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The Effect of Party Systems on Climate Change Decision Making

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THE EFFECT OF PARTY SYSTEMS ON CLIMATE CHANGE DECISION MAKING

By

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A capstone project submitted for Graduation with University Honors

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## ABSTRACT

Governments are complex institutions that require the approval of many actors when passing bills and making policies. In this project, I will address the question of how party systems affect climate change decision making in climate change action in Europe. This project answers this question by analyzing the cases of Germany, France, and the UK. To analyze the party systems in these countries, I will use the “veto player” framework established by George Tsebelis in 1995. For each country case, I will analyze their government system, party system, and the governing parties, as well as populist political parties. Using statements made by the political parties and other primary and secondary sources, I will evaluate whether they support climate change policy or not. Once this is established, I will analyze two climate change policies in each country to showcase where and how the party system can create veto players and how this impacts climate change policy making. Understanding the significance of veto players can help explain why climate change policy is a difficult phenomenon to address and how veto players can impact the policy making process. This paper aims to contribute to the literature on climate change policy making by offering policy implications.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dedicated to my parents who gave me the freedom to pursue a career in climate change and political science. A special thank you to my faculty mentor and capstone advisor Dr. Irepoglu Carreras and friends for supporting me along the way.

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## INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) are two entities that have pursued international climate change agreements in the past few years. This response came at a time where countries started to understand that no one country can solve climate change, as it is a global problem and not just a domestic one. As the effects of climate change became more prevalent throughout the world, countries saw a need to band together and hold each other accountable. This in turn resulted in EU member states and certain UN member states to join together and create international climate change agreements, that stipulated how much countries need to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by. For example, the EU made its member states commit to renewable energy targets so that not only can the EU hit its targets, but its members do too as part of the Paris Climate Agreement. Another example is the Paris Climate Agreement itself as 190 countries have joined the agreement to limit global warming below two degrees Celsius (European Commission 2023a). While these international agreements put a benchmark for countries, countries decide on their own goals and plans to accomplish these requirements through strategies, plans, and domestic policies. However, despite many people recognizing the need to address the issue domestically, many domestic policies either are not passed or fall short of where they need to be.

The current literature on the topic of climate change decision making focuses on the impact of populism and individual country analysis on climate change policy. Mudde and Kaltwasser defines populism “as a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic camps, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the [general will] of the people” (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). They further go on to describe it as an ideology that can be

attached to other ideologies rather than an ideology that exists on its own (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). As such, populism can be described as a way of understanding politics. Previous research on populism has investigated the relationship between rightwing populism and skepticism about climate change. A study conducted in 2021 showed that rightwing populism and the nationalist ideology that it holds, have contributed to both its supporters and party members to be skeptic of the realities of climate change and certain policies like increasing taxes on fossil fuels (Kunlin et al. 2021). However, while the research discusses how the nationalist agenda of rightwing populist parties puts it in opposition to climate change, the research fails to address the effect of populism in climate change policy.

In addition to this, previous research has investigated how certain systems can contribute to climate change decision making and how veto players play a role too. Current literature suggests that climate advocates that exist within a pluralist system can be prevented from joining politics, which in turn could lead to weak policy (Midenberger 2020). Furthermore, the literature also suggests that when a government system has multiple veto players, it is harder to have agreement on what action to take (Harrison and Sundstrom 2010). However, while current research addresses the role of government systems and veto players in decision making, there is still a gap in the literature when it comes to understanding how the party system of countries creates veto players which in turn affects decision making.

This research analyzes how party systems effect climate change decision making in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom (UK). To address the climate crisis, more insight is needed on why countries enact the climate change policies they do. Through looking at the party systems within these countries and their populist parties, we will get a better understanding of why these countries pass certain climate change policies. Party systems can be defined as the



system within which political parties operate within a country. There are three kinds of party systems: multiparty, two-party, and single-party. In a multiparty system, multiple parties play a role in the government and in comparison, two-party and single-party systems are when respectively, two parties dominate politics within the country, or one political party dominates politics. Political party systems play a role in which parties have decision making powers within a country based on the type of government the country operates with and the role parties play within politics. As populist parties are included within the party system and are normally not receptive to climate change, understanding the strength these parties have within a system will also help in understanding the climate change decision making process. This research attempts to show that party systems play an important role in climate change decision making by creating veto players that can either support or prevent climate change policy. Based on the veto player framework developed by George Tsebelis (1995), this research builds upon the current veto player research to showcase the importance of partisan veto players in climate change decision making.

#### THEORETICAL ARGUMENT: VETO PLAYER FRAMEWORK

Before understanding the separate circumstances of each country, it is important to first establish what a veto player is within a political system, the previous research on veto players, and their relevance to understanding the climate change decision making of Germany, France, and the UK. To begin with, a veto player is an “individual or [a group] of collective actors whose agreement (by majority rule for collective actors) is required for a change of the status quo” (Tsebelis 1995). As such, veto players can be seen as the change makers in a government because by rejecting or passing a policy, that person or group of people are preventing change. For the purposes of this research, veto players will be restricted to people who can stop a bill

from going through the legislature. Institutions within government that can only delay the passing of legislation will not be considered veto players in this analysis. All in all, this makes veto players an important factor in decision making because based on their support or rejection of a policy or idea, decisions will be made.

For the purposes of this research, it is important to get an understanding of the previous research conducted on veto players. To begin with, veto players fall into two categories: institutional and partisan. Institutional veto players are the institutions within government like the House of Commons in the UK and the Bundestag and Bundesrat in Germany that are given formal veto powers through the country's constitution. In addition to national institutions, subnational actors like cities also have institutional veto powers. In comparison, partisan veto players are the parties within the parliament like the Renaissance party in France. However, unlike institutional veto players which are set structures of the government, partisan veto players can shift or even become irrelevant based on how parties act in countries. For example, while the Philippines has four veto players, none of those veto players are partisan veto players because of clientelism, where representatives elected to Congress switch parties based on the resources available rather than stay loyal to one party (Teehankee 2013). Due to this, partisan veto players only play a role in the decision-making process when legislators act in accordance with their parties and follow party ideology when making decisions. So, while institutional veto players are a constant part of decision-making, partisan veto players are relevant when there is strong party loyalty, making the distinction important when looking at the number of veto players in countries. Table 1 below defines and lists the institutional and partisan veto players in each country case.

Table 1

Veto Players		
	Institutional Veto Players	Partisan Veto Players
Definition	Institutions within a government that can prevent change from happening	Parties within parliament with majority of seats
Germany	Bundestag & Bundesrat	Social Democrat Party, Alliance 90/The Greens, Free Democrats
France	National Assembly & Senate	Renaissance Party, Republicans Party
United Kingdom	House of Commons	Conservative Party

As such, based on the government system and the party system in place in a country, countries can have one to multiple veto players affecting decision making. In dominant party systems or single-party systems, there is only one partisan veto player because that one party controls decision making in the country (Tsebelis 1995). On the other hand, government party systems with coalitions, which is when parties work together to form a majority, have multiple partisan veto players (Tsebelis 1995). This can be seen in how the three countries chosen for this research have different numbers of veto players.

The number of veto players within a system affects how often change happens and for what reasons. According to George Tsebelis, the more veto players a policy must go through, the greater the chance for the policy to be rejected. As such, the more veto players there are and the less similarity between veto players in policy positions, the less likely policy change is going to

occur (Tsebelis 1995). In a 2014 study on the impact of veto players on climate change policy outputs, the climate change policy adoption process of the United States and the UK was compared to see if the number of veto players affects the adoption rates of climate change policy. Through this comparison, Madden found that when countries have more political institutions that a climate change policy must go through, the less likely climate change policy passed (Madden 2014). This conclusion was further supported when a 2016 study concluded that Russia easily adopted international climate change agreements in their domestic policy because the single executive institution was the only veto power (Korppoo 2016). However, while institutions might mean more roadblocks for climate change policy, it does not necessarily mean that it always hinders the process. A 2020 study on the impact of veto players on incremental and drastic policy making concluded that having more veto players does not necessarily mean that climate change policy will not occur (Ike 2020). In addition to looking at the number of veto players in Australia during the passing of the 2014 Carbon Tax Repeal and the 2011 Carbon Tax Policy, the study looked at congruence of ideology and individual cohesion between veto players at the passage of both policies. The research concluded that the passage of the drastic policy change of the 2014 Carbon Tax Repeal happened because the “coalition government had fewer veto actors that were closer in their ideology, but less unified...in terms of their individual policy positions” (Ike 2020). In comparison to this, the incremental passage of the 2011 Carbon Tax Policy occurred because the government at the time had more ideologically farther veto players that were more unified in individual policy positions (Ike 2020). All three of these studies highlight the importance of understanding climate change policy in relation to veto players as they can determine the climate change policy track of a country.

Climate change is an international and domestic problem that will require policy to solve as policy determines each countries' response to the problem. However, to understand the international level of climate change policy, it is first important to establish why domestic climate change policy is difficult to pass. Through looking at Germany, France, and the UK through the perspective of the veto player framework, this research will analyze how the number of veto player institutions and the stances of partisan veto players affect climate change legislation. Veto players determine whether a country will maintain status quo, as such, to understand how a country adopts climate change policy, it is important to look at the veto players in power who will decide whether the policy passes or not. As such, if we can understand the role of partisan veto players in relation to institutional veto players, it will become clearer why climate change decision making is difficult.

## RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

This research attempts to analyze how party systems affect climate change decision making in Germany, France, and the UK using the veto player framework. Through looking at the three cases, this research will show that party systems have a considerable effect on climate change decision making and that populist parties only play a role in the decision-making process if their party system allows them to.

To answer this question, this research will identify the separate party systems and parties of each case and analyze the decision-making process of each country through identifying veto players and their influence. Each case will begin with the identification of both the government system and the party system it uses. Then, the research will discuss how the party system of that country makes decisions and who is in power in the country being discussed. Afterward, the research will investigate how the party system operates and their role in the grand

scheme of the government. Building on this, once the government and party systems are established, the research will move on to discuss how decisions are made within the party systems and which party is in power in the case being discussed. Once this is established, I will use the veto player framework established by George Tsebelis to showcase the effect of the party system on climate change decision making.

After establishing the party system of the country, each case will identify the relevant parties of the country, while also analyzing how much influence the parties have in the party system. More specifically, each party's stance on climate change will be identified in relation to whether they believe it is a problem and how they will solve the issue.

Each case will also look at the domestic policies implemented by the countries and look at where veto players are and their impact on the legislative process. Two climate change policies will be identified for each country and through breaking down the legislative process, I will identify where partisan veto players are and discuss their importance to the piece of legislation.

## SELECTION OF CASES

These specific countries were chosen to gain a wide understanding on the effect of party systems and populist parties. Despite how some countries share similar government structures and party systems, the political operation of each country affects how party systems and populist parties affect decision-making. There is a mix of multi-party and two-party systems between the three countries and a mix of government systems, which offers insight into how the government affects party systems. This will offer evidence as to why the conclusions in this research are not universal, but rather a guide to beginning to understand the effect of party systems and populist parties in a country's government system.

## GERMANY

In this section, I will look at Germany's government, party system, its populist parties, and its domestic policies in relation to climate change. First, I will break down the German government to understand the roles of its upper and lower chambers. Once this is established, I will discuss the party system in place and the most relevant parties to this study with the inclusion of the country's populist party. Finally, I will evaluate the effect of the party system on Germany's climate change decision making through breaking down the legislative process. In addition to breaking down the legislative process, I will look at two climate change laws in Germany: the Renewable Energy Act 2021 and the Climate Change Act 2021.

### GERMAN GOVERNMENT

To begin with, Germany has a parliamentary government system that has two chambers: the Bundesrat and the Bundestag. The Bundesrat is the upper chamber, and it represents the regional interests of the 16 regions of Germany. As such, it can be known as a place for the regions to participate directly in decisions made by the national state. The Bundesrat has three central functions within the German parliamentary system. Firstly, its main purpose is to defend the regions from the national state and indirectly from the European Union (Bundesrat 2022). This is because the state and national interest might not always align and through the Bundesrat, the regions can try to defend themselves from interests that do not benefit them. Secondly, it makes sure that the political and administrative experience of the regions is part of the national state's and European Union's legislation and administration (Bundesrat 2022). The Bundesrat gives the regions a say in government and allows for the interests of the regions to be incorporated into national policy and decision making. Finally, the Bundesrat has a duty to act as a check on the national state (Bundesrat 2022). It has the duty to scrutinize bills that comes its

way as seen through its role “in determining a state of defense and its status as a ‘reserve of legality’ in legislative emergencies” (Bundesrat 2022). As such, even though the Bundesrat aims to represent regional interests, it has a much bigger role within the German government system. In addition to the Bundesrat, the German government also has the Bundestag, the lower chamber.

Unlike the Bundesrat, the Bundestag’s members are elected to office by the German public. The two most important tasks of “the Bundestag are the legislative process and the parliamentary scrutiny of the government and its work” (Deutscher Bundestag 2022d). One of the main functions of parliament is to decide on laws and this duty is shared between the Bundesrat and Bundestag. The duty of introducing new pieces of legislation and revising legislation as bills is shared between the Bundesrat, Bundestag, and the Federal Government. However, despite all three sharing the duty, each focuses on the interests specific to them. As such, the Bundestag focuses on the people of Germany rather than its specific regions. Therefore, its duty is to debate on bills from the perspective of the people of Germany who elect the Bundestag members to office. The second task of the Bundestag is to scrutinize the Federal Government. This can be done through debates on bills of interest as mentioned before, but also through “minor and major interpellations” (Deutscher Bundestag 2022e). Interpellations are when members of the Bundestag interpret the order of the day and demand an explanation from the Federal Government for something they have done. In addition to being able to debate and demand explanations, the Bundestag also has several committees to scrutinize the Federal Government (Deutscher Bundestag 2022e). While these two tasks are considered the most important for the Bundestag, the lower chamber has other duties as well that solidifies its important role in German politics.



Outside of the tasks mentioned before, the Bundestag is also tasked with the election of the German chancellor, deciding on the federal budget, and the deployments of the Federal Armed Forces outside Germany. To begin with, the Bundestag is in charge of voting for whether the chosen candidate for chancellor can take office. It does not actually choose the chancellor as this duty is given to the Federal President (Deutscher Bundestag 2022b). In addition to electing a chancellor, the Bundestag is also involved in the federal budget through debates on the various plans provided by departments and questioning the allocations of the budget (Deutscher Bundestag 2022c). The Bundestag also votes on the budget making it a key player on where money is allocated.

#### PARTY SYSTEM – GERMANY

One of the most important political positions in Germany is the position of Chancellor because he or she can be considered the face of the country. As mentioned above, a majority in the Bundestag is needed to vote a Chancellor into office, but this is not easy due to how the German party system is a multiparty system. Unlike a two-party or single-party system, a multiparty system means that there are numerous parties fighting for a seat in parliament. This in turn makes decision-making difficult as each party has their wants and makes voting on a Chancellor difficult without concessions. However, to understand why this is difficult, it is first important to understand how members of the Bundestag are voted into office.

In German elections for the Bundestag, citizens get two votes, one vote is to directly vote a candidate into office and the other vote is given to a political party. However, when considering decision-making and party systems in the country, the second vote is the important one. This is because once the first vote decides which candidates should join the Bundestag, the second vote decides how the rest of the seats are allocated by party. The first vote will not cover

all the seats in the Bundestag, as such, the number of votes a party gets in the second vote equates to the proportion of the remaining seats given to them. Unlike a two-party system or single-party system, this means that multiple parties need to divide the remaining seats and that no clear majority really exists in the Bundestag. As such, parties need to form coalitions if they hope to accomplish anything like voting in a Chancellor.

The current Bundestag is divided between six parties: Social Democrat Party (SPD), Christian Democratic Union of Germany and Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), Alliance 90/The Greens, Free Democrat Party (FDP), Alternative for Germany (AfD), and The Left Party. After the last election, SPD has the majority with a total of 206 seats out of 736 seats (Deutscher Bundestag 2022a). However, a clear majority in the Bundestag would require a party to have 369 seats and no party has this, therefore, SPD made a coalition with the Greens and FDP to bring their seat total to 521 seats. With this majority in the Bundestag, SPD was able to vote Olaf Scholz as the Chancellor and the rest of his chosen cabinet was divided between the three parties of the coalition.

The coalition multiparty system of Germany forces parties to work together because working alone means not achieving the majority needed for decision-making. As shown above, no party has a clear majority in the Bundestag and parliament is very important when it comes to the legislative process. As such, the multiparty system forces parties to form coalitions and come to a consensus to get things done. However, to understand how the multiparty system affects climate change decision making, it is important to understand the coalition parties and the populist party of Germany.

## POLITICAL PARTIES – GERMANY

For the purposes of this paper, I will be looking at each party's stance on climate change policy in relation to their history with climate change policy and their proposed solutions when it comes to reaching net zero emissions and transportation policy. The five political parties I will be delving into are the CDU, SPD, the Greens, the FDP, and the AfD because the first party has been the majority for the past 16 years, the next three parties have the current majority in the Bundestag with their coalition, and AfD is the populist party of Germany.

### *CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (CDU)*

The current Traffic Light Coalition (SPD, Greens, and FDP) was only recently elected to office, as such, to get a clearer picture of how party systems effect climate change decision making, it is important to look at the previous majority party, the CDU. Before the Traffic Light Coalition, the previous Grand Coalition consisted of the CDU, the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CSU), and SPD.

The CDU believes climate change to be a problem that Germany needs to address and the previous chancellor, Angela Merkel, from the party was considered a climate change champion. However, before the party lost its majority, it came under fire after a court ruling that the government was not acting quickly enough to cut emissions (Sugue et al. 2021). To understand how the party planned on addressing climate change, I will be looking at its net zero emissions plan and transportation policy.

The overall climate change plan provided by the CDU is a combination of various elements that address different parts of the climate change problem. To begin with, the road to net zero plan is a set of ways the CDU planned to address emissions in accordance with government policy at the time of its majority. Through accelerating construction of wind and

solar, increasing sustainable biomass production, increasing hydropower and geothermal production in rural areas, and developing the current EU emission trading system to be used on a global scale, the party hopes to bring Germany down to net zero emissions (Sugue et al. 2021). Following the road to net zero plan, the party also focuses on the promotion of innovations to help address climate change. For example, two innovations that the party was pushing for was chemical recycling and sponge city concepts to help retain water (Sugue et al. 2021). The second way the party plans on addressing climate change is its transport policy through encouraging electric car use, railways, and ride share services. Based on this, it can be said that the CDU focuses a lot on transportation and possible innovations when it comes to addressing climate change.

Despite the parties' ideas to combat climate change, it has been under fire on multiple occasions for not doing enough to address the issue. For example, in 2021, the German court ruled that the Climate Action Law, that was spearheaded by the Grand Coalition lead by CDU Chancellor Angela Merkel, was partly unconstitutional for putting the burden of climate change on future generations (Oroschakoff 2021). In addition to this, many accounted the recent German success in reaching emission targets to the Coronavirus Pandemic because it prevented many people from traveling, a big emission industry. Had the pandemic lockdowns not happened, Germany would not have reached its 2020 climate goal that was made into law through the passage of the Climate Action Law. As such, it is still under debate whether the policies of the CDU helped address climate change and if these policies can be helpful long-term.

#### *SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY (SPD)*

The current party with a majority of seats in the Bundestag is SPD, making their stance on climate change and what they plan on doing an important part of how Germany plans on

addressing the issue. Using the failings of the CDU in addressing emissions on a needed pace, SPD tried to showcase itself as the new climate change leader. To achieve this title, the party looked to make the manufacturing industry of Germany greener and this is reflected in their plan to net zero emissions and transportation policy.

While SPD has some similarities to CDU in how it plans to address climate change, there are some important differences. To begin with, like the CDU, SPD agrees with the “government policy of cutting CO2 emission by 65 percent by 2030 and 88 percent by 2040, with the aim of achieving climate neutrality by 2045” (Sugue et al. 2021). This means that while the party might differ in how it hopes to address climate change, it agrees with the EU that climate change is a problem. However, an important distinction between the parties is that in addition to the EU emissions goal, SPD also hopes to have all electricity come from renewable sources by 2040 and has set up binding targets for the goal (Thurau 2021). For this reason, the party supports the construction of more solar panels and their placement on all buildings in addition to making Germany a leader in hydrogen energy. Moving on, unlike the CDU, SPD is in favor of a 130 km/h speed limit on federal highways and putting 15 million electric cars on the street when it comes to how it wants to tackle transportation policies (Knight 2019). As such, pushing for electrifying the transport industry is a main climate change policy for the party. Additionally, within transportation policy, the party wants to electrify the railway system by 2030 (Thurau 2021). Finally, the party wants to make urban public transport more accessible and wants to support €365 annual public transport tickets to do this (Sugue et al. 2021). Based on this, it can be said that SPD understands the need for policies to address climate change, but that it focuses on transportation to achieve Germany’s current road to net zero plan.

With the party recently gaining a majority and forming a coalition with the Greens and FDP, looking at the policies the coalition is pushing for will be important to understanding how the party will affect climate change decision making.

### *ALLIANCE 90/THE GREENS*

The Greens are considered the environmental and human rights focused party in Germany and currently retains 118 seats in the Bundestag. The platform of the party is concerned with the environment, infrastructure, human rights, and social policy. At its core, the Greens aim to address issues involving the environment and want to utilize Germany's renewed focus on climate change to push for more policy that addresses the issue. To evaluate the stance of the party on climate change, I will consider its road to net zero and transportation plan.

To begin with, being the major party championing for climate change policies, unlike its coalition partners, the party is more willing to push the status quo on climate change policies. Unlike the CDU and SPD, the Green party wants to commit Germany to reduce emissions by 70 percent by 2030 and only use renewable energy by 2035 (Sugue et al. 2021). This would increase the commitment Germany already has to reduce emissions and to ensure this is done, the party wants to give the Climate Ministry the power to veto government decisions not in compliance with the Paris Climate Agreement targets (Jordans 2021). Additionally, the party also wants to bring the phaseout of coal to 2030 rather than the current mandated year 2038 and increase wind and solar power to make up for the loss in coal powered energy (Ellyatt 2021). These policies and goals set the Greens apart from other parties on climate change because the party wants more ambitious goals for Germany, while the CDU and SPD could be said to take more moderate views on the issue. In addition to this, the party also wants "to ban the sale of new polluting cars from 2030" and like SPD, have electric cars make up a large portion of the market (Sugue et al.

2021). Like SPD, the Greens also support implementing speed limits and the acceleration of building charging stations for electric vehicle use to support their higher goals for Germany. Finally, the Greens support increased funding for the railways and public transport system so that short-haul flights become unneeded and to further this initiative, the party wants to place a tax on short-haul flights to discourage them (Sugue et al. 2021). Put together, the Greens are the most outspoken about climate change and follow that up with ambitious goals for Germany.

With the Greens being part of the current coalition government, there is possibility that the party will be able to push for increased attention to climate change on the national level.

#### *FREE DEMOCRATS (FDP)*

The Free Democrats party is the third party in the Traffic Light Coalition and currently retains 92 seats in the Bundestag, making it the party with the least number of seats within the coalition. Like its coalition partners, the Free Democrats agree that Germany should hit its Paris Climate Agreement goals, however, the party believes that rather than placing interim targets; scientists, technicians, and engineers should be the people guiding the country to hit its targets (Sugue et al. 2021). To evaluate the stance of the party on climate change, I will consider its road to net zero and transportation plan.

As mentioned, unlike its coalition partners, the FDP wants to encourage technological innovation as a way of reaching net zero emissions. Currently, “the party wants to end subsidies for renewable energies and [instead back] the development of synthetic fuels” like hydrogen (Sugue et al. 2021). Rather than subsidize the renewable energy sector, the party believes that market rules should regulate the sector. When it comes to transportation policy, FDP agrees with the Greens on introducing speed limits on highways and the banning of polluting vehicles (Sugue et al. 2021). However, unlike its counterparts, the party believes that subsidies in the

transportation sector should be used to boost hydrogen and alternative fuel sources (Sugue et al. 2021). In addition to introducing speed limits, the party wants to eliminate aviation taxes and night flight bans, which sets it apart from the Greens.

Unlike its coalition partners, the FDP takes a different approach to climate change policy. While the party supports climate change policies in accordance with the coalition, it differs when it comes to policies on subsidies. The only industry the party wishes to subsidize is the hydrogen and alternative fuels sector, which contrasts with its coalition partners. With the FDP being a supporter of the free market and the market regulating itself, its number one policy to address climate change is emissions trading (Thurau 2021).

#### *ALTERNATIVE FOR GERMANY (AfD)*

The Alternative for Germany party is considered the far-right populist party of Germany. Currently holding 78 seats in the Bundestag, the party has the second to lowest number of seats as of the 20th electoral term. Unlike the other parties mentioned above, AfD does not believe climate change is a man-made problem, but rather a natural one. Due to seeing climate change in this way, the party does not believe in active climate change protection and believes Germany should continue using coal-fired power, gasoline, and diesel (Thurau 2021). In accordance with the party not believing in climate change, it believes that Germany should withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement and only look to increase disaster preparedness for the consequences of “natural” climate change (Thurau 2021). However, with the party’s low seat count in the Bundestag and the Traffic Light Coalition having a majority of the seats, AfD will not play as major a role in climate change decision making in Germany.



## EVALUATING PARTY SYSTEM EFFECT ON CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION

This research focuses on the effect of party systems on climate change legislation through identifying and evaluating veto players in the passage of legislation. To understand this process in accordance with Germany, I will run through the process of passing legislation and identify where veto players are and how the party system affects these veto players.

Germany has three main parts to its legislation process: the Federal Government, Bundesrat, and the Bundestag. Each of these entities plays an important role in whether a bill is passed as such, it can be said that there are three institutional veto players in Germany because all three entities can introduce bills into the legislative process. If any of the three choose not to introduce a bill, then they automatically become a veto player as they can prevent change from happening.

A bill can be introduced into the legislative process through three means. The first is that the Federal Government can propose to amend or introduce a law through having the Federal Chancellor, currently Olaf Scholz of the SPD party, “transmit the bill to the Bundesrat” (Deutscher Bundestag 2023). As mentioned, the Federal Chancellor of Germany is not an elected position but a position that directly results from the party system of the country. This makes the party system very important in Federal decision making as the Chancellor and his cabinet are more likely to amend or introduce laws that align with its coalition motives rather than parties outside the coalition like AfD or CDU. In this sense, the party system creates a veto player through the Chancellor position. Once a Chancellor transmits the bill to the Bundesrat, the Bundesrat then has time to question the bill and ask for further clarification from the Federal government before the bill is given to the Bundestag (Deutscher Bundestag 2023). Before a bill is transmitted to the Bundesrat though, the Federal President of Germany decides on whether the

bill is a consent or objection bill. If the bill is a consent bill, then approval of the Bundesrat is needed for the bill to pass after approval by the Bundestag, while if the bill is an objection bill, then approval of the Bundesrat is not necessary after approval by the Bundestag (Bundesrat 2004). Only when the bill is a consent bill is the Bundesrat a veto player because their rejection of the bill would fail the bill unless the Federal Government or Bundestag refer the bill to a mediation committee to revive. Once this is complete, the Chancellor then gives the bill to the Bundestag with the comments of the Bundesrat to go through three readings in the plenary and legislative work in the committees (Deutscher Bundestag 2023). The second way a bill is introduced is through the Bundesrat and the process is like when the Federal government introduces a bill. However, a key difference is that the Bundesrat will need a majority in favor of the bill, 35 votes, to pass the bill on to the Federal Government for comments (Brunner and Debus 2008). As such, in this method of introducing a bill, the Bundesrat becomes a veto player and because the party system is also reflected in the Bundesrat, which parties make up a majority in the chamber can make a difference on whether a bill moves forward or dies in the chamber. The composition of the Bundesrat will become key when it introduces legislation because if there is no majority or the majority is composed of the opposition, then the opposition of the ruling coalition can have a major influence on policy (Brunner and Debus 2008). Once a majority of Bundesrat passes the bill and comments are given from the Federal Government, the bill then moves onto the Bundestag where it will go through the Bundestag voting process (Deutscher Bundestag 2023). In these first two methods of introducing bills, either the Federal government or the Bundesrat become veto players with the Bundestag always being a veto player. For this reason, when legislation is being considered, at most, there will always be two veto players.

The third method of introducing bills is through the Bundestag. For the Bundestag to present draft laws, the law needs to be “supported by either at least one of the parliamentary groups or at least five percent, [which is] 31 of the Members of the German Bundestag” (Deutscher Bundestag 2023). The party system plays a major role in the Bundestag as it determines seat distribution in the chamber and the majority. In this case, because a parliamentary group or party can support the introduction of a draft law, each party becomes a veto player that can initiate change. Similarly, any five percent of the Bundestag becomes a veto player meaning that if no party or five percent of the chamber chooses to not support a bill, then the bill dies before even being introduced to the floor. Bills introduced through this method do not need to first go through the Bundesrat, meaning that urgent bills can be introduced by parliamentary groups (Deutscher Bundestag 2023).

#### *APPLICATION OF THE VETO PLAYERS FRAMEWORK TO LEGISLATION – TWO*

##### *EXAMPLES*

To understand how the veto player framework can be applied to Germany’s domestic climate change policy, I will break apart the Renewable Energy Act 2021 which passed a series of amendments for the Renewable Energy Act 2017. The Renewable Energy Act 2021 was introduced by the Federal Government which at the time was under the Grand Coalition, a coalition of CDU, CSU, and SPD. The bill outlined a plan for the development of installed power capacity, which included provisions so that solar installations no longer get fixed tariff guaranteed, quotes for offshore wind power installations, and a new strategy for hydrogen (Appunn 2021). However, the bill did not have partisan support from the various political parties in Germany as the Greens and the Left parties criticized the bill for its roadmap for renewable energy technologies, which would later be reflected in their rejection of the bill in the Bundestag.

During the time of this voting, the Bundestag consisted of 709 seats, which would mean the coalition needed a majority of 355 votes to pass the bill (“Bundestag Election 2017” 2017). Based on this, there is a clear benefit to the Federal Government in introducing the bill because even if the opposition does not vote in support of the bill, the bill can still pass the Bundestag because of the coalition government style the country follows. Through the Grand Coalition, the CDU, CSU, and SPD shared a total of 399 votes in the Bundestag (“Bundestag Election 2017” 2017). However, just because the coalition has a majority of seats did not mean that the bill would pass in the first round of votes. The bill went through several amendments before it was able to pass the Bundestag, but despite this, the bill passed with no support from the opposition which consisted of the Green party, the Left, and FDP on December 17, 2020 (Scheid 2020). All the political parties in the Bundestag can be veto players, but because of the coalition government, the strength of the CDU, CSU, and SPD’s veto powers are stronger based on seats as they can pass a legislation on their own even without approval from the other parties. However, if the coalition parties are not in alignment on the bill being debated, then it does not matter if the bill is supported by the Federal Government because there is no individual cohesion in policy positions. Once the bill passed the Bundestag, it then moved to the Bundesrat, the third veto player, to get consent.

Before the Renewable Energy Act 2021 could be passed, it had to go through three institutional veto players and three partisan veto players. Had the Federal Government not introduced the law as part of its climate change agenda, then the policy would have died as an idea and the Renewable Energy Act 2017 would not be changed. At the Bundestag, there are several veto players because without a majority, the bill will die in the chamber and to gain a majority, parties need to work together and compromise if ideology and individual policy stances

do not align. Finally, the Bundesrat acts as the last veto player because without their consent, the bill cannot be made into law. Similarly, to the Bundestag, a majority of 35 seats needs to be achieved if a bill hopes to pass the chamber so partisan veto players also play an important role in the upper chamber. Based on this, the climate change decision making process and the types of policies passed during a government cycle, are based on if the individual policy stances of parties are similar enough to gain a majority in the two chambers. For example, if the CSU, CDU, and SPD had similar individual policy stances rather than similar ideology, then the bill might have been passed without amendments because all parties would have agreed on what the bill should contain.

Another example of veto players and their effect on climate change decision making in Germany is the Federal Climate Change Act 2021. In 2019, Germany passed the Climate Change Act in response to wanting to legally bind the country to its climate targets. After its original passage, in 2021, a group of nine young people with the support of environmental associations sued the German government over the Climate Change Act because “it violates their fundamental right to a humane future” (“German Climate Law” 2021). The court ruled in favor of the young activists and has ordered the legislature to amend the Climate Change Act to provide clearer emission targets by the end of December 2022 (Treisman 2021). In response to this ruling, the German government under the Grand Coalition immediately moved forward with a draft proposal for the amendment of the Climate Change Act in which Germany will become greenhouse gas neutral by 2045, which is five years ahead of the original target year (“How a Court Ruling” 2021). After being introduced to the Bundestag, the bill went through minor changes and was then adopted by the Bundestag as well on June 24, 2021 (Appunn and Wettengel 2021). Following this, the bill was moved to the Bundesrat which consented to the bill

on June 25, 2021 (Appunn and Wettengel 2021). Throughout this process, the bill faced little to no opposition according to media sources. However, if the Grand Coalition faced opposition to the amendment by its opposition parties, then it still could have passed the law through the Bundestag without support from the opposition due to its majority and partisan veto powers. However, the coalition would still have to gain the approval of the Bundesrat due to the bill being a consent law that requires Bundesrat approval.

Table 2

Bills		
	Renewable Energy Act of 2021	Climate Change Act of 2021
Climate Change Policy Area	Plan for the development of installed power capacity	Amendment that provided clearer emission targets
Institutional Veto Players	3	3
Partisan Veto Players	3	3

Both the Renewable Energy Act 2021 and the Climate Change Act 2021 showcase how important the party system is to the passage of laws and in turn, climate change decision making. Due to the multiparty system that Germany follows and its voting system, parties need to form coalitions to gain a majority and this majority is critical to the passage of legislation. The Renewable Energy Act 2021 was able to pass without support from the opposition parties because of the Grand Coalition's majority, however, had the parties of the Grand Coalition not had enough seats, they would not have been able to pass the legislation. In contrast, because the Climate Change Act 2021 had little to no opposition, it had a smooth adoption process and that

can be seen through how quick the legislation was adopted. As such, it can be said that the party system of Germany plays a role in determining how easily climate change legislation is passed.

Climate change legislation is difficult to pass in Germany unless there is consensus among the coalition parties. For a bill to pass in Germany, it needs to go through both the Bundestag and Bundesrat, two institutional veto players, before it can become law. Within these two chambers, Germany has many partisan veto players because of its multiparty system and election system. Because multiple parties get elected to the Bundestag and Bundesrat, no party retains a majority of the seats, as such, parties form coalitions that allow them to gain seats through formal alliances with other parties. The coalition government of Germany makes it so that the coalition parties need to be in alignment when it comes to a policy stance if they hope to pass the bill because even if one coalition partner does not agree, the bill might not pass. However, this also means that if the coalition agrees on a bill, they can pass the bill without support from the opposition. Currently, the Traffic Light Coalition contains the Green party, which means that there is possibility for more attention to climate change within the Federal Government and an increase in passage of climate change bills. However, more research needs to be done on this as the coalition just recently took power in Germany.

## FRANCE

In this section, I analyze France's party system, its populist parties, and its domestic policies in relation to climate change. First, I will break down the French government to understand the roles of the National Assembly and the Senate. After this is established, I will discuss the party system in place and the most relevant parties to this study. Finally, I will evaluate the effect of the party system on France's climate change decision making through

breaking down the legislative process and using the Climate and Resilience Law and Anti-Waste and Circular Economy Law to showcase this.

## FRANCE GOVERNMENT

France has a semi-presidential hybrid regime system that consists of the relationship between the president, prime minister, and the government (Drake et al. 2020). The key difference between the prime minister and the president is that the “prime minister is in charge of the government, which determines and implements national policy”, and the president oversees the Council of Ministers (Drake et al. 2020). The French government is also divided between the National Assembly and Senate and for legislation to pass, both houses must pass the legislation. As such, to pass legislation, the French president relies on his parliamentary majority to support his government and intended [program] (Drake et al. 2020).

Both the National Assembly, the lower chamber, and the Senate, the upper chamber, have duties to pass legislation and act as checks on the French government. However, an important distinction between the two entities is that the National Assembly is directly elected by the French people, while the Senate is elected by indirect universal suffrage. In its legislative duties, the National Assembly has a responsibility when it comes to constitutional laws, ordinary laws, and referendums (“Fiche de Synthèse” 2023). For the purposes of climate change legislation though, this study will be focusing on ordinary laws and referendums. In addition to legislative duties, the National Assembly also acts as a check on the French government through the ability to question the government. In comparison to the National Assembly, the Senate has the duty of also voting on laws from the government and parliamentary initiatives (“The Senate’s Role” 2023). In addition to this, the Senate “votes [on] any amendments to the Constitution”, acts as a



check on the government, and is in charge of representing French citizens living abroad (“A Special Role in Parliament” 2023).

### PARTY SYSTEM – FRANCE

France has a multi-party system where multiple parties have a strong say in how the French government is run. As such, in elections, multiple parties aim to gain the necessary number of votes needed to be elected to the presidency or the National Assembly. To understand the role of the French party system in decision making, it is important to understand how voting in France works.

The National Assembly is elected through the legislative districts that divide France. Currently, France is divided into 566 legislative districts with an additional 11 more added to represent French citizens living abroad (Mazoue 2022). France has a two round voting system, where all voters vote two times. The first round of voting is to determine which candidates can at least get a 12.5 percent of registered voters and once this is achieved, the candidate moves onto the second round of voting (Mazoue 2022). Candidates who wish to be deputies in the National Assembly do not require a party to run, however, being part of a parliamentary group provides resources and benefits to the potential deputy. In France, to become a parliamentary group, 15 deputies have to join together and while some deputies choose to join existing parties, others choose to branch out and create their own (Mazoue 2022). Other benefits to forming or being part of a party is that a party can influence chamber debates and the Assembly (Mazoue 2022). So, even though candidates are not required to run under a party, being part of a party can give candidates greater benefits because certain privileges are only accessible if one is part of a party in the National Assembly.

Like the National Assembly, political parties play a role in electing the French President as well. The French President is elected through a two-round voting system like the National Assembly. This is so that presidential candidates can get on the ballot without the backing of a political party if they meet certain conditions (Mcnicoll 2022). However, most presidential candidates run under either a party or an electoral coalition. For example, Emmanuel Macron, the current president, ran under his Renaissance party and Jean-Luc Mélenchon ran under the NUPES alliance in the 2022 Presidential election. After the first round of voting, two top candidates are moved onto the second round of voting where citizens vote for the candidate they wish to become president. In addition to being important for the election process, political parties also become important in determining how the government works after the National Assembly and President are elected.

Once the National Assembly and President are elected is when political parties play a role in how France is run. France's Prime Minister is chosen by the President based on which party gains a majority in the National Assembly after elections. When the President and the Prime Minister come from different parties, they need to work together to run the French government in what is called "cohabitation" (Mazoue 2022). Cohabitation is disadvantageous to the President because losing the National Assembly majority means a loss of top-down decision-making power, as the Prime Minister and their party will follow their own legislative agenda through their majority (Mazoue 2022). However, the recent 2022 elections provided a brand-new situation for the French government where there is no clear majority in Parliament nor a period of cohabitation (Hewlett and Kuhn 2022). While President Emmanuel Macron won the presidency, his party lost the absolute Parliamentary majority, meaning that while the party has a majority, it needs to form alliances to pass policies (Hewlett and Kuhn 2022). The importance of

this majority when it comes to climate change decision making will be showcased through analyzing two of France’s climate policies in recent years.

The current National Assembly is divided between nine parties: Renaissance; National Rally; La France Insoumise; The Republicans; Democrat; Socialists; Horizons; Democratic and Republican left (NUPES); and Ecologist (NUPES). Currently, the President of France’s party is the Renaissance and the coalition he created with the Democrat and Horizons gave him 245 seats out of the 577 seats in the National Assembly (“Takeaways from the Final Round” 2022). However, even with a coalition, Macron does not have the necessary absolute majority to move forward with his agenda without forming new alliances with other parties in the Assembly. As such, currently the National Assembly has no clear majority and parties will need to work together to pass policies.

Based on this, there are several political parties and alliances important to climate change decision making in France. The first is Renaissance and its alliance Together formed with Horizons and Democrat. Following the Together coalition is the National Rally, the party of the runner up candidate for the French Presidency Marine Le Pen. Finally, I will discuss the NUPES alliance, the final key political alliance in the French party system.

## POLITICAL PARTIES – FRANCE

For the purposes of this paper, I will be looking at each party’s stance on climate change policy and the actions they are proposing.

### *RENAISSANCE*

The current presidential party is Renaissance as such, it plays a critical role in how the French government makes decisions on a variety of issues. As the party was created by

Emmanuel Macron himself in 2017, I will be using his stances on climate change as the party's stances on the issue.

To understand the party's stances on climate change, I will be looking at the stances taken during the 2022 presidential election. During the 2022 election, climate change related issues accounted for 1.5% of media time dedicated to the election due to issues like immigration, crime, and the Russia-Ukraine war taking priority (Brunet 2022). Seeing climate change as a voter issue, Macron hoped to utilize his climate change focused program from 2017 by renewing promises to aid in his 2022 election (Lewis 2022). However, it is important to note that this renewed climate change focus was concentrated on energy due to the fossil fuel crisis caused by the Russia-Ukraine war. Macron stated that he agreed with the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global warming below two degrees Celsius and wants to expand nuclear energy production, build up offshore wind farms, and increase solar panels to help France attain more renewable energy sources (Lewis 2022). Based on this, it can be said that the main concern of the Renaissance party currently is energy when it comes to climate change. This focus on energy can be contributed to France not converting 23% of its energy into renewable energy when other countries in the EU accomplished this, which in turn made it a priority for the party now (Brunet 2022). Out of the 27 EU member states in 2020, France was the only member state to not hit its 2020 binding renewable energy target, and with the EU increasing the percentage of energy coming from renewable energy for 2030 to 42.5%, there is more pressure on France to ramp up renewable energy (European Commission 2023b). As such, focusing on energy for the party is both a reflection of the party's stance in addressing climate change, but also a political move due to the recent elections.

### *NATIONAL RALLY*

The National Rally is the populist party of France and in the recent 2022 elections, it made a lot of political gains when it came to seats in the National Assembly. The two presidential candidates in 2022 were Macron and Marine Le Pen, the National Rally candidate. While she lost the presidential election to Macron, the party made significant gains in the National Assembly, preventing Renaissance from gaining an absolute majority. In the National Rally 2022 manifesto, the party has stated that when looking at climate change, the needs of the French people need to be considered first before international needs (Basso 2023). As such, the party can be described as taking a nationalism-based stance to climate change, but Arnaud Gossement, an associate professor at Panthéon-Sorbonne University, suspects that this is mainly to satisfy the electorate as the party is only outspoken when it comes to opposing the increase of renewable energy sources like offshore wind (Basso 2023). In addition to this, the party has not yet proposed solutions for reforming the transportation and lifestyle factors of climate change, two major aspects of the problem (Basso 2023). Based on this, the National Rally can be described as believers of climate change due to voter interest but with a focus on local environmentalism and energy.

### *NUPES ALLIANCE*

The New Popular Ecological and Social Union (NUPES) Alliance is a new coalition of parties in France that consists of the Europe Ecology-The Greens party, The Socialist Party, the French Communist Party, and LA France Insoumise party. Currently, the main climate change party in France is the Europe Ecology-The Greens party, however, the party has adopted a common approach on climate change policy through its membership in the NUPES alliance (Moussu 2022). The NUPES alliance has stated that it wants to implement a green rule that

would give nature a legal status so that France will not take more from nature than nature can replenish (“Programme Partagé de Gouvernement” 2022). In addition to taking a central stance on climate change, the individual parties of the coalition will also play a role in the introduction of the alliance’s climate change program. The central theme for the alliance’s climate change program in the Assembly is based on energy transition that combines renewable energy with current energy sources (“Programme Partagé de Gouvernement” 2022). While energy is the area where the alliance is focusing on, the alliance’s government program highlights many of the other areas within climate change the alliance hopes to create change in. Based on this, the alliance can be described as the most outspoken when it comes to climate change and will play a vital role in the future as it is an opposition party.

#### EVALUATING PARTY SYSTEM EFFECT ON CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION

Like the Germany case, to understand the effect of party systems on climate change legislation, I will identify and evaluate the veto players within the French legislation process and evaluate how the party system affects veto players.

France has a variety of different legislative processes based on how a bill is introduced. The first method I will break down is when a bill is passed through referendum. Referendums are bills that propose an amendment to France’s constitution and it can be introduced by either the President, a Deputy, or a Senator (“Law-making in France” 2021). As such, when it comes to referendum laws, the party introducing the bill through either the President, Deputy, or Senator is a veto player. Once introduced, then the bill is considered by the first house of the French parliament, either the National Assembly or Senate, where it is reviewed by a committee and then voted on (“Law-making in France” 2021). Once the first house reviews the bill, then the bill is passed onto the second house based on which house reviewed it first. In this sense, both the

National Assembly and Senate are institutional veto players that gain the power to prevent a bill from passing until a majority of Senators and Deputies agree on the bill. The partisan veto players are determined by which parties make up the absolute majority or majority. As such, the National Assembly can have either one partisan veto player if one party has the absolute majority or multiple veto players if the majority is made through a coalition. Like how the partisan veto players in the National Assembly are determined, the Senate can also have one partisan veto player to many partisan veto players.

If the National Assembly and Senate have partisan veto players that are opposing parties, there is a chance that the bill text adopted in both houses are different. When this happens, the bill may shuttle between the two houses until the same text is passed or the bill may go to a joint committee that then decides on the text of the bill (“Law-making in France” 2021). Once both houses agree on the bill, then the bill is passed into law. At this point in the process or before a law is passed, another institutional veto player called the French Constitutional Court could become relevant. The French Constitutional court is a court in France that determines the constitutionality of bills and laws (“General Overview” 2023). However, for the court to have veto powers over a piece of legislation, it needs to receive an application that questions whether a law or bill is constitutional (“Selection of QPC Decisions” 2023). For example, the court received an application about the constitutionality of a pension reform law and ruled that parts of the law were constitutional, allowing the law to pass (“Fresh Protests Across France” 2023). However, the court could have also ruled that the law was not constitutional and when this happens, the law is no longer a law, making the court an important veto player when it applies.

## *APPLICATION OF THE VETO PLAYER FRAMEWORK TO LEGISLATION – TWO*

### *EXAMPLES*

One way for climate change legislation to pass is referendum laws because these laws deal with “reforms relating to the economic, social, or environmental policy...[and] public services contributing to economic, social, or environmental affairs of the state” (“Law-making in France” 2021). An example of this process is the Climate and Resilience Bill passed on July 20, 2021. The Climate and Resilience Bill was a bill introduced by Macron in response to helping France reach its climate change goals. If passed, the referendum would “enshrine climate and environment protection in the French constitution” (Boucey and Kar-Gupta 2021). Once introduced, the bill first went to the National Assembly for its first reading and vote. At the time, the Renaissance party had an absolute majority in the National Assembly, which allowed the bill to easily pass the first house within the legislative process (“Macron’s Climate Referendum” 2021). Due to the Renaissance party having an absolute majority in the National Assembly, it is an important partisan veto player because even without opposition support, the party would have been able to pass the bill. Once the bill passed the lower house, it then went to the Senate for a vote.

During the passage of the Climate and Resilience bill, the French Senate was under the Republicans party majority. Unlike the National Assembly, the French Senate is elected by elected politicians in France, as such, the party system elections to the Senate are controlled by already elected politicians (“Explainer: How do France’s Legislative Elections Work?” 2022). The Republicans party is another opposing party and while they sometimes vote in line with the Renaissance party, it was not the case for the Climate and Resilience bill. During the vote of the bill, the Republicans party used their majority to change the wording of the bill so that when it



passed the Senate, both passed versions of the bill would be different (Aboudouh 2021). The Republicans party wanted to change the wording of the bill for two reasons, one it wanted to change the bill so that climate change would not be guaranteed in the constitution and two, by changing the wording, the bill would need to go through more debate before it is passed. Due to the text of the bill needing to be the same, the bill was then given to a joint committee composed of members from both houses so that they can agree upon the same text. Once the bill was agreed upon in the joint committee, it was then passed into law.

The legislative process for the Climate and Resilience Act had three institutional veto players and two partisan veto players. To begin with, the first institutional veto player is the President and the government because they could have chosen not to introduce the referendum. Macron pushed for this referendum to not only follow through with the promises he made on being more active on climate change, but to also create a favorable view of himself in the 2022 election, as such, his party stance and his own stance on the issue caused him to push for the referendum (“Macron’s Climate Referendum” 2021). Following the President is the National Assembly and Senate, both of which had one partisan veto player each. At the time of this legislation, the Renaissance party had an absolute majority, making them the most important partisan veto player in the National Assembly, as they could pass legislation all on their own without the support of the other parties. However, while the Renaissance party was the major partisan veto player in the National Assembly, they were not in the Senate. The Senate was composed of a majority Republicans when the bill was being passed, as such, the Republicans party became another important partisan veto player. They were able to use their majority to change the text of the bill, which in turn led to a watered-down version of the original bill that would not make climate change binding in the constitution (Darmanin 2022). Both the

Renaissance and Republican parties had different stances on the bill, which is what led to both acting differently when it came to the passage of the legislation. The President is from the Renaissance party, as such, the members within the National Assembly voted to pass the bill as both the President and they are of the same stance and ideology. However, while the Republican party agreed in the importance of climate change, they did not agree on guaranteeing this within the French constitution (“Macron’s Climate Referendum” 2021). If the Renaissance party and the Republican party had similar individual policy stances on the bill, then the bill might have passed both houses without any changes to the text of the original bill. Another institutional veto player the bill could have faced is the French Constitutional Court, however, because the court received no application that questioned the constitutionality of the bill, it did not become a relevant veto player for the passage of this legislation.

Another example of veto players and their effect on climate change decision making in France is France’s Anti-Waste and Circular Economy Law, however, unlike the previous law, this law was passed through the ordinary legislative process. The only difference between the referendum legislative process and the ordinary legislative process is that the ordinary bills can only be introduced by either the Prime Minister, another minister on behalf of the Prime Minister, Deputies, and Senators (“Law-making in France” 2021). Once the bill is introduced into either the National Assembly or Senate, it then follows the same legislative process until either the legislation is passed or dies. As such, like the referendum process, there is three institutional veto players and two partisan veto players.

The Anti-Waste and Circular Economy Law was a bill introduced by the Minister of State and the Minister of Ecological and Inclusive Transition to reduce waste and preserve the environment. Unlike the Climate and Resilience Bill which started in the National Assembly, the

Anti-Waste and Circular Economy bill started in the Senate, which in 2019 was still led by a Republicans party majority (Chadwick 2020). Once the bill passed the Senate, it then moved to the National Assembly which at the time was led by the Renaissance party majority (“French Parliament to Mull Law to Cut Consumer Waste” 2019). However, both houses did not pass the same bill, as such, the bill went to a joint committee so that an agreed upon bill for both houses could be reached and passed into law, which it did in February 2020 (“France’s Anti-Waste and Circular Economic Law” 2023). Media reports on the legislation showed no opposition to the legislation and the environmental issues it addressed, and this was further supported by a case study done by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in 2021, where they reported that parties had a consensus on the bill, which contributed to the bill’s eventual adoption (“France’s Anti-Waste and Circular Economic Law” 202). However, this legislation could easily have been watered down like the Climate and Resilience Law if the Republicans party was not of the same stance as the Renaissance party and the government. So even though this bill went through the same veto players except for the President, both had different legislative experiences because of party alignment on the bill’s issue. Furthermore, like the Climate and Resilience Law, this law was also not questioned for its constitutionality, as such, it did not need to go through the French Constitutional Court. With this, the bill went through three institutional veto players and two partisan veto players as well.

Table 3

Bills		
	Climate and Resilience Bill	Anti-Waste and Circular Economy Bill
Climate Change Policy Area	Make climate change targets legally binding	Reduce waste and preserve the environment
Institutional Veto Players	3	3
Partisan Veto Players	2	2

Both laws represented different situations for climate change decision-making in France. When the President and National Assembly majority are of the same party, it does help with passing legislation because when the party has a majority, they can pass legislation without the vote of opposing parties in the National Assembly. However, the Senate is a more complicated situation because the Senators are elected by other government officials in a process that is not very clear to the public. Despite this though, the two example legislations show that when majority parties have a similar stance on the issue, it is easier to pass climate change legislation in comparison to when they have different stances, as showcased by the Climate and Resilience Law. It is important to note though that both legislative examples are from times that the Renaissance party had both the Presidency and National Assembly, which currently is not the case. When the government is under a majority party, both the President and National Assembly majority can be considered one partisan veto player because they are from one party. However, when the National Assembly majority is from another party or is under a coalition government,

then, the number of veto players that a bill must go through increases. Based on this, France's party system does affect its climate change decision-making because the parties in power control what climate change legislation is passed, however, more research needs to be done on how a coalition majority in the National Assembly will affect this process, as that is France's current situation.

## UNITED KINGDOM

In this section, I will look at the UK's government, party system, its populist parties, and its domestic policies in relation to climate change. First, I will breakdown the UK government to understand the roles of the House of Commons and House of Lords. Once this is established, I will discuss the party system in place and the most relevant parties to this study with the inclusion of the country's populist party. Finally, I will evaluate the effect of the party system on the UK's climate change decision making process through breaking down the legislative process and two climate change centered legislation: the Environment Act of 2021 and the Nuclear Energy (Financing) Act of 2022.

## UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT

The UK is a parliamentary government with two houses: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Both houses share a lot of duties such as making laws, consideration of public policy, and holding the government accountable, however, where they differ is their appointment process and their ability to pass legislation ("What the Lords Does" 2023). To begin with, the House of Commons is the first chamber of the house and the chamber with the most power because it is publicly elected by the people ("The Work of the House of Commons" 2023). Being publicly elected, the House of Commons can pass legislation in the sense that they can stop a bill from moving forward in parliament, in comparison to this, the House of Lords can scrutinize

bills, but cannot block a bill (“What the Lords Does” 2023). This difference can be attributed to how Lords are appointed rather than elected. The appointment system of the House of Lords allows nonpolitical expertise when it comes to bills from people like Bishops, as such, while there are parties represented within the Lords, it is mainly considered a party independent chamber as people are appointed for their expertise rather than party (“How Members are Appointed” 2023). In addition to its other duties, the House of Commons is where the government is formed from after elections. The party with a majority of seats in the House of Commons will choose a Prime Minister who will then form the UK government until the next election (“The Two-House System” 2023). As such, the party with a majority of seats in the House of Commons will have a strong say in how the UK government is run for five years after each election. So, while the House of Commons and House of Lords share many of their duties, the House of Commons is the real legislative power in the UK parliament.

#### PARTY SYSTEM – UNITED KINGDOM

The UK has a two-party system where two parties tend to dominate the government. However, just because the UK has a two-party system does not mean that only two parties exist within the system. Even though the UK has many political parties, two parties, the Conservative and Labour parties, control the government by having a majority of seats within parliament, which in turn leads to one party forming the government. Additionally, because these two parties dominate the number of seats in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister also tends to come from either of the parties, giving one party control over the executive government. To understand though why the UK has a two-party system, it is important to understand how parties are elected to the House of Commons.

The UK uses the first past the post voting system when electing Members of Parliament (MPs) to the House of Commons. In this voting system, the candidate with the greatest number of votes in a constituency will get the seat in the House of Commons (BBC 2023a). For example, if a candidate got 32% of the votes but is the candidate with the greatest number of votes, then she would become the MP of the constituency even if 68% of the votes went to other candidates (BBC 2023a). Because of this voting system, it is generally easier for one party to gain a majority of seats in the House of Commons. However, in the case a party does not gain a majority, then they will be forced to form a coalition with another party to gain a majority in the house (Lebentz and Fielder 2019). In addition to creating the absolute majority, this system also prevents smaller parties from gaining a majority in the House of Commons, preventing fair representation of minority parties (BBC 2023b). This in turn prevents a multiparty system because smaller parties have very few seats in the House of Commons while the two large parties have an overwhelming number of seats.

The current House of Commons is divided between 12 parties. After the last election, the Conservative party had the majority and therefore formed the UK government with its 354 seats out of the 650 seats available in the House of Commons (“State of the Parties” 2023). At the time of the 2019 election, Boris Johnson was chosen as the UK Prime Minister, but this position has changed hands within the Conservative party to now be Rishi Sunak.

The two-party system of the UK generally allows one party to take control of the UK government until the next general election. Through a voting system that is based on the greatest number of votes rather than proportional representation, many constituencies in the UK elect MPs from the same party (BBC 2023b). As such, the two dominant parties have a powerful hold on the party system as they tend to get the greatest number of MPs to the House of Commons. To

understand how having the ability to form the government and a majority in the House of Commons affects climate change decision making, it is important to understand the four parties relevant to climate change.

## POLITICAL PARTIES – UNITED KINGDOM

For the purposes of this paper, I will be looking at each party's stance on climate change policy in relation to their history and what they are proposing to mitigate the problem. The four political parties I will be delving into are the Conservative party, the Labour party, the Green party, and the UK Independent Party (UKIP). As mentioned, the Conservative party and Labour party are the two dominant parties within the UK party system, as such, they play an important role in the policies that are passed. The Green party is the climate change party in the UK and as such, is relevant to this discussion. Finally, UKIP is the populist party of the UK.

### *CONSERVATIVE PARTY*

The Conservative party is the current dominant party in the UK and has been in power since 2010. While the Conservative party has members that believe in climate change as a problem, it also has many sceptics as well (Mason 2021). As such, the Conservative party's approach to climate change is a mix of contradictions on how to solve climate change with a consensus that climate change is a problem that needs addressing.

The Conservative party has not always been a supporter of environmental policies. In 2015, the Green Alliance, a think tank in the UK, expressed worries that if climate change became an election issue, that the Conservative party would backtrack on climate change to keep its climate-sceptic support and the right-wing press (Carter and Pearson 2022). The Conservative party did backtrack on many of their climate change proposals until they saw a loss in votes from younger and women voters in 2017, which gave the party the initiative to take a more active



response to the problem, which later turned into a commitment on getting the UK to net zero (Carter and Pearson 2022). However, while the Conservative party put out many proposals to address climate change like the Ten Point Plan, the party had mixed success in accomplishing their proposals due to climate change never being a key issue (Carter and Pearson 2022). Based on this, it can be said that while the Conservative party believes in climate change, they will only act on the issue if they see political benefit. Even when the party saw an advantage in pursuing climate change policy though, the party still was reluctant to take major action and sometimes went back on promises to keep its members satisfied.

Overall, the Conservative party in the UK is neither for nor against climate change. It has generally taken a neutral stance to climate change as showcased by how the party pushed for a Net Zero Strategy in 2021, but recent reports on the plan showcase many policy gaps on plans on how to accomplish this. Despite being in power since 2010, the UK's Climate Change Committee has reported that they have limited knowledge on the government's plan, "with minimal detail provided in the Net Zero Strategy on...questions such as the effort from different parts of the UK and how key assumptions around waste reduction will support the transition" (Climate Change Committee 2022). As such, while the Conservative party supports climate change action, the party's divide on the issue has prevented it from moving forward with some of the actions it has promised.

### *LABOUR PARTY*

The Labour party is the major opposition party to the Conservative party and formed the UK government from 1997-2010. Currently, they hold a total of 196 seats within the House of Commons and while not a majority, is the greatest number of seats following the Conservative party ("State of the Parties" 2023). Unlike the Conservative party, the Labour party has been a

longtime supporter of climate change mitigation policies, however, despite being a big supporter of the issue, the party also displays a mixed record for climate change policy.

When the Labour party was in power, they took a radical stance on climate change and showed it through the policies they passed. The most notable of these policies is the 2008 Climate Change Act which made the emission reduction targets of the UK legally binding (Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment 2020). Through the passage of this act, the UK was able to transform their power sector to be more renewable and emission free (Fankhauser et al. 2018). Seeing the benefit to being more climate change conscious, the Conservative party also took on a more environmental stance which in turn motivated the Labour party to do even more during their majority rule. Even though they are no longer in the majority, the Labour party has continued to carry this outspoken stance on climate change.

In 2021, during the party's conference, the party made some big announcements when it came to climate change policy. First, the party said it would "invest 28 [billion pounds] a year in climate measures" and this money would go to improving the energy sector and making daily life in the UK more sustainable" (Elgot 2021). In addition to funding for climate change, the party's website outlines how the party wants to increase onshore wind, introduce new green standards for housing, and improve transportation ("Britain in 2030" 2023). However, despite making these promises, the question now is how the party will achieve these promises as the party does not have a majority in the House of Commons.

Based on the previous and current stance of the party on climate change, it can be said that the Labour party does believe in climate change and recognizes a need to address the issue. Furthermore, the party passed the 2008 Climate Change Act and helped in getting the UK energy

sector to where it is now in terms of emissions. Based on the news and the party's own climate change policy document, the party seems to be carrying this momentum into the next elections. As such, while the party is promising a greener UK, the validity of this will be proven if they receive a majority of seats in the House of Commons the next coming election.

### *THE GREEN PARTY*

The Green party is the major climate change party in the UK. However, the party only has one member in the House of Commons and has not been in the majority (“State of the Parties” 2023). The platform of the party is mainly concerned with climate change and moving the UK to a more renewable pathway. In the recent 2019 elections, the party was a big supporter of the Green New Deal, which is a push for more renewable energy, more sustainable housing, renewable transportation, green jobs, protection of the environment, and sustainable farming practices (“General Election Manifesto 2019” 2019). In addition to creating climate change policies that address these issues, the party also wants to change the way the government works to be more climate change conscious. While the Green New Deal is the main platform the party is running on, in their 2019 manifesto, they also want to assign someone to be responsible for its implementation and have another person responsible for dealing with climate change in general (“General Election Manifesto 2019” 2019). In addition to outlining how the Green New Deal would look for the UK, the party has also called out the leading two parties to commit for stricter climate goals, especially the Conservative party as it is the party in power right now. Based on this, the Green party is a strong supporter of addressing climate change and has also taken on the role of calling out other parties to help in accomplishing this.

However, because the party only has one seat in the House of Commons, it is difficult for the party to pass legislation without the support of other parties. Currently, only one bill out of

ten bills the party wants to pass is currently being considered in the UK parliament (“Two Years: Ten Bills” 2023). As such, even though the party is a big supporter of climate change, the impact it has on the UK decision making process is minimal due to the lack of seats in parliament.

### *THE UK INDEPENDENT PARTY*

UKIP is the populist party of the UK and currently holds no seats in the House of Commons. Unlike the other parties, UKIP does not believe climate change is a human made problem, but rather a weather problem, as such, the party is against climate change policies (“UKIP Policy: The Environment” 2022). This is reflected in how the party supports repealing many of the UK’s climate change acts such as the 2008 Climate Change Act, Energy Act of 2013, and the Net Zero strategy (“UKIP Policy: Energy” 2022). It is important to note though that while the party is against climate change policy, climate change is not the party’s central issue. UKIP is described as a single-issue party because the party’s purpose was to withdraw the UK from the European Union (Usherwood 2008). As such, while the party addressed other topics like climate change, it focused on Brexit for a long time. Based on this, the UKIP party does not believe climate change is a problem and as such aims to repeal climate change policies, however, because the party has no seats in the House of Commons, it will not play a major role in climate change decision making.

### EVALUATING PARTY SYSTEM EFFECT ON CLIMATE CHANGE LEGISLATION

To understand the effect of party systems in climate change legislation, I will be explaining where veto players exist within the UK legislative process. Once the veto players are identified, I will breakdown the legislative process of two UK climate change acts to showcase how the party system effects the veto players that exist within the system.

The UK has three main parts to its legislative process: the Government, the House of Commons, and the House of Lords. While each of these entities are important, the two most important for the legislative process are the House of Commons and Lords as most of the Prime Minister's powers come from having a majority in the House of Commons. As such, either the government, an MP, or a Lord can be the first veto player in the process, as they can chose not to introduce a bill into parliament.

In the UK, a bill can be introduced into the legislative process through three means. The first method is through government ministers, which consists of the Prime Minister and their cabinet ("Public Bills" 2023). As mentioned before, the UK Prime Minister is not an elected position, but rather a position chosen based on the majority party in the House of Commons. For this reason, the party system is important to government decision making because it controls who forms the UK government, who in turn picks their cabinet from their own party. The party system creates a partisan veto player through the Prime Minister and his cabinet as they can choose to only introduce bills that align with their party. In addition to the government's ministers, both MPs and Lords can also introduce bills into parliament ("Private Members' Bills" 2023). Like the Prime Minister position, the party system also creates a veto player in the House of Commons through elected MPs. This is because gaining a majority in the House of Commons allows a party to run the UK government through a one-party system, where one party oversees both the government and the House of Commons. In comparison to MPs though, while Lords can be party affiliated, they do not have to be, as such, they are a veto player not created by the party system.

Once a bill is introduced, it then gets considered in both the House of Commons and Lords. The first reading of a bill takes place in the House it is introduced to. From there, the bill

goes through five stages in each house (“First Reading (Commons)” 2023). However, while the House of Commons is always a veto player, the House of Lords is not because of the Parliament Act 1949. Due to the House of Lords being a non-elected house, it normally only has the ability to delay bills rather than vote on them. As such, the only times the House of Lords becomes a veto player is if the bill starts in the House of Lords, is a private bill, or if the bill is sent to the Lords less than a month before the session ends (“The Parliament Acts” 2023). Once a bill passes both houses, then it becomes law. Based on this, many bills only go through two veto players which is the person introducing the bill and the House of Commons.

In addition to institutional veto players, there are also partisan veto players in the UK. The UK has several political parties within the House of Commons with others not even having a seat in parliament like UKIP. However, because the UK operates on a House of Commons majority, many of these political parties do not have enough seats to be partisan veto players with power within the UK legislative process. The partisan veto player with the power to control legislation is the majority party, which currently is the Conservative party, as such, the party system creates one strong partisan veto player in the form of the majority party.

#### *APPLICATION OF THE VETO PLAYER FRAMEWORK TO LEGISLATION – TWO EXAMPLES*

To understand how the veto player framework can be applied to the UK’s domestic climate change policy, I will breakdown the Environment Act of 2021. Sponsored by George Eustice, a Conservative party MP, the bill was first introduced in the House of Commons during a Conservative party majority. The purpose of the bill was to “make provisions about...plans and policies for improving the natural environment” (“Environment Act 2021” 2021). Once introduced, the House of Commons has the first two reading stages and the committee stage,

both of which give MPs a chance to debate the bill and consider possible amendments to the bill. Once these stages were complete, the bill went to the report stage, where the MPs vote on amendments to the bill. During the amendment voting process for the Environment Act of 2021, the Conservative majority was able to control the amendment process through voting “no” on any amendments that they did not agree with. For example, many amendments proposed by Labour MPs were denied due to not having a majority of votes like clause 24, which would prohibit the burning of peat in upland areas (“Environment Bill: Volume 698” 2021). When put to a vote, the 351 Conservative MPs voted no, preventing the amendment from being added despite the Alliance party, Green party, Independents, Labour party, and Liberal Democrats voting yes (“Environment Bill: Division 18” 2021). As such, through using their majority, the Conservative party was able to control what goes into the bill as they became the strongest partisan veto player within the House due to the party system of the UK. Knowing that the bill could pass if all the Conservative MPs agreed on the bill, the Conservative party had an incentive to introduce the bill because they could control its introduction and passage in the House of Commons. After the bill passed the House of Commons, it then went to the House of Lords to repeat the same process.

In the House of Lords, the Lords will debate the bill and offer amendments. However, because the House of Lords is an appointed position and many members are not politically active, the voting process is not as politically divided as the House of Commons. For example, during the report stage, an amendment was proposed to say that soil health and quality are priority areas for environmental improvement and 209 Lords said they agreed with the amendment (“Environment Bill: Volume 814” 2021). While most Conservative Lords voted no, the amendment was still able to pass because not all Lords voted, and some Conservatives even

voted in favor of the amendment (“Environment Bill: Division 2” 2021). Unlike the House of Commons, the House of Lords is a delaying veto player because they can only delay the bill rather than decide whether the bill moves forward. Once the bill passed both Houses, the opposite Houses considered each other’s amendments and once agreed upon, then the bill was given to the Monarchy for their approval to become law.

Another bill to consider is the Nuclear Energy (Financing) Act of 2022, a bill that would provide “for the implementation of a regulated asset base model for nuclear energy generation projects” (“Nuclear Energy (Financing) Act 2022” 2022). Introduced in the House of Commons, the bill is supported by Greg Hands, a Conservative MP, during a Conservative party majority in the House of Commons. When the bill got to the report stage, like the previous piece of legislation, the Conservative MPs were able to prevent any amendments from opposing parties from passing though. For example, an amendment to require the Secretary of State to give parliament a report on the cost of the nuclear project was prevented from passing through 309 Conservative MPs voting “no” on it (“Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill: Volume 706” 2022). Once the House of Commons was able to discuss the bill in detail and were satisfied with the bill, then the bill moved to the House of Lords. In the House of the Lords, the unified Conservative party Lords were able to prevent more amendments to the bill with the support of some other parties like the Crossbench members (“Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill: Division 6” 2022). However, like the previous bill, the House of Lords would only be able to delay the bill and could not prevent the bill from moving forward within the legislation process. Once the bill was approved in the House of Lords, it then got made into law, which means that in total, the bill went through two institutional veto players and one major partisan veto player which is the Conservative party.



Table 4

Bills		
	Environment Act of 2021	Nuclear Energy (Financing) Act of 2022
Climate Change Policy Area	Plans to improve natural environment	Financing for nuclear energy projects
Institutional Veto Players	2	2
Partisan Veto Players	1	1

Both acts are now law and showcase the power of the party system in passing climate change legislation. Because the Conservative party had a majority when passing both bills, they were able to prevent any amendments they did not want from opposing parties. Furthermore, because the House of Lords is not a veto player unless certain conditions are met, the Conservative party was able to control the passage of the legislation because only the House of Commons could prevent either bill from passing. As such, for the UK, the party system controls which party comes to power and this in turn controls the kind of climate change legislation passed, because if the Conservative party did not like a piece of climate change legislation, they could prevent the bill from passing. This was clearly showcased by how in the Environment Act of 2021, the Labour party was not able to pass any of their amendments and the Conservative party was able to keep the wording they liked for the bill. Based on this, in the UK, the party system plays an important role in how easily climate change legislation is passed and the kind of legislation passed.

## COMPARISONS

In all three countries, party systems have played an important role in deciding which parties are in power, which in turn dictates the country's climate change decision making. The type of government, its party system, and election system determine the number of partisan veto players within a country and those partisan veto players can determine the country's climate change policies for their terms in parliament and office. The following comparisons between the three countries will further display this point.

In the case of Germany, the country has a parliamentary government system that operates within a multiparty system. Unlike the other cases in this study, Germany was the only one to consistently display a coalition government that shared power between parties rather than have one party control both parliament and the executive government. In comparison to this, France, which is a semi-presidential government that also operates within a multiparty system showcased a government style that prefers absolute majority rule compared to coalition. The multiparty system in Germany and its election process makes it so that no party can gain an absolute majority, as such, parties form coalitions which means that when passing climate change legislation, the coalition parties need to agree on the policy. In France though, the multiparty system and election process generally lead to the President and National Assembly majority coming from the same party, so the party can pass climate change legislation without working with other parties. This difference is most obvious with Germany's Renewable Energy Act of 2021 and France's Climate and Resilience Act. If any of the three coalition parties in Germany were not in agreement of the Renewable Energy Act, the bill would not have passed, but for France's Climate and Resilience Act, the bill would have passed even if all the opposition parties said no due to the Renaissance party's absolute majority. As such, the number of partisan veto

players that need to agree for a bill to pass matters when it comes to climate change legislation because if all parties do not have the same stance on climate change, then the policy will not pass.

In the case of the UK, the country has a parliamentary government like Germany, but operates under a two-party system. Like Germany and France, the UK has multiple parties, but only two parties dominate the UK political system. This means that while the political parties in power can change when it comes to Germany and France, for the UK, the two political parties in charge are normally the Conservative and Labour parties. Furthermore, like France, the UK can either have an absolute majority or coalition government, but generally, the country operates under one party. As such, both France and the UK cases display how having less partisan veto players in parliament allows for easier passage of legislation. In both the National Assembly and House of Commons, when there is only one partisan veto player, the party does not need to gain support from other parties when passing climate change legislation. However, unlike France whose Senate is also an institutional veto player, the UK's House of Lords can only delay bills normally and is only able to veto bills when certain conditions are met. As such, the House of Lords has a delaying veto power where it can delay the passage of a bill to get some time to change both political and public perception of the bill (Tsebelis 1995).

Using Tsebelis' (1995) veto player framework, this research was able to identify where partisan veto players are within the system. Tsebelis' definitions and previous research on veto players gave me the basis to decide which parties are partisan veto players. By first identifying which political parties are in power, we get an understanding of how they can influence legislation by looking at how they exercise their veto player powers. In all three cases, the

majority party used their large number of seats in the chambers and houses to decide what goes into policy and if the policy passes.

This research reveals how having less partisan veto players makes it easier for climate change legislation to pass because all parties have different stances on the issue. Furthermore, while some party systems allow for populist parties to be represented like Germany and France, others do not like the UK. However, in all three countries, the populist parties with negative stances toward climate change did not have enough seats in the parliaments to really make a difference in climate change legislation. This though could change, with a specific look at France, because the National Rally is gaining popularity in France, as shown through how in the last parliamentary elections, the party won 89 out of the 577 seats in the National Assembly to become the party with the second largest number of seats (Smith 2022). Table 5 shows the summary of the analysis.

Table 5

Countries			
	Germany	France	United Kingdom
Government Type	Parliamentary government	Semi-Presidential government	Parliamentary government
Party System	Multiparty	Multiparty	Two-party
Legislation	Renewable Energy Act of 2021 & Federal Climate Change Act 2021	Climate and Resilience Law & Anti-waste and Circular Economy Law	Environment Act of 2021 & Nuclear Energy (Financing) Act of 2022
Institutional Veto Players	3	3	2-3
Partisan Veto Players based on Legislation	3	2	1

## CONCLUSION

Party systems effect climate change decision making through determining the number of partisan veto players within a country. When there are more veto players a bill needs to go through, the more consensus is required among parties to pass the bill, however, if there are only a few veto players, then less consensus is needed. As such, coalition governments have a disadvantage to passing climate change legislation in comparison to absolute majority governments, because absolute majority governments generally have one to two partisan veto

players as showcased by France and the UK. However, while certain party systems lead to more veto players, they also lead to more representation in government. In the UK two-party system, while it would be hard for the Green party to gain seats, in Germany and France's multiparty systems, the Green party has a chance of gaining a seat in the coalition or absolute majority governments. This also means that populist parties have more of an opportunity to gain political representation in Germany and France compared to the UK, as there are less barriers for smaller parties. However, currently, no populist party has enough seats in parliament to effect climate change decision making. Based on this, while party systems do affect the partisan veto players in a country, it does not determine the climate change decision making of that country because another important aspect of the legislation is institutional veto players. However, understanding the role of party systems within the decision-making context can help explain why climate change legislation is difficult and why certain countries have an easier time passing legislation compared to others.

As such, to pass climate change policies, countries need parties that believe climate change to be an important issue and who will take policy actions towards addressing the issue. If the coalition parties or majority party were parties that does not believe in climate change, then through being a partisan veto player, the parties or party could stop climate change legislation. Furthermore, it will be easier to pass climate change legislation when parties are of a similar stance when it comes to the issue and how to solve it. When partisan veto player parties have different stances on how to address the issue, then like the Climate and Resilience Act in France, the original intent behind a bill could be changed. While not discussed in this research paper, in certain cases, a partisan veto player can prevent a climate change piece of legislation from moving forward in the legislative process by killing the bill with its majority. For these reasons,

when people want to pass more climate change legislation, they should look to which political party is in power, its stance on the issue, and how the party has already tried to address the problem, because the party is more likely to pass a policy that aligns with their view than not.

#### FUTHER AVENUES OF RESEARCH

This research showcases how different cases will have different results because each country has a different government system, party system, and election process. As such, more research needs to be done on other countries in Asia, Latin America, and the United States. Furthermore, this research only discussed domestic policy, but another important aspect of climate change legislation is international agreements which will have different veto players in comparison to domestic policy. By looking at the effect of party systems in climate change decision making in other countries and in international agreements, we will get a better understanding of the role party systems will play when it comes to addressing climate change.

In addition to expanding the research countries, this study also does not address the single-party system. Unlike the multiparty and two-party system, single-party systems only have one party in power for a long period of time. Thus, looking at the effect of the single-party system on climate change would showcase whether having only one party makes climate change decision making easier compared to a multiparty or two-party system. Based on this, there are still further avenues of research about the effect of party systems on climate change decision making.

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