

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Habeck, Vice Chancellor, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, Co-leader of Green Party
FROM: Political Advisor Office
SUBJECT: Strategies for Green Party
DATE: 10/31/2022

Key objectives

Holding the dual position as green party's leader and office holder of vice chancellor and Economic Affairs and Climate Actionsⁱ, Habeck are obligated to "good policies" which may equivalent to put the public interest beyond the party's ideology. For instance, to ensure storage tanks of gas are at least 90 percent full by November, Habeck reaches the agreement with the rest of cabinets to bring idle coal production back to lifeⁱⁱ. Also, Habeck did his duty to shop for gas in the Emirateⁱⁱⁱ, a country being accused of existing human rights violations.

Despite being the incumbent, as the leader of green party, a party has the reputation of being "anti-party" and anti-establishment party^{iv}, to accommodate with need of radical environmentalists^v, who inherit the ethos of the party. Habeck being the adamant opponent of Nord Stream 2, and critics for Bavarian state, who proposes Northwestern state use "fracking" to expand source of energy supply, which impose significant damage on the environment^{vi}. Also, to finance the government budget deficit, Habeck follows the Greens preference on Economic and social policy, which favors a strong state and more government spending, to forward the nationalization of Uniper^{vii} and price cap.

In addition, Habeck practiced a celebrity communication style, taking praised from business leader when he took a large business delegation^{viii}, and exploited his personal

charisma characterized of being approachable, making him the most popular politicians before the occurrence of energy crisis doubled by economic recession.

Opportunities and constraints

Firstly, German may be at a switch point^{ix} from an economic business model based on cheap imports and industrial exports into a tech-driven regenerative modes. Even before the Russia retaliates on EU sanction by reduce gas supply, German face an energy crisis^x rooted in its heavy dependence on fossil fuels, triggered by multiple reasons including the shrinking in production in fossil fuel industry amid pandemic, the spillover effect of China's surging in energy demand on global market, etc. The inevitable upgradation of economic development mode echoes Green party's advocacy for renewable energies and sustainable strategy. However, the current situation that Germany still heavily relies on the export-dependent model, and certain sectors (e.g., chemicals and metal production) are particularly energy-intensive^{xi}, constraints the speed of transformation.

Secondly, as global crisis disaster become more frequent, a new paradigm emerges: Green party's climate protection are becoming mainstream. The poll result shows 2/3 of Germans regards climate protection should be one of the most important tasks for the government, and the image of Green parties are significant more positive in the flooded area. The broad public support for more climate protection, rendering the energy issue to be on the top in multiple parties' agenda, including the current coalition formateur, SPD, which rendering major advantage for Greens on agenda-setting. However, this can also lead to a loss of brand uniqueness and voter base.

Thirdly, Bavaria capturing massive political and economic power as being large, rich and conservative state are the one faces larger loss under the new situation of limited gas supply comparing to its Northwestern counterparts, who has more wind energy as buffer. The powerful interest group in Bavarian state may recognize the salient loss, be more open towards policy change and embracing the shift towards renewable energies, according to the self-undermining feedback mechanism proposed by XX (XX).

Lastly, the constraints embedded in institutional design and geopolitical relationship creates further obstacle for Green Party. The former regards legislative-executive veto-points, which implies that for a bill passed by whole cabinet still require the approve of parliament, which Green Party only have 118/416 votes. And the later relates to the deterioration of relationship with China, who was at once the largest trade partner, due to the divergence of opinion in human rights protection, etc., Also, the escalation of Ukraine war indicates German need to prepare for the Russia's complete cut off the gas supply/

Strategies

To achieve these micro energy policies, Minister of Environment, Steff Lemka, a member of Green parties, could effectively set the agenda regarding the environment and energy concern according to Laver and Shepsle's (1996) "portfolio allocation" approach. This approach basically assumes the government ministers have approximately total control over the policy field they govern, as they have both negative and positive agenda control, while the former refers to no procedure being discharged if ministers choose not to propose, and the latter depicts that the jurisdiction system guarantees cabinet members with the "proposal power". However, as Martin (2014) argues that "accommodative" policy initiatives that deal with issues more attractive to partners are

more likely to be prioritized on government agenda, since the power-sharing mechanism between executive and legislative branch makes the enforcement difficult. Also, using data and empirical studies, Martin (2014) proves there is a systematic relationship between the timing of government bills and preference of other parties. Under the context of the current energy crisis doubled by economic recession and globalized human rights violations, the closure of fossil fuel production and nuclear plants should be combined with the policy combo in the expansion of alternatives energy option, compensation for producers and consumers, moderate foreign policies and balance of budgets deficit government subsidy, which requires the cooperation of other ministries department. For instance, in order to nationalize Uniper, it requires a large financial commitment of the government, which is charged by Minister of Finance, Christian Linder from the business-friendly FDP. Therefore, successful in accomplishing the ambition in transforming to renewable energies, Greens may need to waive the inferior goals, such as concern over human rights violation in Emirates and China, to build a repository relationship with other parties in the coalition.

Also, With Robert Habeck as vice chancellor and the most controversial politician, Green party could also use media coverage and its high profile celebrity to form the consensus among the public opinion. For instance, more coverage of climate disasters, such as flood and forest fire, may stimulate a sense of urgency to solve Germany's dependence on fossil fuels among the people beyond the core constituency, as it shows there are significantly more intensive demands from flooded areas than in the non-flooded area. Also, the communication within parties can be essential to maintain the unity, [as the radical fundamentalist may find it hard to comprehensive some compromise](#)

[made by the current office-holders](#). Thus, the strategy of “short term sacrifice to reach ultimate goal” and the approximate timeline should be detailed and discussed in the party’s internal meetings.

According to Strom, Muller and Smith (2010), Germanies have 100 coalition committees to deal with the potential coalition commitment over 18 cabinets. Particularly, in Muller and Strom(XXX), 6 approaches were explicit: PCa, Parl, PS, IC, CoC, CaC. Currently, as the consensus over the closure of nuclear plants and coal production line has not reached between greens and FDP, the policy summit among leaders could be a platform to exchange the opinions and negotiate the possible compromise.

Policy Options Regarding the Energy Issue

More specifically, the closure of three nuclear stations after next year’s April, and the offline of coal production when the energy crisis comes to an end should be the top priorities of the Greens. The formal one could be break down into more incremental steps, since according to Lower Saxony’s Social Democrats and Greens, the [Emsland station’s continue operation could be “unnecessary” considering the regions produce a sufficient amount of wind energy](#), a station whose supply may be redundant and has the potential to be first one to be shut down. Also, as the radical protestors living in the forest against the coal drew nationwide attention and empathy from the party base, it was essential to constrain the coal production and return to normality.

Regarding the allocation of required cutback in gas consumption between households and industry, it has proven the shift of all the pressure to customers by applying a gas levy to be a failure, [since the surcharge intended to compensate for the struggling energy](#)

[providers turned out to be profit-making companies](#). Therefore, it would be more reasonable and cautious to apply a price cap, and pay the difference between the import price and market price using government special funds, since the consumer could be irritated over the rising price and restricted menu for the alternatives, especially facing energy-demand winter season and a high inflation rate. To avoid the market mistakenly confusing this movement as a switch to inflationary fiscal policy, the government should [clearly elaborate the purpose and potential plan for raising tax rate after this period of difficulty](#). Also, it may charge additional tax on the companies making windfall profits over this crisis. [For instance, it can skim off the profits that electricity companies made above the production cost](#).

Strategic Positioning:

Currently, [According to Harbeck \(2022\), Greens have to make difficult decisions at an “insane speed” and prove their capability to “justifiably” bear the responsibility of being in the government](#) by practicing pragmatism rather than idealism. This presentation of professionalism and stability can be advantageous for them to partner with parties closer to the center of the ideological spectrum, for instance, [CDU who are now at the leading position in the public poll](#). However, to decide how fast it moves to the center can be subtle and critical, since Green’s brand is built on its idealistic mission, the voter base could accuse party leaders of failing to push the agenda adamantly. Moreover, the accusation of [Baerlock’s fake CV and book plagiarism](#) cost the party heavily in the 2021 election, which could be prevented through more comprehensive examination on the chancellor candidates past experience and possible loopholes. The division of opinion over multiple issues in the current traffic light coalition and [the raising of Afd](#), as well as

the pervasiveness of anti-globalization, populism and polarization could impose further difficulty for Greens to maintain its position in the coalition. Considering the current global economic recession and democracy deconstruction, Greens should be prepared to forgo some universal basic values and adopt more realistic foreign policies, and advocate for strengthening national power, with the emphasis on its representativeness of future and hope.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Ministry_for_Economic_Affairs_and_Climate_Action

ii <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0GT-oZD8nc>

iii <https://www.dw.com/en/german-economy-minister-robert-habecks-stressful-first-year/a-63397423>

iv <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hFh3BAnDx0>

v <https://www.dw.com/en/nuclear-power-german-greens-put-pragmatism-before-core-values/a-63521581>

vi <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-north-south-divide-flares-up-over-energy-crisis/a-62940864>

vii <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/21/business/germany-uniper-nationalized.html>

viii <https://www.dw.com/en/german-economy-minister-robert-habecks-stressful-first-year/a-63397423>

ix <https://www.dw.com/en/is-the-energy-crisis-the-final-nail-in-germanys-export-dependent-economic-model/a-62727083>

x <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0GT-oZD8nc>

xi <https://www.dw.com/en/is-the-energy-crisis-the-final-nail-in-germanys-export-dependent-economic-model/a-62727083>