



The Slovenian Greens: from early success to long-term failure

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Overview

- What factors determine Green party success?
- Presence of Green values
- The impact of economic crisis
- Development of Green parties in Slovenia
- Green party achievements
- Environmental policies
- Critical political decisions and failures of Green political leadership
- Conclusions



What factors determine Green party success?

- *External:*
 - electoral rules,
 - characteristics of competition within a party system,
 - value orientation of the electorate
- *Internal:*
 - organisational fragmentation of Green parties: intra party conflicts, conflicts among Green parties;
 - characteristics of party leadership and its behaviour
- *Economic crises* → decline in the legitimacy of „ideological „ parties in power
- **Characteristics of agency within the Green party segment**



Presence of Green values

- 1980s- supporting the development of the new Green social movement
- Environmental consciousness soon spread more widely across all generations and education groups
- Massive scope of mobilisation of citizens to solve environmental problems – Let's Clean Slovenia initiative
- Presence of post-modern values



ŠE ZADNJIČ

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Source: <https://www.ocistimo.si/>



The impact of economic crisis

- Ranking of citizens' values in favour of materialistic values (rather than post-materialistic values).
- Ranking of voters' preferences and public policies in a negative direction when it comes to the greening of politics.

BUT

- Opened a window for opposition parties and new parties to enter the system.



Development of Green parties in Slovenia I

- 1971 - established League of Societies for the Protection of the Environment in Slovenia
- 1980s - post modern environmental movement against industrial development (shutting down of the Krško nuclear power plant and the Žirovnica uranium mine , installation of cleaning devices, cutting the price of lead-free petrol)
- 11 June 1989 - party established out of the new social movement - The Greens of Slovenia.
- 8 April 1990 – success at the elections, position of Vice President of the Assembly, ministerial positions in the field of environmental protection and health and energy



Source: <https://siol.net/siol-plus/na-danasnji-dan/koalicija-ki-je-slovenijo-popeljala-v-samostojnost-430283>



Source: <https://siol.net/novice/slovenija/dusan-plut-v-zeleni-prtljagi-se-skriva-smrt-kapitalizma-video-22057>



Source: <http://www.rtv slo.si/moja-generacija/volitve-ki-so-slovenijo-popeljale-v-samostojnost/362344/>



Source: <https://www.mladina.si/93113/projedrski-lobi-deluje/>



Development of Green parties in Slovenia II

- 1990- faced difficulties shortly after the first multi-party elections:
 - 1) unclear relationship between internal party organs;
 - 2) management of political pluralism within the party was ineffective,
 - 3) internal left-right division.
- 1992- re-entered the parliament
- 1993 – the break up of The Greens of Slovenia into several Green parties



Development of Green parties in Slovenia III

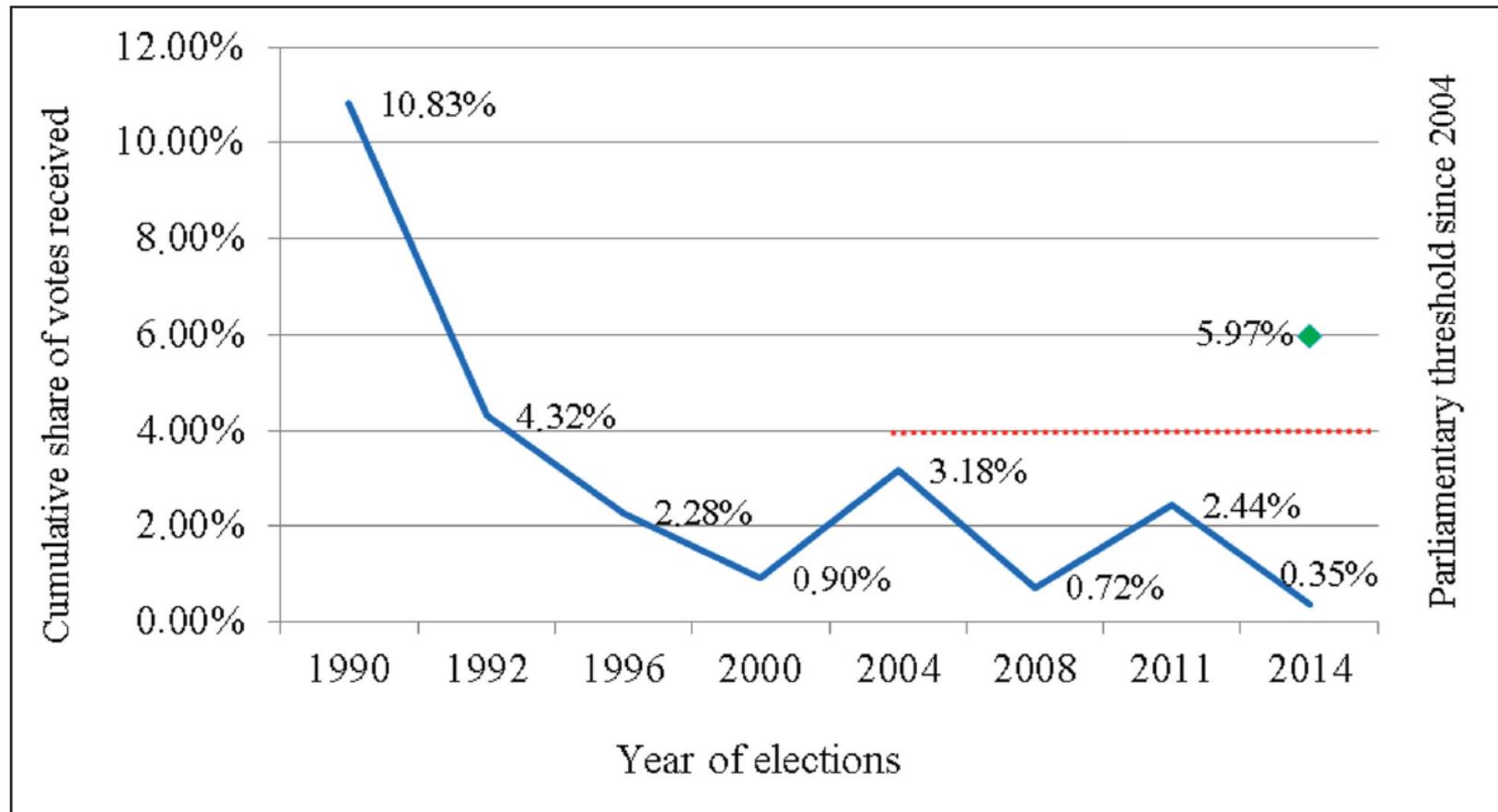
- 1996-2018 - The Greens of Slovenia remained the most persistent and regular green competitor at national elections.
- 2014 – Coalition United Left enters the parliament with one seat for TRS, the Party for eco-socialism
- 2004-2014- unsuccessful at EP elections, 1 MEP in Group of the Greens/ European Free Alliance
- 2018-The Greens of Slovenia enter in coalition with Andrej Čuš and get only 1,07% which is enough for receiving financial support from the state budget.
 - Left (Levica) with emphasis on green policies gains 9,29% and 9 MPs.



Source: <http://www.petv.tv/novice/splosno/andrej-cus-in-zeleni-slovenije/>



Figure 1: Cumulative percentage of votes for Green parties at parliamentary elections in Slovenia since 1990



Source: data from Table 1 (electoral results of Green parties at national and European elections).



Green party achievements

- The greening of a new coalition (1991)
- The adoption of a law on closing down the uranium mine in Žirovniski vrh
- Cutting taxes on some energy devices and construction material to build more eco-friendly buildings
- Measure to decrease dangerous industrial emissions and to clean several rivers
- Supporting projects in the field of waste management
- Ensuring an increase in the protection of recycled paper and its use in Slovenia;
- The introduction of cleaning devices in a series of individual factories in the chemical industry;
- Establishing a shelter for refugees from the former Yugoslav territory;
- The promotion of plastic Christmas trees;
- collecting and sending medical drugs to the people in the Ukraine whose health had been endangered by the nuclear accident in Chernobyl;
- and Leading several 'small' green projects [*ptica zlatovranka*].



Environmental policies

- Government coalition agreements have only included environmental policies as a dedicated segment when there have been Green representatives in the government
- Since 2004, consistent representation of environmental policies in recent coalition agreements due to the influence of EU's core strategies
- TRS- Party of Sustainable Development of Slovenia emphasises social policy matters: society of democratic ecological socialism, eco-socialism, ecological humanism → no publicly visible green activities by Green MPs



Critical political decisions and failures of Green political leadership

1. Joining the Demos coalition in 1990, when the party did not decide on where they stood on big political questions.
2. Collaboration and integration with ideological parties.
3. Unable to resolve the conflict over the alleged misuse of the parliamentary party funding.
4. Locally self-made politicians have exploited local Green political organisations.
5. Weak managerial abilities (2011).
6. Did not manage to take advantage of the crisis of legitimacy currently facing mainstream parties.



Highlights of the electoral programme of Levica



- Decent work, economic democracy
- Apartments, health system, public education, role of science and research, culture, **public transport**, sport and recreation
- Fight against poverty, pensions, equal opportunities, care for the disabled
- Fair taxes
- **Environmental policy that is independent from the economy, agriculture based on the nature and society, wellbeing of animals**
- Democratisation, journalism serving the public, equal legal protection
- Army for the defence not for NATO
- For the Europe of people, not capital

Source: <http://www.levica.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Levica-volilni-program-2018.pdf>



Agreement between Levica and 5 governmental parties

- Improving the public transport infrastructure;
- the transition to renewable energy sources and the limitation of pollution;
- care for animal welfare;
- sustainable agriculture and the preservation of rural areas.
- Levica, as the opposition partner of a minority government, may be exempt from the implementation of measure if he justifies the consequences: e.g. lower environmental standards.



Conclusions

- Slovenia's rather stable and ,weak' institutional rules – which have allowed for an open-party system – can be regarded as a supportive factor of Green parties' success
- Green values among voters have not waned and cannot be considered lost, even in the context of the economic crisis.
- The economic crisis has so far proved to be both a challenge as well as an opportunity for Green parties.
- Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the internal – particularly agential – characteristics of Green party developments could be the key for explaining of the decline of Green parties in particular national circumstances.