

ABSTRACT:

In a world that is increasingly growing in awareness on the detrimental effects that global warming may have on nature and human population in the short and long run, it seems reasonable to have a look at how the country which is going to be more affected by it in the EU is tackling it. Spain is going to be the country more affected by the increase of global surface temperatures but is going to be the one lagging behind in regards to CO₂ reduction as established by the Kyoto Protocol. In order to know the reasons why Spain is at the bottom of the list against global warming among western European countries we have carried out a comparative study with one of the more successful member states on environmental protection in the EU, Germany. By comparing them we wanted to highlight how their different historical past combined with the political choices of their different leaders and participation of their citizens means a lot in their environmental outcome. We have made a research on their historical economic background since after WWII and also had a look at the different government approaches towards the environment and global warming. We have also looked at the evolution of green parties and how the civil society, media and NGOs had a say on this matter. The results we found is that after WWII Spanish development was slowed down by Franco's dictatorship whereas Germany was living their „economic miracle“. After Franco's death Spain embraced democracy and experimented an unprecedented growth. However, his later entering into democracy, and reaching high quality of life made their population focus their attention on basic needs rather than post materialistic ones such as the environment and climate change. Despite of this, being part of the European Union plus the increasing involvement of its population in the last years due to the shift toward Postmaterialistic values, are the driving force for Spain to push forward its commitment on the fight against global warming.

Key Words: Environmental Politics, Comparative Analysis, Germany, Spain, Global Warming, Postmaterialism, Democracy, NGOs