a payment is impossible for an employed person working longer than the number of hours determined by the regulations¹⁰⁸⁸. In addition, during the interview at Tachles Arena – Zentralrat der Juden, speaking out against the phenomena of anti-Semitism or racism, A. Baerbock herself used the word “nigger.”¹⁰⁸⁹. Finally, even a photo with G. Soros caused a surge of ideas about him financing the candidate’s rise to power, as along with a wave of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and fears of a “global eco-dictatorship.”¹⁰⁹⁰.

In addition, A. Baerbock was also criticized for her lack of experience in public administration and her relatively young age (40 years), appearance and neglect of her parental responsibilities (which is much more difficult to imagine for a male candidate), a number of unpopular proposals (e.g., a ban on short-haul flights or higher petrol prices)¹⁰⁹¹. Finally, there was also a series of fake news, such as alleged nude photos of A. Baerbock or her initiative to ban pets or barbecues, as well as outright sexism. Political consultant J. Hillje identified two main interest groups for the dissemination of this kind of information: right-wing radical and pro-Russian (primarily because of the greens’ desire to ban the Nord Stream 2).

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Petrenko O.* Germany's Greens leader Annalena Baerbock ruined her rating with false data in her CV. [Electronic resource] // Discover 24. 12.06.2021. Available at: <https://discover24.ru/2021/06/lider-zelenyh-frg-annalena-berbok-obvalila-svoy-reyting-nedostovernymi-dannymi-v-rezyume/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Turau J.* Why is Baerbock as the Green candidate for the German chancellor being criticized for? [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 03.07.2021. Available at: <https://learnrussian.dw.com/ru/pochemu-kandidat-v-kanclery-frg-annalena-berbok-popala-pod-shkval-kritiki/a-58142041> (accessed 03.07.2021).*In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹⁰⁸⁶ «What are we fighting for»: the co-chair of the German Greens did not declare income. [Electronic resource] // EurAsia Daily. 20.05.2021. Available at: <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2021/05/20/za-chto-borolis-v-germanii-sopredsedatel-zelyonyh-ne-deklarirovala-dohody> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁸⁷ Annalena Baerbock: scandal with photos and income [Electronic resource] // OstWest*. 20.05.2021. Available at: <https://ostwest.tv/news/annalena-berbok-skandal-s-fotografiyami-i-dohodami/> (accessed 09.09.2022).*Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Schuler R., Sauerbier M.* 40 000 Euro der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung*: Baerbock lässt ihr Doktor-Stipendium prüfen [Electronic resource] // Das Bild**. 10.07.2021. Available at: <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/baerbock-laesst-ihr-doktor-stipendium-pruefen-40000-euro-der-heinrich-boell-stif-77039806.bild.html> (accessed 27.07.2021).*In the registry of undesirable organizations in the territory of the Russian Federation.**Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Balzer E.* Anfeindungen und Hetze von rechts [Electronic resource] // Belltower News. 07.05.2021. Available at: <https://www.belltower.news/annalena-baerbock-anfeindungen-und-hetze-von-rechts-115425/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁹¹ *Turau J.* Why is Baerbock as the Green candidate for the German chancellor being criticized for? [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

However, it is quite difficult to definitely determine the source¹⁰⁹². It is worth noting that other competitors, not exclusively from the far-right, could have engaged in similar activities.

It should be acknowledged that, alongside objective facts, one can also observe the phenomenon of post-truth, when the appeal to emotions is much more important than objective facts and/or nuances that are often revealed later. As an example, the A. Baerbock scholarship scandal could be analyzed. According to the Greens, she did indeed hold a number of positions in the Alliance 90/The Greens and the European Green Party simultaneously, but the payment for this activity was not expected for an extended period, and since 2011 it has been a minimum amount¹⁰⁹³.

The Alliance 90/The Greens tactic was generally unsuccessful. The party, in fact, was unable to take advantage of the crises that overtook the country during the period of other parties' rule to improve their ratings¹⁰⁹⁴. According to A.V. Belinsky, they “failed to fully convey their agenda to the voters.”¹⁰⁹⁵. The situation was overshadowed by a number of events not related only to A. Baerbock, such as, for example, racist statements from B. Palmer¹⁰⁹⁶. A. Baerbock herself publicly condemned the lord mayor of Tübingen, threatening to expel him from the party. This decision was justified, and the events took place in May 2021¹⁰⁹⁷. He was subsequently suspended until the end of 2023, which even meant that he would only be nominated for the next election as an independent candidate. However, this happened only after the federal campaign and became a compromise solution for both the politician and the party¹⁰⁹⁸.

A. Laschet also faced serious criticism. First of all, he was accused of plagiarism in a book published back in 2009, “The Upwardly Mobile Republic: Immigration as an Opportunity.” This was reported by Bild, citing parallels with the 2008 work of K. Weitzenegger¹⁰⁹⁹. Another scandal was the laughter of the candidate during the speech of F.-W. Steinmeier about the consequences of the flood in North Rhine-Westphalia, after which the hashtag #Laschetlacht (#LaschetLaughs) became popular on

¹⁰⁹² *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146; *Brady K.* Germany: Annalena Baerbock becomes prime target of sexist hate speech [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹⁰⁹³ *Schuler R., Sauerbier M.* 40 000 Euro der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung*: Baerbock lässt ihr Doktor-Stipendium prüfen [Electronic resource] // Das Bild**. *In the registry of undesirable organizations in the territory of the Russian Federation. **Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *Vishnyakova V.* Battle of Personalities: How...

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Belinsky A.V.* Big Races to...P. 21.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146.

¹⁰⁹⁷ *Geyer G., Stolz C.* Update: Palmer rechtfertigt rassistischen Kommentar: „Ich habe Dennis Aogo in Schutz genommen“ [Electronic resource] // Der Tagesspiegel. 09.05.2021. Available at: <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/palmer-rechtfertigt-rassistischen-kommentar-ich-habe-dennis-aogo-in-schutz-genommen/27172542.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁹⁸ Landesschiedsgericht: Boris Palmer soll Grünen-Mitgliedschaft bis Ende 2023 ruhen lassen [Electronic resource] // RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland. 23.04.2022. Available at: <https://www.rnd.de/politik/boris-palmer-gruenen-mitgliedschaft-soll-bis-ende-2023-ruhen-LZP5BVQYN4OYHALF24OKXIYIIQ.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹⁰⁹⁹ Es geht um ein Buch aus dem Jahr 2009: Auch Armin Laschet hat geschrieben! [Electronic resource] // Das Bild*. 30.07.2021. Available at: <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/politik-inland/laschet-auch-der-nrw-landeschef-hat-abgeschrieben-buch-aus-dem-jahr-2009-77235608.bild.html> (accessed 01.08.2021). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

social media¹¹⁰⁰. Floods in Germany occurred in mid-July, around the same time the popularity rating of the party, as shown by the data presented above, reached a peak, and then began to decline¹¹⁰¹. In addition, a photo quickly on the internet showing A. Laschet standing under an umbrella during a visit with flood victims, while his interlocutor did not have one, and someone else held the umbrella for the candidate¹¹⁰².

A. Laschet was also criticized for meeting with E. Musk, during which the construction of a plant for the production of batteries for electric vehicles was discussed. Despite the seemingly favorable nature of this type of transport for the environment, it was assumed that too much water would be required for such type of production. The politician was also criticized for his inconsistent views on sanitary measures during the pandemic¹¹⁰³. In addition, J. Laschet, A. Laschet's son, was involved in the awarding of a contract for the production of medical masks and gowns between the State Chancellery of North-Rhine Westphalia, led by A. Laschet, and the Van Laack clothing brand without a proper preliminary tender¹¹⁰⁴. On a large scale, a similar story unfolded at the federal level in the so-called “mask scandal,” where two Bundestag deputies from the bloc (N. Löbel and G. Nüßlein) were convicted of receiving kickbacks for intermediary services in mask procurement¹¹⁰⁵.

Furthermore, the vague position of A. Laschet did not affect the party in the best way, especially when the published 100-day plan did not go much beyond the limits of the party programme¹¹⁰⁶. The candidate also faced with criticism from M. Söder, because in an interview on ARD, he announced his unwillingness to introduce tax breaks, which would distinguish the party from the left and was even outlined in the election programme¹¹⁰⁷. Moreover, the “Rezo-effect” contributed to the spread of many high-profile stories again. The blogger immediately released several new videos for the elections to the

¹¹⁰⁰ CDU/CSU chancellor candidate criticized for inappropriate laughter. [Electronic resource] // RIA Novosti. 18.07.2021. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20210718/smekh-1741711877.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁰¹ More than 80 dead in Germany due to flooding [Electronic resource] // Interfax. 16.07.2021. Available at: <https://www.interfax.ru/world/778208> (accessed 05.06.2023).

¹¹⁰² *Bau M.* Nein, diese beiden Männer mussten für Armin Laschet nicht im Regen stehen [Electronic resource] // CORRECTIV—Recherchen für die Gesellschaft. 13.08.2021. Available at: <https://correctiv.org/faktencheck/2021/08/13/nein-fuer-armin-laschet-mussten-zwei-maenner-nicht-im-regen-steinen/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁰³ Armin Laschet's hard campaign [Electronic resource] // Euronews*. 20.09.2021. Available at: <https://ru.euronews.com/2021/09/20/profile-laschet-germany-elex-2021> (accessed 21.09.2021). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Burger R.* Mode-Blogger „Joe...“

¹¹⁰⁵ *Gunkel' E.* Mask scandal in Germany: how it will hit Merkel's party [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 08.03.2021. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/ru/masochnyj-skandal-v-frg-kak-on-udarit-po-partii-merkel-pered-vyborami/a-56804507> (accessed 08.03.2021). *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹¹⁰⁶ Laschet stellt 100-Tage-Plan vor [Electronic resource] // Die Zeit. 13.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2021-09/cdu-sofortprogramm-armin-laschet-bundestagswahl-union-kanzlerkandidat#:~:text=%3A-,Laschet%20stellt%20100%2DTage%2DPlan%20vor,-Familie%20und%20Sicherheit> (accessed 05.06.2023).

¹¹⁰⁷ *Görmann M.* Armin Laschet: Söder fährt ihm in die Parade – kommt es jetzt zum großen Bruch? [Electronic resource] // Der Westen. 14.07.2021. Available at: <https://www.derwesten.de/politik/armin-laschet-markus-soeder-steuersenkungen-ard-sommerinterview-zdf-morgenmagazin-bundestagswahl-wahlkampf-cdu-steuern-id232787611.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

Bundestag, where he criticized the Christian democrats with particular predilection¹¹⁰⁸. He accused them of a series of corruption scandals¹¹⁰⁹ and the incompetence of the bloc members (especially A. Laschet)¹¹¹⁰. However, the greens were also subjected to criticism, because the blogger considered it inappropriate to over-demonstrate the role of women for the party.

As with A. Baerbock, each of the cases requires a separate examination in order to characterize the authenticity of the situation or provide a convenient context/perspective. For instance, according to the investigation by the portal CORRECTIV – Recherchen für die Gesellschaft, in the case of the umbrella incident, a specific fragment and angle that was successful for informational noise was chosen¹¹¹¹. However, this was no longer so important. CORRECTIV – Recherchen für die Gesellschaft also carried out a number of other investigations regarding A. Laschet, such as disproving claims about the misuse of donations to the Aktion Lichtblicke association for the election campaign¹¹¹², as well as about allegedly ignoring the politician's visit to the heavily damaged city of Stolberg, preferring to speak to the "green background."¹¹¹³.

In fact, the results of the CDU/CSU were not only linked to A. Laschet. A. Merkel's resignation had two distinct effects. On the one hand, this is the loss of a strong and fairly stable leader, which can be perceived as a disadvantage. On the other hand, it revealed a certain level of fatigue among the population from her long tenure in power. Among other things, this was expressed with the natural association of all problems with the ruling party and the leader herself, and in some cases, with the entire coalition, even if this or that crisis was of a regional or global nature and any anti-crisis measures would not be able to guarantee a complete and immediate elimination of the consequences. To illustrate, the most striking examples may be migration policy, as well as the measures taken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there were also newer problems or even stages of old crises (in this case, migration), such as the significant underestimation of the events in Afghanistan¹¹¹⁴. However, a few old problems remained from the legacy of A. Merkel. In particular, in one of its publications The Telegraph* attributed the rejection of nuclear energy or the Chancellor's policy regarding the debt crisis, which puts

¹¹⁰⁸ *Dicke T.V.* Youtuber Rezo mit der nächsten „Zerstörung“: Er wirft Politikern „Scheitern und Verkackten“ vor [Electronic resource] // NHA. 24.08.2021. Available at: <https://www.hna.de/welt/rezo-zerstoerung-politik-youtube-video-youtuber-cdu-laschet-kloeckner-scheuer-bundestagswahl-zr-90936423.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁰⁹ *Gries H.* Rezo mit finaler...

¹¹¹⁰ *Dicke T.V.* Youtuber Rezo mit...

¹¹¹¹ *Bau M.* Nein, diese beiden...

¹¹¹² *Eckert T.* Keine Hinweise, dass Hochwasser-Spendengelder von «Aktion Lichtblicke» in Wahlkampf von Armin Laschet fließen [Electronic resource] // CORRECTIV—Recherchen für die Gesellschaft. 29.07.2021. Available at: <https://correctiv.org/faktencheck/2021/07/29/keine-hinweise-dass-hochwasser-spendengelder-von-aktion-lichtblicke-in-wahlkampf-von-armin-laschet-fluessen/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹¹³ *Bau M.* Hochwasser: Doch, Armin Laschet war vor Ort in Stolberg [Electronic resource] // CORRECTIV—Recherchen für die Gesellschaft. 20.07.2021. Available at: <https://correctiv.org/faktencheck/2021/07/20/hochwasser-doch-armin-laschet-war-vor-ort-in-stolberg/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹¹⁴ *Vishnyakova V.* Battle of Personalities: How...

“dependence on Russian gas” as well as on coal, to such issues¹¹¹⁵. The latter, although it refers to an earlier period, is also relevant due to A. Merkel’s prolonged time in office.

In addition, there was some disunity between the CDU and the CSU, not only in terms of leadership but also regarding their aspirations to participate in the future state administration of the younger sister party, founded with the popularity of M. Söder. Moreover, the CSU also experienced disagreements with coalition partners at the regional level, particularly with the Free Voters, or rather between M. Söder and the leader of the latter, H. Aiwanger¹¹¹⁶.

Finally, O. Scholz emerged as the third candidate. Several factors indicate his direct influence on the results of the game. First of all, as already mentioned above, his personal rating witnessed significant growth compared to other politicians in the country. He came third, trailing behind only A. Merkel and M. Söder¹¹¹⁷. However, the latter was not nominated as the candidate of the CDU/CSU, and the former stepped down as Chancellor. In addition, as already mentioned, a series of debates took place on German television in the TV Triel format, where all three candidates took part. According to the results of the meetings, polls showed the victory of O. Scholz. According to Forsa-Blitzumfrage, in the third discussion (September 19) he received 42% of approval, while A. Laschet got only 27%, and A. Baerbock gained 25%¹¹¹⁸. Whereas in the first debate (August 29) the results were as follows: 36% (O. Scholz), 30% (A. Baerbock), and 25% (A. Laschet)¹¹¹⁹. Furthermore, Infratest dimap published data on the second meeting (September 12), where O. Scholz scored 41%, A. Laschet scored 27%, and A. Baerbock scored 25%¹¹²⁰.

At the time of the campaign, O. Scholz did not hold the position of the chairman of the party, unlike A. Baerbock and A. Laschet, although the latter led the CDU only in January 2021. At the same time, the Christian democrat, among other things, held significant positions at the state level and was a member of the Bundestag, approaching the election as Minister-President of North Rhine-Westphalia¹¹²¹. By comparison, A. Baerbock, despite her strong positions within the party, was only a member of the Bundestag¹¹²². However, O. Scholz seemed to have surpassed both of them as Vice-

¹¹¹⁵ *Johnson D.* Angela Merkel’s legacy is chaos at home and abroad [Electronic resource] // The Telegraph*. 26.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/09/26/angela-merkels-legacy-chaos-home-abroad/> (accessed 27.09.2021). *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹¹¹⁶ *Vishnyakova V.* Battle of Personalities: How...

¹¹¹⁷ Laschet fällt aus...

¹¹¹⁸ *Schmidt M., Sagatz K., Sauerbrey A., Christmann K., Sabin T.* Wer hat das Triell gewonnen?: Forsa-Blitzumfrage sieht Scholz vor Laschet und Baerbock [Electronic resource] // Der Tagesspiegel. 19.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/wer-hat-das-triell-gewonnen-forsa-blitzumfrage-sieht-scholz-vor-laschet-und-baerbock/27627436.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹¹⁹ Olaf Scholz ist Sieger in der Forsa-Umfrage [Electronic resource] // Stern. 30.08.2021. Available at: <https://www.stern.de/kultur/tv-triell--olaf-scholz-ist-sieger-in-der-forsa-umfrage-30695040.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹²⁰ Blitz TV-Triell...

¹¹²¹ Federal election...

¹¹²² Lebenslauf [Electronic resource] // Annalena Baerbock: [official website]. Available at: <https://annalena-baerbock.de/lebenslauf/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

Chancellor, Finance Minister, and previously as Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, member of the Bundestag and First mayor of Hamburg¹¹²³.

He earned additional popularity during the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the flooding¹¹²⁴. During the latter crisis, he not only promised financial assistance, but also provided moral support, which was lacking in the case of A. Laschet¹¹²⁵. In fact, it was also an illustration of him as a successful crisis manager, who was able to determine urgent measures aimed at economic recovery or oversee post-flood reconstruction. However, according to E.V. Pimenova, earlier O. Scholz also proven himself in a similar capacity, because even during the administration of Hamburg, he was able to successfully suppress the riots during the G20 summit (Group of Twenty)¹¹²⁶. L.N. Rebrina and N.L. Shamne, however, do not agree on this matter. From the point of view of these researchers, with reference to Internet users, the very fact of the riots was rather a reputational blow for O. Scholz¹¹²⁷.

However, it was not without unambiguous scandals. First of all, this is the story surrounding the bankruptcy of the Wirecard payment company, when about 2 billion euros were not declared on its accounts, and fraudulent reporting spanning several years was uncovered. In fact, the company was in good standing with top officials of the state (including A. Merkel), which had been repeatedly stated. As a result, not only O. Scholz, but even Chancellor A. Merkel, who was in office at that time, had to deny this involvement. Despite the fact that most of the fraud occurred before O. Scholz came to the management of the ministry, he was nevertheless criticized by the opposition for the unsuccessful work of the German Federal Financial Supervisory Authority. The most negative aspect here was the release of the investigation results in the Bundestag shortly before the elections¹¹²⁸. The second high-profile case during the campaign was the story of the Cum-Ex scandal, whose roots date back to 2016. In fact, it was an exposure of a tax fraud involving M.M. Warburg & Co Bank. According to mass media reports, the place of O. Scholz in this story is that after his meeting with the shareholders of the bank, they were not required to pay 47 million euros, which the tax authorities wanted to receive. Meanwhile, 45.5 thousand euros were deposited into the SPD's accounts from investors closely tied to the bank¹¹²⁹. In fact, despite the seriousness of both cases, they did not create a serious reputational loss for O. Scholz,

¹¹²³ Über mich [Electronic resource] // Olaf Scholz: [official website]. Available at: <https://olaf-scholz.spd.de/ueber-mich/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹²⁴ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146.

¹¹²⁵ *Belinsky A.V.* Big Races to...P. 20.

¹¹²⁶ *Pimenova E.V.* The New Era of German...P. 127-128.

¹¹²⁷ *Rebrina L.N., Shamne N.L.* Internet Memes as a Relevant Format of Political Communication in Germany (The Case of the Thematic Group "Olaf Scholz") // Science Journal of Volgograd State University. Linguistics. 2022. Vol. 21, № 4. P. 49-50.

¹¹²⁸ Wirecard: German Parliament slams Scholz and Merkel [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 06.07.2021. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/wirecard-german-parliament-slams-scholz-and-merkel/a-57800993> (accessed 30.10.2021).*In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹¹²⁹ Fraud case: Olaf Scholz is threatened with exposure [Electronic resource] // Vesti.ru. 08.08.2022. Available at: <https://www.vesti.ru/article/2881502> (accessed 09.09.2022).

as shown by the surveys presented above. Probably, it was a more difficult task for the general public to understand such complex cases than to criticize A. Laschet and A. Baerbock for inappropriate smiles, statements, behavior in public and so on. Ultimately, the rating of each politician fluctuated in one way or another every month, however, O. Scholz came up to the elections as the clear frontrunner.

The rather strong unity of the party around its candidate¹¹³⁰, despite his historical affiliation with a more conservative wing, also added a positive effect¹¹³¹. At the same time, their social orientation also played to the advantage of the social democrats. According to Infratest dimap, it was social security that was both the key topic for the choice of the SPD, and the key topic in the elections¹¹³². However, from the point of view of M.V. Khorolskaya, a long stay as a junior partner, as well as the protracted consequences of G. Schröder's reforms as Chancellor which were far from the most popular, also had their impact¹¹³³.

However, in addition to the CDU/CSU, the SPD and the Greens, among the main parties of the country, the AfD, the FDP, and the Left participated in the elections and entered the parliament, too. It was not assumed that any of them had real chances of winning, although there was still a certain level of fluctuation in their results.

The decline in migration flows played a key role in the results of the Alternative for Germany¹¹³⁴. According to Destatis data for 2020, net immigration into the country had been decreasing for the 5th consecutive year¹¹³⁵. However, the closure of borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be decisive. Interestingly, in this case, its own ideology turned against the AfD, which insisted on this restriction. This statement can be argued by the fact that the main point for criticizing the government's actions vanished. Historically, this was not the first time such a trend occurred, where the key issues on which a party relied faded into the background.

The party's lack of consistency in the course of the coronavirus also played a special role. Initially, the party supported government measures, but gradually distanced itself, criticized them, and became more radicalized. In particular, this resulted in cooperation with the Querdenker movement (supporters of conspiracy theories and opponents of vaccination), participation in demonstrations, holding face-to-face party meetings, as well as the launch of the “Healthy without Compulsion”

¹¹³⁰ *Belinsky A.V.* Big Races to...P. 20.

¹¹³¹ *Kinkarc S., Bushuev M.* Chancellor Olaf Scholz: the one who was underestimated [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. 08.12.2021. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/ru/kancler-olaf-sholz-tot-kogo-nedoocenili/a-59987705> (accessed 08.12.2021). *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹¹³² *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146.

¹¹³³ *Khorolskaya M.V.* The Main German Parties...P. 27.

¹¹³⁴ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146.

¹¹³⁵ Migration 2020: strong decline in registered arrivals and departures: Net immigration decreasing for the fifth year in a row [Electronic resource] // Destatis. 2021. Available at: https://www.destatis.de/EN/Press/2021/06/PE21_306_12411.html;jsessionid=3F22D65159B9F2623051E87EA7FA85F3.live741 (accessed 09.09.2022).

campaign. In fact, the main goal of the latter was the rejection of compulsory vaccination, and, indeed, many of its opponents (in particular, 50% of the unvaccinated, according to Forsa) supported the AfD. In addition, also it was also possible to trace lower rates of vaccination in East Germany, where the Alternative for Germany is traditionally popular. However, such rhetoric did not find support in most of the country. Another important factor was the internal party differences, which led to the departure of J. Meuthen from the party. It is worth noting that it was this co-chairman who criticized the party's cooperation with the Querdenker movement, while the launch of the "Healthy without Compulsion" campaign was announced by T. Chrupalla. However, the party also faced other crises, such as the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution's recognition of the inner-party association Wing as right-wing extremist¹¹³⁶.

The duet of the lead candidates was T. Chrupalla and A. Weidel. According to the already mentioned Forsa rating, in August 2021, T. Chrupalla was ranked the 19th (9 points), while A. Weidel got the 20th place (8 points). By comparison, C. Lindner from the FDP ranked the 8th (32 points), surpassing even A. Laschet, and J. Wissler from the Left was in 17th position (21 points). At the same time, the second leftist candidate, D. Bartsch, was not in the list of the 20 most popular politicians¹¹³⁷.

It is worth noting that T. Chrupalla did not hold high positions at the federal level, and spent most of his adult life working as a house painter and decorator¹¹³⁸, which illustrated the departure from the reputation of the "party of professors."¹¹³⁹ On the other hand, A. Weidel managed to be the leader of the faction, however, she did not become the co-chair of the party until 2022¹¹⁴⁰. In fact, the latter is an extremely controversial figure in the context of the conservative ideology of the AfD, relying on state level of governance instead of developing regional and even global ties. Among other things, she is not only homosexual, but also was in a relationship with a woman of Sri Lankan origin. She also had partial residence in Switzerland, and was suspected of unofficially employing Syrian migrants as house servants¹¹⁴¹. However, all these facts were revealed in different years, which, in particular, did not prevent A. Weidel from leading the faction in the 2017-2021 convocation¹¹⁴².

It should also be taken into account that from the very beginning, the AfD, the FDP, and the Left understood that they would not get the Chancellor's seat. This may have been one of the key reasons why the appointments of lead candidates from these parties did not generate as much widespread

¹¹³⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* COVID-19: Influence on...P. 203, 205-206.

¹¹³⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146; Laschet fällt aus...; Bundestagswahl 2021: die...

¹¹³⁸ Tino Chrupalla, AfD [Electronic resource] // Deutscher Bundestag: [official website]. Available at: https://www.bundestag.de/abgeordnete/biografien/C/chrupalla_tino-857230 (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹³⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 148.

¹¹⁴⁰ Dr. Alice Weidel [Electronic resource] // Alternative für Deutschland: [official website]. Available at: <https://www.afd.de/partei/bundesvorstand/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁴¹ Weidel soll Asylbewerberin schwarz beschäftigt haben [Electronic resource] // Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 13.09.2017. Available at: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/bundestagswahl/2.2960/alice-weidel-beschaeftigte-offenbar-asylbewerberin-schwarz-15196885.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁴² Dr. Alice Weidel.

attention as those from the CDU/CSU, the SPD and the Alliance 90/The Greens¹¹⁴³. In addition, their chances of gaining any influential positions outside their own party within Germany were more limited. This would require either being part of a coalition (at the state or federal level) or leading a delegation to the Bundestag. As a result, the chances of the AfD to get into the coalition are negligible, because other parties, after its reorientation towards nationalism and right-wing populism, are reluctant to cooperate with the right¹¹⁴⁴. The FDP, on the other hand, was part of the “Black-yellow” coalition at the federal level in the past (2009-2013), and at the subnational level it occasionally joins coalitions in different states. The Left has similar experiences. Therefore, the re-election of A. Weidel and the leader of the party T. Chrupalla, and the co-chairman of the Left faction D. Bartsch, as well as the leader of the party J. Wissler, were generally justified¹¹⁴⁵. In contrast, the leader of the FDP and the lead candidate C. Lindner had a progressive career path within the party. He previously served as the head of the party delegation in the Landtag of North-Rhine Westphalia and later became the party's overall leader, as well as heading a faction in the Bundestag¹¹⁴⁶. To be fair, the Greens, which emerged from similar parties, were also among those who had a hard time finding a real political heavyweight. On the other hand, even R. Habeck, A. Baerbock's co-chairman, was more experienced¹¹⁴⁷. In addition to his party leadership role and being a deputy in the Bundestag, he was Deputy Minister-President and thematic minister in Schleswig-Holstein¹¹⁴⁸.

Analyzing the Left's results, first of all, it is important to remember the general crisis of the left parties in Europe at the present stage. Indeed, earlier, starting with the economic crisis of 2008-2009, it was possible to observe a certain “leftist revolt.”¹¹⁴⁹ However, it began to decline after that, because the opportunity to take the advantage of the situation was lost¹¹⁵⁰. This was confirmed in section 2.3., Chapter 2, which is devoted to the results of the 2019 election campaign in the EU and Germany, besides, as the indicators of the Party of the European Left, the political group in general, and directly the Left itself in the European elections added to this argumentation¹¹⁵¹. In addition, the party continued to lose its former positions in East Germany. Its main and more successful competitor for the protest vote in these federal states was the Alternative for Germany, which is less popular in West Germany. As

¹¹⁴³ *Lehmann P., Matthieß T., Regel S., Weßels B.* Die Ampelkoalition: Wie wird aus unterschiedlichen Zielen ein gemeinsames Regierungsprogramm? Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2022. P. 31-32.

¹¹⁴⁴ *Basov F.A.* Germany in the European Union: From the Economic Locomotive to Political Leadership // *Outlines of global transformations: politics, economics, law.* 2017. Vol. 10, №1. P. 47.

¹¹⁴⁵ Hennig-Wellsoh und Wissler zur Doppelspitze der Linken gewählt [Electronic resource] // *Die Zeit.* 27.02.2021. Available at: https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2021-02/janine-wissler-zur-neuen-linken-vorsitzenden-gewaehlt?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁴⁶ Christian Lindner: Federal Minister of Finance [Electronic resource] // *The Federal Government: [official website].* Available at: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/federal-cabinet/1988486-1988486> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁴⁷ *Belov V.B.* Party-Political and...P. 26-27.

¹¹⁴⁸ Robert Habeck [Electronic resource] // *The Federal Government: [official website].* Available at: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/federal-cabinet/1988602-1988602> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁴⁹ *Barabanov O.N., Grigoriev D.I., Kagarlickij B. Yu., Koltashov V.G., Rybin A.S.* The Global Leftist Revolt...P. 5.

¹¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* P. 9.

¹¹⁵¹ Comparative tool.

mentioned earlier, this can be associated with the ideological shift of the Left towards Western values, which led to the loss of its own identity, as well as the absence of radically new ideas¹¹⁵². There are several other reasons that can be identified as the illustration of the party tactic's failure, as among these were as follows: their ambiguous position on the crisis in Afghanistan¹¹⁵³, the late start of their own campaign, the disagreements with S. Wagenknecht, which did not affect the lead candidates in the best way, a change of Chancellor and a greater interest in voting for a new leader rather than in accordance with traditional beliefs that have no realistic chance of winning, and excessive opposition, illustrating unlikely participation in a coalition¹¹⁵⁴.

Separately, it is worth discussing S. Wagenknecht, who was still a very influential figure in the party and made resonant statements on the eve of the elections. In this case, it was the publication of the book "The Self-Righteous," which exposed the weaknesses of the party and broadcast more right-wing views¹¹⁵⁵. Finally, it was the revival of the so-called "Red Socks Return/Red Socks 2.0 Campaign". This campaign, initially launched in 1994 and again in 2021, was initiated by the Christian democrats. In fact, this was the appearance of images of red socks on shop windows and posters in order to warn about the potential return to the past. The revival of the campaign could be associated with the possibility of the Left entering a coalition in the event of an SPD victory¹¹⁵⁶.

The campaign of the FDP, in many respects, was built around the image of C. Lindner, who allegedly fights alone against the challenges of our time¹¹⁵⁷. Despite some mistakes, the role of this politician, is difficult to overestimate. He successfully returned the party to the Bundestag, after the failure in the 2013 elections¹¹⁵⁸. However, in 2019, he also improved the 2014 elections results¹¹⁵⁹. Despite some of his careless statements (e.g., an unsuccessful sexist joke about L. Toiteberg)¹¹⁶⁰, he managed to create the image of a "young and dynamic party"¹¹⁶¹ aimed at "de-bureaucratization and digitalization in all areas."¹¹⁶². A number of wrong decisions were also made by the FDP. They failed to

¹¹⁵² *Belov V.B.* Party-Political and...P. 27; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.146.

¹¹⁵³ *Emendörfer J.* Wahlforscher: Linke hat als Reparaturbetrieb der Sozialdemokratie keine Zukunft [Electronic resource] // RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland. 29.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.rnd.de/politik/bundestagswahl-2021-warum-hat-die-linke-so-schlecht-abgeschnitten-FZTUNBEDYFDJFE77GB3EAJ7VNM.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁵⁴ *Jahn U.* Warum die Linkspartei abgestürzt ist [Electronic resource] // Tagesschau. 27.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/btw21/linkspartei-bundestagswahl-101.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁵⁵ *Schwarz P.* The Nationalist Diatribe of a Left Party Leader — a Review of the New Book by Sahra Wagenknecht [Electronic resource] // World Socialist Web Site. 22.07.2021. Available at: <https://www.wsws.org/ru/articles/2021/07/21/wag1-j21.html> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁵⁶ What do red socks have to do with Germany's election? [Electronic resource] // France 24. 16.09.2021. Available at: <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20210916-what-do-red-socks-have-to-do-with-germany-s-election> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁵⁷ *Khorolskaya M.V.* German Elections...

¹¹⁵⁸ *Khorolskaya M.V.* The Main German Parties...P. 27-28.

¹¹⁵⁹ Comparative tool.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Kalarickal J.* „Einfach rausgerutscht“ [Electronic resource] // Die Tageszeitung. 21.09.2020. Available at: <https://taz.de/FDPlerin-ueber-Lindners-sexistischen-Witz/!5715226/> (accessed 14.07.2022).

¹¹⁶¹ *Sokolov A.P., Davydov A.D., Pimenova E.V.* Elections to the Bundestag...P. 11.

¹¹⁶² *Khorolskaya M.V.* The Main German Parties...P. 28.

present an alternative and effective management during the coronavirus crisis, and they withdrew early from coalition negotiations after previous elections¹¹⁶³. On the other hand, these mistakes showed that the lessons of the past were learned. Being a junior coalition partner under the CDU/CSU in the past forced the FDP to make concessions and sacrifice its values, which, ultimately, greatly influenced the results of 2013¹¹⁶⁴. In addition, the FDP faced scandal in the federal state of Thuringia, where they were not the majority party but received the votes from both the CDU and the “handshake” Alternative for Germany, which made it possible for the FDP to appoint T. Kemmerich as Minister-President, who was later forced to resign¹¹⁶⁵. Some experts (A.P. Sokolov, A.D. Davydov, E.V. Pimenova) believe that the growth of the FDP can be attributed not only to its own merits, but rather to the cohesion within the party, as well as the dissatisfaction of voters with opponents, including the CDU/CSU and the Alliance 90/The Greens. Among these were also the mistakes of A. Merkel, dissatisfaction with A. Laschet as a candidate, and the controversies surrounding the greens¹¹⁶⁶. This could be supplemented by the fact that the FDP did not have any unique theme (like the Green's climate or the AfD's migration) that was on the rise and allowed for the growth, regardless of the rest of the party's rhetoric.

It is possible to draw a parallel between the results of the campaign and the points of the spatial theory of party competition. The two opponents closest to the center (the CDU/CSU and the SPD) were again in the spotlight, and their long-term ideological convergence, corresponding to the characteristics of a majoritarian system, was further justified by their participation in a joint ruling coalition. The initial drop in the ratings of the SPD, along with the favorable performance of O. Scholz (however, as well as with the failures of opponents) clearly proved the priority of the factors accompanying ideology. In this case these were the role of leaders and the scandals associated with them. This was especially important in connection with the resignation from big politics of the long-term leader of the country, A. Merkel, who represented the CDU/CSU, who posed a competitive challenge for the SPD. However, one cannot completely deny the influence of the greater ideological involvement of the social democrats in the global problem of climate change compared to the Christian democrats.

Except for the greens, the issue of leadership has become less significant for other parties, which is a characteristic of a proportional system. This was also due to the fact that they did not have any real chances to take the place of Chancellor. Accordingly, the ideological basis was already much more important. A clear illustration of it was the decline in migration flows, which became significant in

¹¹⁶³ Sokolov A.P., Davydov A.D., Pimenova E.V. Elections to the Bundestag...P. 11.

¹¹⁶⁴ Sokolov A.P., Davydov A.D. From Opposition into...P. 120.

¹¹⁶⁵ Chagina M. Elections in Thuringia as a Catalyst for the Political Crisis in Germany [Electronic resource] // International Studies. 06.11.2020. Available at: <https://internationalstudies.ru/%D0%B2%D1%8B%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%8B-%D0%B2-%D1%82%D1%8E%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B3%D0%B8%D0%B8-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BA-%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%BB/> (accessed 09.09.2022).

¹¹⁶⁶ Sokolov A.P., Davydov A.D., Pimenova E.V. Elections to the Bundestag...P. 11.

reducing the popularity of far-right ideas. Another example of the role of ideology was the success of the greens, associated with the attractiveness of an ideology based on the ideas of combating the global problem of climate change. However, the ideology alone was not enough when it came to the manifested claims to victory, as the theme of leadership still played its role. Nevertheless, the party still achieved historic success, although it did not win the elections. By comparison, the less ideologically unique FDP, despite being the second non-radical competitor to the two leading powers after the Alliance 90/The Greens, did not offer attractive unique points and therefore failed to demonstrate similar results. Meanwhile, the Left, which lost its ideological uniqueness, continued to lose its electorate.

Finally, it is relevant to refer to the provisions of the concept of second-order national elections, with the proviso that it is more correct to count cycles from federal campaigns. Therefore, it would be most appropriate to compare the national results of 2021 with the supranational results of 2024. However, if trying to compare the results of the elections to the Bundestag in 2021 with the elections to the European Parliament in 2019, which are less significant for voters, there were an increase in the results of the SPD as one of the traditional leaders. Another reason was the decline in the performance of smaller the Alternatives for Germany, the Left, and the Alliance 90/The Greens. This showcases that citizens took voting more seriously (lower percentage of spoiled ballots¹¹⁶⁷ and higher turnout¹¹⁶⁸) and were not ready to vote so actively for small/radical/new/populist/protest parties and were less focused on less perceptible everyday issues (e.g., global problem of climate change). However, the Alliance 90/The Greens' performance in two consecutive campaigns have elevated the party's status, at least as long as the climate agenda remains at the forefront¹¹⁶⁹.

In this chapter, the author continued the study of the influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of European parties. This time, the election campaign for the Bundestag in 2021 was analyzed as a case study. Based on its results, the current composition of the institution was formed. As in Chapter 2, the choice was due to the greatest visibility of changes in the rhetoric and other activities of parties and their leaders, precisely during the pre-election race, while the voting results made it clear how this transformation was favorably received by voters. In addition, the case of the national campaign in Germany made it possible to take into account differences in supranational and national characteristics (both parties and citizens' attitudes towards various problems), as well as the continued climatic evolution of the country's main parties. Finally, the influence of key non-climatic factors on the overall election results was taken into account separately to avoid errors.

¹¹⁶⁷ Ungültige Stimmabgabe.

¹¹⁶⁸ Wahlbeteiligung bei den...

¹¹⁶⁹ Bundestag election 2021; Comparative tool.

The findings revealed that, as in the 2019 European elections, the global problem of climate change had a significant impact on the transformation of European parties during the election campaign to the Bundestag in 2021. The parties focused on key climate topics such as the Paris Agreement, the European Green Deal, the Emissions Trading System, RE, coal and nuclear phase-out, etc. As for climate-related topics, the parties extensively discussed transport, international trade, and aid to the countries of the Global South, while regarding all environment-related topics, innovation, investment, and the circular economy were discussed.

According to the results of the voting, the success of the Alliance 90/The Greens was especially noticeable. The party did not manage to take the second place similar to 2019, however, in percentage terms, it achieved record figures for itself. Due to a fairly high threshold (5%), minor environmentally oriented parties could not get into the Bundestag, but the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative, as well as the Human Environment Animal Protection Party did improve their 2017 results. Indeed, the Ecological Democratic Party did not succeed, and the Animal Protection Alliance repeated its previous mark. However, in three out of four cases (except for the Human Environment Animal Protection Party), the results were still worse than those in the elections to the European Parliament¹¹⁷⁰. In 2019, better conditions for minor environmentally oriented parties could be attributed to the greater urgency of the global problem of climate change for politics at the supranational level and the difference in the minimum thresholds for the Bundestag and the European Parliament, as well as in order to justify the provisions of the concept of second-order national elections (particularly voters' willingness to vote for small/radical/new/populist/protest parties). However, the results of the SPD, the Alliance 90/The Greens, the AfD, and the Left also correlated with the latter, as well as with the difference in the perception of the global problem of climate change at different levels.

Other major national parties also increased their focus on the global problem of climate change. Even the Alternative for Germany, which questions its anthropogenic origin, included the topic among the key ones, however, as a subject for criticism¹¹⁷¹. The rhetoric of other participants also contained slogans and epithets that emphasized the importance of the issue. So, when talking about the fight against global climate change, even traditionally fewer progressive parties declared it as the “greatest problem of our time” (FDP) or “preservation of creation” (CDU/CSU)¹¹⁷². However, this did not mean unity of forces. When characterizing the parties by their level of climate involvement, the Greens have definitely retained the first place, even despite some populism and eco-socialism of the Left. Apart from excesses and the replacement of capitalism with socialism, the Left still could not offer anything new.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁷¹ Deutschland. Aber normal.

¹¹⁷² Riebe F., Marquardt J. Klimawandel & Wahlentscheidung 2021 - eine Frage des Alters? // *Easy_social_sciences*. 2022. № 67. P. 41.

These two powers were followed by the more moderate SPD. The departure from the status of a junior coalition partner led by A. Merkel allowed the party to attract more serious attention, while its climate rhetoric began to converge with the supranational affiliation represented by the PES. Despite the limitations in the form of decisions already taken in the Grand coalition, the SPD was able to show itself as a more progressive than its former partner.

On the right flank, the situation remained unchanged since 2019, where the least climate positive AfD was followed by the FDP, and then by the CDU/CSU. The tactic of the Alternative for Germany did not work, as was in the case of the migration discourse. The reason for this could be determined by the real dissatisfaction of citizens with waves of migration, while they were, on the contrary, deeply concerned about global climate change. Consequently, at different stages, these two topics were the most popular, but criticism of government actions produced opposite results. That is why some AfD partners in the Identity and Democracy began to reconsider their climate views.

However, this does not imply that the Christian democrats and the liberal democrats did not make any progress in their rhetoric since 2019, but they kept defending key ideological foundations, talking about the global problem of climate change more due to of its popularity rather than as a real priority. Accordingly, the FDP did not fully follow the example of the ALDE in 2019 and was quite close to the AfD in certain points. They also insisted on innovation and economic development, offering a limited list of tools (primarily the Emissions Trading System). This tactic did not get the support of voters, who were definitely closer to parties that were more progressive, at least in their words. In turn, the CDU/CSU bloc no longer hushed up the climate issue, as it did with the EPP during the 2019 European elections. However, this was clearly not enough for one of the most pressing topics for voters, in that the situation was further overshadowed by the bloc's increased attention to the protection of the automobile industry.

Thus, according to the classification of the Deutscher Naturschutzring and the Climate Action Network, in 2021, the Alliance 90/The Greens and the Left fell into the category of “very good”. The place of the SPD was rather between “good” and “very good”, but for the CDU/CSU, the FDP, and the AfD, it was rather “very bad”, if not “really very bad” in the case of the latter¹¹⁷³. According to the second classification of the Climate Action Network, the “defenders” were represented by the greens and the left. The SPD was more of an intermediate position between the “defenders” and the “delayers”, and the “dinosaurs” were formed by the CDU/CSU, the FDP, and the AfD¹¹⁷⁴.

From the point of view of social constructivism and sociological institutionalism, it is possible to observe an illustration of the classical mutual influence of the agency and the structure, especially in view of the parties' awareness of their mistakes in 2019, further thematic institutional and other climate

¹¹⁷³ Deutschland. Aber normal; Wen wählen für...

¹¹⁷⁴ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.

development at both levels of government, as well as the ongoing high interest of citizens in the global problem of climate change.

Finally, when discussing the results of the campaign, in order to avoid errors, non-climatic factors should not be ignored. These included the resignation of A. Merkel, as well as the systemic crisis of Christian democracy and social democracy. A separate item should identify the lead candidates and candidates for the post of Chancellor. So, a series of scandals, mistakes in behavior, as well as the level of their authority, had an effect, from which O. Scholz came out as a clear winner. This was especially noticeable in comparison with his key opponents – A. Baerbock and A. Laschet. At the same time, not everything was quiet in other parties either, but within the campaign much less attention was paid to them. However, significant points can be highlighted, such as the unsuccessful coronavirus rhetoric of the Alternative for Germany, the influence of S. Wagenknecht's activities, the ambiguous position on Afghanistan by the Left, the scandal in the elections in Thuringia by the FDP, among others.

In this context, the reference to the spatial theory of party competition is relevant, which explained the great importance of the role of the leader both in the victory of O. Scholz and the failure of A. Laschet (especially under the influence of the resignation of A. Merkel) in the context of the majority element of the mixed system. On the other hand, in the context of the proportional aspect, the ideological foundations played a role in the progress of the greens (albeit it was overshadowed by the activities of A. Baerbock), as well as the decline in the indicators of the Left and the AfD. The FDP, on the contrary, gained less than it could have had if it had offered a more attractive programme. However, the role of leaders was not inherently so significant for parties that had no real chance of winning and appointing a Chancellor from their members.

Taken together, about it is possible to observe some stability in the context of the representation of parties in the Bundestag. These are still the Christian Democratic Union in Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria, the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the Alliance 90/The Greens, the Free Democratic Party of Germany, the Alternative for Germany, and the Left. The only exception was the accession of the South Schleswig Voters' Association, which participated in the elections under special conditions. However, the positions of the six main parties have undergone some changes. The first place was taken by the SPD, overtaking the CDU/CSU, and the Alliance 90/The Greens came the third, with the FDP being the fourth. At the same time, the SPD, the Greens, and the FDP improved their results compared to 2017, whereas the CDU/CSU did not. In contrast, the Alternative for Germany and the Left performed worse compared to previous elections¹¹⁷⁵.

¹¹⁷⁵ Bundestag election 2017; Bundestag election 2021.

Conclusion

This thesis allowed to determine the influence of the priority of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union and its member states, specifically Germany, on the transformation of European parties. For this, a set of tasks was solved:

1. Both the evolution and positioning of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda and value system of the citizens of the European Union and Germany have been characterized.

The author has developed a five-stage periodization reflecting the transition from fragmentation in international environmental efforts (1940s-1971) to the beginning of comprehensive rethinking of global environmental problems (1972-first half of the 1980s), progressing towards the establishment of environmental management architecture at different levels (second half of the 1980s-first half of the 1990s), followed by the mobilization of international cooperation to combat the global problem of climate change (second half of the 1990s-2010) and finally, the dominance of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda (2011-2021).

The emergence of the global problem of climate change as a priority at the international level was influenced by the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC (1997)¹¹⁷⁶, the successful conclusion of an international legally binding agreement at the Paris Conference in 2015¹¹⁷⁷, publications such as the special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change “Climate Warming by 1.5 °C” (2018), and the activities of non-systemic movements such as the “School Strike for Climate”/“Fridays for Future” (particularly led Swedish activist Gr. Thunberg)¹¹⁷⁸, etc.

At the supranational level, the European Green Party and the Nordic Green Left Alliance in 2004¹¹⁷⁹, the Emissions Trading System in 2005¹¹⁸⁰, the European Commissioner for Climate Action (now the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for the European Green Deal) in 2010¹¹⁸¹, etc. emerged. The environmental section in the Lisbon Treaty (2007) was named “Environment (climate change).”¹¹⁸². However, the culmination of this was the adoption of the 2030 Climate & Energy Framework under the Paris Agreement in 2014¹¹⁸³ and, to a greater extent, the “Clean Energy for All Europeans” package of directives and regulations in 2018-2019¹¹⁸⁴. These efforts involved preparations for international negotiations, adaptation of the achievements, their active coverage in the mass media,

¹¹⁷⁶ *Schulze E., Valentini R., Sanz M.* The long road...P. 506.

¹¹⁷⁷ Paris Agreement.

¹¹⁷⁸ *Kurbanov E.A., Fominykh A.E.* Climate Change and...P.179; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 205.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 206.

¹¹⁸⁰ *Appunn K.* Understanding the European...

¹¹⁸¹ *Schoenefeld J.* The Politics of...; Frans Timmermans.

¹¹⁸² Treaty of Lisbon. Art. 174.

¹¹⁸³ European Council (23...

¹¹⁸⁴ Clean energy for...

as well as the broadcasting of the “global leadership” discourse by institutions and leaders¹¹⁸⁵, that played a key role in the perception of the global problem of climate change. The European Green Deal, along with the legally binding European Climate Law¹¹⁸⁶, has further reinforced this.

The situation in Germany was marked by a certain distinctiveness, expressed in special anti-nuclear sentiments. They were influenced both by the presence of the Alliance 90/The Greens in the “Red-green” coalition (1998-2005)¹¹⁸⁷, and the accident in 2011 at the “Fukushima-1” nuclear power plant (Japan), after which it was decided to phase out nuclear energy¹¹⁸⁸. Other changes developed aligned with the supranational level. Thus, in 2014, the Climate Action Programme 2020 was adopted¹¹⁸⁹, followed by the Climate Plan 2050 in 2016 the Climate Action Programme 2030 in 2019¹¹⁹⁰. Finally, in 2021, an amendment to the Climate Change Act was introduced, which raised the targets¹¹⁹¹.

As a result, there was a significant increase in environmental concerns among EU citizens from 2014 to 2019, where Germany's performance was above the average for the union. Special attention was paid to the climate-related. The resolution to the global problem of climate change was seen as more appropriate at the supranational level, which could be associated with both the need for regional (or even international) efforts, and the willingness to vote in elections to the European Parliament for topics that are not the most tangible at the individual level¹¹⁹². Interest grew both in the greens as the most environmentally oriented, and in the choice of the environment and climate as a defining factor in voting decisions¹¹⁹³. However, the dynamics of the difference in the attitudes of citizens towards the same topic in European and national elections was also indicative here. In addition, comparing 2019 and 2021 on the decisive issue for voting, the dynamics were relatively stable. The closest pursuer was the Left, followed by the SPD. In 2019, the CDU/CSU, the AfD and the FDP followed in order. In 2021, these were the FDP, the CDU/CSU, and the AfD¹¹⁹⁴. Consequently, the logical outcome of the presented dynamics was that the 2019 European elections and the 2021 Bundestag elections, which fell into a period of particularly active climate transformation, were tagged “climate.”¹¹⁹⁵.

2. Theoretical, historical, legal and institutional foundations of the two-level institution of European parties and election campaigns in the European Union and Germany have been systematized.

¹¹⁸⁵ Historic Climate Deal...

¹¹⁸⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Climate...P. 128.

¹¹⁸⁷ *Zimakov A. V.* Germany's Nuclear Energy Refusal...P. 363-364.

¹¹⁸⁸ Die Energiewende 2011.

¹¹⁸⁹ Aktionsprogramm Klimaschutz.

¹¹⁹⁰ Klimaschutz in Deutschland.

¹¹⁹¹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 143.

¹¹⁹² Special Eurobarometer 415...P. 33, 35, 36, 37; Special Eurobarometer 486...P. 8, 14.

¹¹⁹³ Europawahl 2019. Umfragen wahlentscheidende...; Europawahl 2019. Umfragen zu...

¹¹⁹⁴ Europawahl 2019. Umfragen wahlentscheidende...; Bundestagswahl 2021. Welche...

¹¹⁹⁵ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 143; *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 208.

The most influential transnational parties officially registered by the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations and forming their political groups include the European People's Party (the political group of the same name in the European Parliament), the Party of European Socialists (the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats group), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (the Renew Europe group), the European Green Party (the Greens/European Free Alliance group), the Party of European Conservatives and Reformists (formerly the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe, the European Conservatives and Reformists group), the Identity and Democracy Party (formerly the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom, the Identity and Democracy group) and the Party of the European Left (the Left in the European Parliament – GUE/NGL group. The European Democratic Party (together with the ALDE in the Renew Europe) and the European Free Alliance (together with the European Greens in the Greens/European Free Alliance) have a lesser representation¹¹⁹⁶.

These parties engage in campaigning for the European elections, work closely with members of the European Commission, form political groups, and promote coordination between national members outside the European Parliament (including individual members and members outside the EU)¹¹⁹⁷. They are considered “important as a factor for integration within the Union” (Maastricht Treaty, art. 138a)¹¹⁹⁸ and have started emerging more actively after receiving the right to be financed from the budget of the European Union in 2004¹¹⁹⁹. The appointment of the President of the European Commission, which takes place with “taking into account the elections to the European Parliament” (Treaty of Lisbon, art. 9D (7))¹²⁰⁰ influenced the formation of the institution of lead candidates (Spitzenkandidaten) from transnational parties only and the organization of debates among them since 2014¹²⁰¹. Now citizens seem to vote not only for members of parliament but also indirectly for a candidate for one of the EU's key posts. Another stimulating fact was the extension of the powers of the European Parliament itself (particularly its involvement in the “ordinary legislative procedure”¹²⁰² and in the appointment of the European Commission)¹²⁰³.

In Germany, almost all major national parties that traditionally form the Bundestag have a supranational affiliation. The Social Democratic Party is represented in the PES, the Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria works within the EPP, the Free Democratic Party of Germany is present in the ALDE, the Alliance 90/The Greens is part of the EGP,

¹¹⁹⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 204; European Union. Group...; Registered Parties.

¹¹⁹⁷ *Guseletov B.P.* Trans European Political Parties in...P. 14-15.

¹¹⁹⁸ Treaty on European...Art. 138a.

¹¹⁹⁹ Statute and funding...

¹²⁰⁰ Treaty of Lisbon. Art. 9 D (7).

¹²⁰¹ Lead candidates and...

¹²⁰² *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 125.

¹²⁰³ The European Parliament: powers.

the Left is a member of the PEL¹²⁰⁴. The Alternative for Germany is not a member, but works closely with the ID Party within the common political group¹²⁰⁵. The minor South Schleswig Voters' Association, which received representation in 2021, is part of the EFA¹²⁰⁶.

To explain and compare the results of elections at both levels, two differences in electoral systems are particularly relevant.

Firstly, it is the presence of a minimum threshold. In both 2014 and 2019, Germany did not have it, although it was 1.8%, 3%, 4% or 5% in many other EU members. At the federal level, Germany has a 5% threshold that must be overcome through second votes¹²⁰⁷. It is also possible to get into the Bundestag either by obtaining at least three direct mandates by first votes (as the Left did in 2021) or by operating as a national minority party (as the SSW does)¹²⁰⁸. This difference significantly impacts the results of minor parties.

Secondly, in the European elections in Germany, only one vote could be cast for the electoral list of a party or other political association, but not for an independent candidate or a candidate from a party (as in the case in several other countries and in the Bundestag elections)¹²⁰⁹. To compare, there are two votes in the Bundestag elections: the first (for a particular candidate) and the second (for the party the list)¹²¹⁰. The two halves of the Bundestag are formed according to a “modified ‘mixed’ form of ‘personalized proportional representation.’”¹²¹¹ Despite the absence of general lists for elections, parties can still nominate lead candidates or candidates for the post of Chancellor during the election race¹²¹².

The presented statistics, along with the discourse of key individuals and institutional changes, were reinforced by the provisions of social constructivism and sociological institutionalism. These theories emphasize the subjective construction of the priority of the global problem of climate change, as well as itself as an issue. Speaking of European parties, the convergence of their views can be justified by the influence of intersubjective ideas and a gradual shift in identity. The same applies to the position of citizens, their interests and beliefs. In fact, this is the mutual influence of the agency and the structure, because the interests of citizens influence the parties, and those, while being in power, transform the activity of institutions – in other words, they introduce new social norms. The convergence of views is also due to the role of the EU and transnational parties as conditionally international organizations that create norms for their members.

¹²⁰⁴ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Role of Political Parties...P. 130.

¹²⁰⁵ Unser Programm für...

¹²⁰⁶ *Renke D.* Nach 70 Jahren...; Member Parties [Electronic resource] // European Free Alliance: [official website]. Available at: <https://e-f-a.org/member-parties/> (accessed 09.04.2022).

¹²⁰⁷ 2014 European elections...; 2019 European elections...

¹²⁰⁸ *Ulli E.* Eine Hürde von...; Anzahl der Direktmandate...; Das Harrisleer Rahmenprogramm...P. 3.

¹²⁰⁹ Wahlrecht; Das Wahlrecht zur...

¹²¹⁰ Electoral System.

¹²¹¹ *Nikitenko A.I.* Features of Modern Electoral...P. 56.

¹²¹² Landesliste.

Applying the concept of second-order national elections to the European elections in Germany (2014 and 2019) and comparing them with the Bundestag elections (2013, 2017, and 2021) revealed several patterns. Mostly, the concept continued to prove its validity. The results of 2014 and 2019 confirmed this for the ruling parties, with the only exception being that in 2014 the indicators of the SPD did not decrease, and junior sister party (the CSU) within the CDU/CSU had a decrease in 2019. Among small/radical/new/populist/protest parties, the Euroskeptic AfD (2014) and the Greens (2014 and 2019) showed better results compared to national elections. The former one performed better in 2019 than 2014, although in 2017 they were more successful. In the second case, the results also correlated with a greater willingness of voters to support environmental issues precisely at the supranational level, both because of the cross-border nature of the issues, and because of the propensity to take risks and choose small/radical/new/populist/protest parties. The 2021 elections showed that that considering the Alliance 90/The Greens as a small party was not entirely accurate anymore but their success in 2019 was still more significant¹²¹³. Here it is also worth remembering the term “minor party”, since the provisions of the concept of second-order national elections are relevant for small parties, while the success of minor parties in Germany is more due to the absence of a 5% barrier¹²¹⁴. According to indicators, such as the turnout for the elections to the Bundestag and the European Parliament, as well as the percentage of spoiled ballots, the concept proved itself valid¹²¹⁵.

The author successfully applied the spatial theory of party competition to both transnational parties and national parties in Germany. By placing them on an ideological scale, one could see two leading relatively moderate forces (the EPP and the PES, as well as the CDU/CSU and the SPD), as well as two radical flanks (the ID Party and the PEL, as well as the AfD and the Left). On the left, the EGP and the Alliance 90/The Greens occupied an intermediate position, however, if the FDP moves more towards the far right, the ALDE can increasingly compete with the EPP for a moderate center-right position (at least in terms of climate). This is facilitated by the cooperation of the liberal democrats with the strictly centrist and therefore, according to A. Downs, the unpopular EDP. Slightly to the left of the ID Party are conservatives and reformists. Although there is no direct equivalent in the Bundestag, the disappearance of the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe can be explained by some overlap in the political niche. Finally, the EFA case confirmed the argument of G. Th. Mavrogordatos about the ambiguity of the regionalists, as in the European Parliament they joined more conservative groups, not just the greens¹²¹⁶. Finally, further expansion of systems is problematic since key niches are occupied, although associations are possible, including as coalitions for elections, which, like the absence of a 5% barrier, also explained the existence of irrational minor parties.

¹²¹³ Bundestag election 2013; Bundestag election 2017; Bundestag election 2021; Comparative tool.

¹²¹⁴ 2019 European elections...

¹²¹⁵ Turnout by year...; Ungültige Stimmabgabe; Wahlbeteiligung bei den...

¹²¹⁶ *Mavrogordatos G.Th. Downs Revisited: Spatial...P. 337; European Union. Group...*

In fact, both systems incorporate majoritarian and proportional features¹²¹⁷, which can be justified both by the mixed system of Germany and the dependence of the European system on all member states. Moreover, although voting patterns vary between German elections, the layout of the first-order national elections can still be observed in voting to the European Parliament. Taken together, these arguments support the notion of two key parties that are moderate and closely aligned with the center as well as other more ideological participants. Finally, the two parties which are considered leading and close to the center, although they are influenced by sensitive topics, to a lesser extent still depend on the success of tactical interpretation and adaptation to them, but the role of leaders and other factors are of particular importance in this case¹²¹⁸.

3. The influence of the global problem of climate change on the transformation of European parties in the framework of the election campaigns to the European Parliament in 2019 and the Bundestag in 2021 has been analyzed.

Both in 2019 and 2021, the climate rhetoric of the parties was dominated by topics related to the Paris Agreement, as well as the Emissions Trading System and RE. Meeting to the criteria of the time, as well as national characteristics, in 2021, the European Green Deal was added to such topics, and the coal and nuclear phase-outs got a more detailed coverage. Both years also emphasized transportation and, to a lesser extent, agriculture, fishing and trade. Regarding all environmental topics, the discussions revolved around innovation, investment, and the circular economy. Overall, compared to 2014 and 2017, the discourse in 2019 and 2021 exhibited a significant deepening and expansion of provisions related to the global problem of climate change.

Using an analytical classification from the Climate Action Network, the behavior of transnational parties in the 2019 campaign could be divided into “defenders” (the European Green Party, the Party of European Socialists and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) and “dinosaurs” (the European People's Party, the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe, the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom). An intermediate position between the “defenders” and the “delayers” was occupied by the Party of the European Left, the European Democratic Party (conditionally closer to the “defenders”) and the European Free Alliance (conditionally closer to the “delayers”).

The national parties in Germany can be more appropriately classified according to the categories of the analytical classification of the Deutscher Naturschutzring and the Climate Action Network: “very good” (the Alliance 90/The Greens, the Left), “good” (the SPD), and “very bad” (the CDU/CSU, the FDP + the AfD). The author even suggested placing the AfD in a separate category of “really very bad”. Furthermore, drawing a parallel with the first classification from the Climate Action Network, the national parties of Germany during the 2019 campaign can also be conditionally distributed as follows:

¹²¹⁷ *Nikitenko A.I.* Features of Modern Electoral...P. 56.

¹²¹⁸ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P.143-144.

“defenders” (the greens and the left), “delayers” (the SPD) and “dinosaurs” (the CDU/CSU, the FDP, and the AfD). In 2021, the alignment did not change significantly, as only the SPD made substantial progress and moved closer to its supranational affiliation, now being rather between “good” and “very good”, as well as between “defenders” and “delayers”.¹²¹⁹

After analyzing the speeches of political party leaders, as well as pre-election manifestos and programmes, data from official websites and materials of party Congresses at the supranational and national levels, it was possible to determine that in 2019, rhetoric-wise the global problem of climate change was most emphasized by the EGP, the ALDE, and the PES. In addition to S. Keller and B. Eickhout as the lead EGP candidates, F. Timmermans and M. Vestager were highly involved in the topic. In addition, besides the European Greens, only the liberal democrats in their manifesto ambitiously expressed their intention to cut emissions by 55% (instead of the set target of 40%)¹²²⁰. At the same time, the views of the European Democratic Party and the European Free Alliance were difficult to consider outside the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe and the European Green Party.

At the national level in 2019, the enthusiasm of the SPD and the FDP was far from the greens. Thus, the Alliance 90/The Greens, both in 2019 and 2021, found room to expand programme provisions, although, similar to the European Greens, it seemed quite difficult to deepen targets due to the threat of inflection. The targets set by the SPD in 2019 slightly exceeded those already set at the EU level, but were lower than those discussed by the supranational affiliation. This could be attributed to the close long-term cooperation of the party with the CDU/CSU as a junior partner in the Grand coalition. Moreover, during the campaign, the global problem of climate change was not listed as a key topic for the party. In 2021, the social democrats corrected themselves by identifying four missions of the future, dedicated to climate, mobility, digital technologies, and healthcare. This was favored by the successful rhetoric of O. Scholz¹²²¹. The FDP was broadcasting a rather skeptical discourse, promoting the European Emissions Trading System as its sole climate priority¹²²². In 2019, the party did not present any targets, and also supported nuclear power, as well as a number of other easing measures¹²²³. In 2021, despite the ambitious slogans, they continued to insist on innovation, defending the market economy, and support certain energy industries. In addition, apart from the AfD, only the FDP highlighted the year 2050 as a milestone for achieving “neutrality.”¹²²⁴. Even the CDU/CSU was more progressive¹²²⁵.

Based on the results of the 2019 campaign, it can be noted that the increasing place of the global problem of climate change in the political agendas of parties should mainly be considered as a favorable

¹²¹⁹ Defenders, Delayers, Dinosaurs...P. 4.; Deutschland. Aber normal; Wen wählen für...

¹²²⁰ *Lisenkova A.D.* Adaptation of the European Union...P. 105.

¹²²¹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 144, 146.

¹²²² *Lisenkova A.D.* Adaptation of the European Union...P. 106; Europaparteitag der Freien...

¹²²³ *Nam H., Konishi S., Nam K.-W.* Comparative Analysis of...P. 3-4.

¹²²⁴ *Bergmann K., Borgstedt S., Diermeier M., Niehues J.* Klimaschutz und Parteipräferenz...P. 1-2.

¹²²⁵ *Ibid.*

factor. First of all, both the European Green Party and the Alliance 90/The Greens achieved record outcomes. In Germany, they obtained second place for the first time and seats in its delegation were also won by minor but environmentally friendly parties such as the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative, the Human Environment Animal Protection Party, and the Ecological Democratic Party. These parties were more successful than in 2014.

In 2021, the Alliance 90/The Greens failed to repeat the success of 2019, but received their best percentage result in federal elections to date. Despite the fact that minor parties did not get into the Bundestag, compared to 2017, the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative and the Human Environment Animal Protection Party performed better, although the Ecological Democratic Party performed slightly worse¹²²⁶. Compared to 2019, the Party for Labour, Rule of Law, Animal Protection, Promotion of Elites and Grassroots Democratic Initiative and the Ecological Democratic Party fared worse¹²²⁷. All this is explained by the great attention to the global problem of climate change at the supranational level, and the difference in the minimum thresholds for passing elections at two levels, as well as by the provisions of the concept of second-order national elections.

Responding to the provisions of the spatial theory of party competition, the fairly comprehensive approach of the Party of European Socialists did not add significant advantages to it over many other Euro-optimistic parties¹²²⁸, which, in part, could be also attributed to its fairly stable position on environmental issues. At the same time, if F. Timmermans the most active on climate matters, which had an impact on the performance of his national party in the Netherlands, a number of other most influential members opted for less successful tactics (e.g., the SPD). In 2021, the German social democrats made corrections and aligned themselves with the PES, and won the elections, performing better compared to 2017 and 2019.

The EFA, a traditional partner of the European Greens, saw a minor increase in 2019 but the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe demonstrated the most significant performance in this regard. Improved results were also observed for their partner in the political group, the European Democratic Party. The FDP performed better in 2019 compared to 2014, and in 2021, they outperformed their results in both 2017 and 2019. However, these achievements are unlikely to have anything to do with the global problem of climate change. A significant ideological breakthrough similar to the one of the ALDE did not occur even in 2021.

Among the transnational parties, the Party of the European Left took a more reserved approach, which did not put climate issues at the forefront. Far-left populism and eco-socialism, often visible at

¹²²⁶ Bundestag election 2021.

¹²²⁷ European Parliament election 2019.

¹²²⁸ Comparative tool.

the national level, coupled with the desire to compete for the greatest climate orientation with the greens, was not evident in 2019. First of all, this was determined by the restrained rhetoric of N. Cué (albeit, unlike V. Tomić) and the content of the election manifesto¹²²⁹. At the national level, the Left just expanded the range of topics under consideration, and also strengthened the correlation of the social and ecological aspects, perceiving them as two inseparable parts. In its populism and eco-socialism, the party moved even further in its targets, striving to surpass even the Greens. However, the rhetoric of the left was not unique and could hardly offer any significant innovation. In 2021, it continued to endow the provisions of the programme with environmental epithets, and even called it “It's Time to Act! For Social Security, Peace and Climate Justice!”¹²³⁰

However, neither the European United Left/Nordic Green Left, nor the Party of the European Left, nor the Left received any growth. In addition, members of the European Left, despite the trend towards an increase in eco-socialist sentiments, still encountered more traditional viewpoints. The cumulative result of the Nordic Green Left Alliance showed some positive dynamics, although not all of its members joined the European United Left/Nordic Green Left¹²³¹. In 2021, the Left almost nearly its seat in the Bundestag, performing worse in both 2017 and 2019. The excessive approaches and the historically unsupported shift from Eastern to Western values were to blame in the context of the global problem of climate change. It is particularly interesting that the PEL also began to gradually emphasize the climate agenda more after 2019, following the example of its member parties like the Left¹²³².

Finally, in 2019, the least environmentally active (in descending order) were the European People's Party, the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe, and the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom. M. Weber and J. Zahradil deliberately downplayed the global problem of climate change, and when answering the questions posed, they were either restrained or critical of measures for deeper action. However, in the text of their manifesto, the Christian democrats did emphasize the importance of the global problem of climate change, paying more attention to compared to 2014. Euroskeptics chose to ignore the topic, adhering to the principle of “less but better.”¹²³³. Lastly, the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom remained silent on the issue, thus depriving itself of the opportunity to offer an alternative to the pro-European course.

At the national level, in 2019, the CDU/CSU limited itself to mostly general and superficial phrases and slogans, abandoning new and/or more ambitious targets. In particular, there was no mention of the planned percentage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and there was only an indirect reference to the Emissions Trading System¹²³⁴. In 2021, the Christian democrats attempted to address the situation

¹²²⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 206-207.

¹²³⁰ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 145; Die Zukunft, für...; Zeit zu handeln!..

¹²³¹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 213.

¹²³² Alternatives to the...

¹²³³ Debate of the...

¹²³⁴ Manfred Weber am...

by presenting an emergency programme of the “Six Post-Crisis Reset Packets”, one of which focused on climate issues. However, the active defense of the automotive industry and the less successful rhetoric of A. Laschet¹²³⁵ became inhibitory factors. On the other hand, despite the progressiveness of the AfD in some environmental aspects compared to other opponents, it was the climate rhetoric of the party that was quite aggressive. Even the Emissions Trading System, previously viewed favorably, was rejected by the party. Right after the elections to the European Parliament, the party even launched the campaign “Stop Greens – Protect the Environment!” By 2021 the views of the right-wing populists in Germany had only deepened¹²³⁶.

For right-wing parties, factors such as appealing to non-standard (in some sense, even marginal) voters or regional specificity (with the emphasis on the least economically developed and environmentally interested member countries) are also relevant. This is evident in the cases of Alternative for Germany, the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom, and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe. Their results were much more correlated with other themes than those of the EPP and the CDU/CSU, although the latter were more dependent on factors such as leadership. In 2021, the attempt by the Christian democrats to rectify the situation did not salvage it. The party lost the election for a variety of reasons, but this approach to the key theme also contributed to their defeat.

In 2021, the AfD performed worse than 2017 and 2019. Among other things, the far-right once again failed to develop a climate discourse analogous to issues like migration and earn additional votes this way. If the popularity of migration issues was due to the dissatisfaction of citizens with the crisis that arose, which was generated by a large number of people from different cultures entering the country, in the climate direction the situation was completely opposite. Other national parties, members of the Identity and Democracy, who had recognized this problem a little earlier, gradually began to adapt their agenda, but the Alternative for Germany did not follow suit¹²³⁷.

The ideological features of the interpretation of the global problem of climate change by different parties are also significant for the greens, this is a classic explanation of all topics through the prism of ecology, especially climate change. The PEL and the Left focus on criticizing capitalism, the PES and the SPD prioritize the social issues of the transition to a “green” economy, the EFA emphasizes increasing regional involvement in the implementation of governance (including through the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity) and the support of national minorities, members of the ID Party (like the AfD) focus on the national level of implementation of the provisions, the ECR Party aims to slow down European integration, while worrying about less economically developed member

¹²³⁵ Armin Laschet im...

¹²³⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* Main Features of the Current...P. 152, 156.

¹²³⁷ *Lisenkova A.D.* Transformation of the Climate Change Agenda...P. 52-53.

states. To some extent, the foundations for the ALDE with the FDP and the EPP and the CDU/CSU are close, formed by economic, energy, and innovation components. Finally, the centrist EDP distributes its priorities quite evenly among the standard key themes.

4. The main non-climatic factors that influenced the election campaigns for the European Parliament in 2019 and the Bundestag in 2021 have been identified.

Firstly, it is the role of leaders. The most relevant example of replacing or relegating traditional party elites to the background could be A. Merkel's decision to no longer apply for the Chancellor's seat¹²³⁸. This case cannot be viewed solely in a negative light, as the population was also tired from her long-term leadership. As another example, it is the statement of S. Wagenknecht in 2019 about her intention to no longer be elected as co-chairman of the faction in the Bundestag¹²³⁹. Finally, the appointment of lead candidates became a manifestation of the role of leaders, where M. Weber (EPP, CSU) in 2019 and N. Beer (FDP) in 2019, A. Baerbock (Alliance 90/The Greens) and A. Laschet (CDU/CSU) in 2021 became unsuccessful. On the contrary, the selection of M. Vestager (ALDE) in 2019 and O. Scholz (SPD) in 2021 proved to be successful. The reputation of a particular party was party depended on it.

Secondly, it is the ongoing crisis of traditional winners. For social democracy, it is most noticeable in their alignment with conservative forces and their willingness to reconcile with the fundamentals of a market economy¹²⁴⁰. In addition, they were forced to change their identity, switching from the working class to small and medium-sized businesses, which undermined the foundations regarding social justice¹²⁴¹. Meanwhile, the identity of the Christian democrats (especially religious) gradually began to erode due to the desire to cover all groups of the population, which was most clearly manifested in the form of concessions during the peak of the migration crisis¹²⁴².

Furthermore, systemic problems within the left forces can also be discussed. In 2019, they were not only quite fragmented at the supranational level¹²⁴³, but also unattractive (as in 2021) to the traditional electorate represented by the working class with their new progressive values, including climatic ones¹²⁴⁴. The left failed to provide a qualified response back in 2008-2009, when voters turned to them again¹²⁴⁵. By contrast, the request for a pro-European alternative in 2019 benefited the ALDE,

¹²³⁸ *Romashenko S.* Angela Merkel steps down as CDU leader [Electronic resource] // Deutsche Welle*. *In the registry of foreign agents. Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

¹²³⁹ Wagenknecht kandidiert nicht...

¹²⁴⁰ *Guseletov B.P.* European Social Democracy: Is...P. 37-38.

¹²⁴¹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor.....P. 146.

¹²⁴² *Sardaryan G.T.* Causes of the Christian Democracy Crisis...P. 1168, 1173.

¹²⁴³ *Beucker P.* Vereint nur in...

¹²⁴⁴ DIE LINKE muss...

¹²⁴⁵ *Ivaldi G.* Populist Voting in...P. 74.

the EDP, the EGP, the EFA, as well as the national greens and the liberal democrats in both 2019¹²⁴⁶ and 2021¹²⁴⁷.

Thirdly, these are problems associated primarily with the government parties. The success of their competitors depended on adapting to one theme or another. Thus, the migration crisis became a favorable factor for voting for right-wing populists in 2019¹²⁴⁸, but turned the internationalism of the left against them¹²⁴⁹. Another example was Brexit, which provoked both a wave of Eurosceptic sentiment in other member states¹²⁵⁰ and led to the triumph of the Brexit Party and the unsuccessful performance of the Conservative Party in the same 2019. All this affected the overall results of the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe¹²⁵¹. Finally, the inconsistent coronavirus course heavily impacted the AfD results in 2021¹²⁵².

Fourthly, this is the role of civil society, particularly the “Rezo-effect”. The video of the YouTube blogger “The destruction of the CDU” gained 16 million views and became the most popular in Germany in 2019. It criticized not only the bloc, but also the SPD, the AfD, and the FDP¹²⁵³. In 2021, Rezo published several videos at once, where he particularly targeted the Christian democrats with his criticisms¹²⁵⁴. He accused them of a series of corruption scandals¹²⁵⁵ and the incompetence of members of the bloc. Moreover, the blogger considered it inappropriate to over-demonstrate the role of women among the greens¹²⁵⁶.

Finally, a number of point solutions had a favorable (or not) effect. This is a split in the Left and the formation of S. Wagenknecht's “Get Up!” movement in 2018¹²⁵⁷, the unwillingness of the FDP to introduce gender quotas¹²⁵⁸, proceedings on the racist statements of B. Palmer within the greens in 2021¹²⁵⁹, the Grand coalition’s underestimation of the events in Afghanistan in 2021¹²⁶⁰, and many others. Moreover, for the CDU/CSU, older crises may have been also relevant due to Angela Merkel's multiple terms in office. For example, this is the abandonment of nuclear energy or the Chancellor's policy regarding the debt crisis¹²⁶¹.

¹²⁴⁶ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Agenda...P. 215.

¹²⁴⁷ *Sokolov A.P., Davydov A.D., Pimenova E.V.* Elections to the Bundestag...P. 11.

¹²⁴⁸ *Zonova T.V.* Elections of 2019...P. 64.

¹²⁴⁹ *Pogorelskaya S.V.* European Elections...P. 12.

¹²⁵⁰ *Piccolino G., Angelucci D., Isernia P.* What Brexit has...

¹²⁵¹ *Babynina L.O.* The Impact of Brexit on...P. 70, 72.

¹²⁵² *Lisenkova A.D.* COVID-19: Influence on...P. 207.

¹²⁵³ *Dambeck H.* Der Rezo-Effekt – echt...; Die Zerstörung der...

¹²⁵⁴ *Dicke T.V.* Youtuber Rezo mit...

¹²⁵⁵ *Gries H.* Rezo mit finaler...

¹²⁵⁶ *Dicke T.V.* Youtuber Rezo mit...

¹²⁵⁷ *Müller J.-W.* What’s Left of...

¹²⁵⁸ *Reeh M.* Quote diskutiert, Ziele...

¹²⁵⁹ *Lisenkova A.D.* The Influence of the Environmental Factor...P. 146.

¹²⁶⁰ *Vishnyakova V.* Battle of Personalities: How...

¹²⁶¹ *Johnson D.* Angela Merkel’s legacy is chaos at home and abroad [Electronic resource] // The Telegraph*. *Access to this mass media resource is blocked by Roskomnadzor at the request of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation.

Thus, it is possible to assess the influence of the priority of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union and its member states, specifically Germany, on the transformation of European parties in multiple directions.

Firstly, being subjectively constructed as a priority in the EU and Germany, due to international trends and leadership ambitions, energy and environmental rationales, institutional and legal adaptation to the Paris Agreement, subsequent steps, and societal demand, the global problem of climate change has strongly influenced both on the tactics of European parties and the overall results of the 2019 and 2021 campaigns.

Secondly, there has been a general increase in attention to climate issues, together with the increased antagonism of right-wing populists, in almost all parties, except for those who consciously and strategically avoided the topic (in particular, Eurosceptics and Christian democrats in 2019).

Thirdly, the clearest evidence of the influence of the priority of the global problem of climate change in the political agenda of the European Union and its member states, specifically Germany, can be seen in the transformation (in this case representation) of the greens at both levels. However, they were particularly interested in this issue during the European elections, which is justified by a favorable solution to the global problem of climate change at the regional (or even international) level, a lesser tangibility of the issue at the household level and, therefore, a correlation with the provisions of the concept of second-order national elections. Additionally, the inclusion of the greens to the most influential parties following the results of the 2019 campaign, as well as the nomination of their candidate for the post of Chancellor in 2021, made voters pay more attention not only to the “green” ideology, but also to factors such as the role of a leader, which already correlated with the provisions of the spatial theory of party competition.

Finally, the results of supranational parties could only be assessed with a high degree of conditionality due to two main reasons: the lack of a unified database of statistics and transnational voting lists. The first problem was addressed by the author through the development of their own rules for calculating the results of transnational parties based on the derived system of features and errors (e.g., taking into account the inconsistency of data from various institutions, the results of only active members of transnational parties at the time of the elections, etc.). However, the second issue limits the analysis to more general and average trends sometimes allowing parties to avoid extreme positions and ideology represented in the European Parliament and comparing them with national trends in Germany. Examples of discrepancies include the PEL and the Left, the ALDE and the FDP, as well as the PES and the SPD in 2019, with the subsequent convergence between PEL and the Left, the SPD and the PES. Notably is that it was the dynamics of the liberal democrats at the supranational level and the social democrats at the national level that correlated with the overall election results, while the PEL has not yet participated

in the next campaign. The CDU/CSU has made some progress, albeit with tactical errors, and the EPP will also be elected next time only in 2024.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- AfD – Alternative for Germany
- ALDE – Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
- ARD – Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland/Association of Public Broadcasting Corporations in the Federal Republic of Germany
- Brexit – British exit/Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union
- CCS – Carbon Capture and Storage
- CDU – Christian Democratic Union
- COP-21 – 2015 Paris United Nations Climate Change Conference
- COVID-19 – Coronavirus disease 2019
- CO₂ – Carbon dioxide
- CSU – Christian Social Union
- ECE – Energy conversion efficiency
- ECR Party – European Conservatives and Reformists Party
- EDP – European Democratic Party
- EEC – European Economic Community
- EFA – European Free Alliance
- EGP/European Greens – European Green Party
- EIB – European Investment Bank
- EPP – European People's Party
- EU – European Union
- Euratom/EAEC – European Atomic Energy Community
- FCCC – Framework Convention on Climate Change
- FDP – Free Democratic Party
- FRG – Federal Republic of Germany
- GDP – Gross domestic product
- GDR – German Democratic Republic
- GUE/NGL – European United Left/Nordic Green Left
- G7 – Group of Seven
- G20 — Group of Twenty
- H₂ – Hydrogen
- ID Party – Identity and Democracy Party
- ICAO – International Civil Aviation Organization

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ITER – International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
KfW – Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau/Credit Institute for Reconstruction
“Kyoto-2” – Second commitment period of Kyoto Protocol
LNG – Liquefied natural gas
MEP – Member of the European Parliament
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NO₂ – Nitrogen dioxide
NPP – Nuclear power plant
n-tv – Nachrichtenfernsehen/News broadcasting
OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PEL/European Left – Party of the European Left
PES – Party of European Socialists
RE – Renewable energy
RTL – Radio Television Luxembourg
RWE – Rheinisch-Westfälisches Elektrizitätswerk/Rhenish-Westphalian Power Plant
SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals
SEA – Single European Act
SPD – Social Democratic Party of Germany
SSW – South Schleswig Voters' Association
TTIP – Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
UK – United Kingdom
UN – United Nations
UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA – United States of America
USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAT – Value-added tax
WDR – Westdeutscher Rundfunk/West German Radio
WTO – World Trade Organization
ZDF – Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen/Second German Television

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