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German Foreign Policy After Unification.

A Re-Examination of Realist Prognoses.

- A Tübingen-Based Project -

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1. Summary

The paper describes the research design of a project whose purpose is to analyze and to explain the foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany after unification. Has the end of the East-West conflict and of the German division effected a significant change in German foreign policy? And more specifically: is the prediction, offered by the realist theory of international relations, that Germany would pursue a more power-oriented foreign policy born out by the facts? To answer these questions, five areas of German foreign policy will be examined and compared both before and after the turning point of 1990. These include: security policy within NATO, EC/EU constitutional politics, foreign trade policy within the GATT, development aid policy, and human rights policy.

2. State of the Art and Research Background of the Project

Before delineating our hypotheses, our methodology, and the cases we have selected for in-depth study, we briefly review the literature on the foreign policy of the "new" Germany. This review is

in two parts: in the first part we offer a state of the art of the analysis of German foreign policy; in the second we summarize our own previous work on this subject, in order to indicate the background (both theoretical and empirical) against which we have planned our research.

2.1. State of the Art: the Study of the Foreign Policy of United Germany

After the end of the East-West conflict and in the wake of Germany's unification, the question of how the foreign policy of the "new" Germany relates to that of the "old" Federal Republic soon became a central theme in the study of German foreign policy. Currently, an essayistic approach to this question dominates the literature. Theory-guided and systematic comparative analyses are rare if not completely absent. In conducting this project we hope to go some way towards closing this lacuna. In our survey of the state of the art, we distinguish three strands of scholarly research on this topic: contributions to the prescriptive debate, discourse analysis, and behavioral analysis. Since this project is behaviorally-oriented, we pay the most attention to the latter strand.

2.1.1. Strands of Current Research on German Foreign Policy

(1) The best part of the current literature can be seen as contributing to the *prescriptive debate* about where Germany's interests lie at the end of the twentieth century and how it should conduct its foreign policy. Books and articles typical of this line of research are less concerned with producing sound scientific evidence than with shaping public opinion. Arguments advanced in the prescriptive debate therefore will not play a major role in this research project, although, quite inevitably, they are based upon assumptions about the characteristics of Germany's foreign policy in the past as well as about the nature and the implications of the changes in the systemic conditions under which it defines and pursues its foreign policy interests.

(2) The subject of the literature which we refer to as *discourse analysis* is not the German foreign policy itself but the way it is talked about. ([Footnote 1](#)) These studies point out that new key terms such as "normality" and "responsibility" have marked the foreign policy debate since the unification. Failing to discuss the interrelationship between the public debate, on the one hand, and the actual foreign policy behavior, on the other, the significance of these observations remains in doubt.

(3) The third line of research - the one that is most relevant to our own objectives - consists of *analyses of the foreign policy behavior* of the "new" Germany. More than with anything else, this literature is concerned with the question of whether or not the years around 1990 represent a turning point for German foreign policy. The scholarly debate has centered upon two issues. The first is the international status of Germany: has Germany become more powerful as a result of the Cold War having ended and the divided country being re-united? The second, much more controversial, issue is the alleged changes in Germany's foreign policy that these events, according to some but not all observers, have triggered: is there such a thing as a "new" German foreign policy to be observed or to be expected in the near future? The answers that scholars have come up with in response to these questions vary, but not in an arbitrary fashion. Rather, they reflect each

individual's affinity to, or sympathy for, a particular school of thought in international relations theory.

2.1.2. Germany After 1990: Does it Command More Power?

The authors who view "1990" ([Footnote 2](#)) as a decisive turning point primarily draw upon theorems of the realist school of thought to justify their position. ([Footnote 3](#)) According to the *realist view*, the unification of Germany, along with the structural changes of which it formed a part, brought about an increase in power of the Federal Republic - an increase which will generate the desire for more independence and a greater readiness to exercise power in order to influence outcomes at the international level. Major representatives of American realism regard the relative increase in German power as an obvious fact not worth the trouble of subjecting it to careful empirical validation (cf. Mearsheimer 1990; Layne 1993: 37f.; Waltz 1993: 62ff.). German authors usually distinguish between various factors of power. According to Hacke (1993), for example, Germany's enlargement in terms of both territory and population can only have long-term effects. When it comes to justifying the claim that Germany has become more powerful, much greater importance is attached to the recovery of its full sovereignty, the increase in economic strength, and the attractiveness of its political system (having been confirmed most spectacularly by the circumstances that led to the collapse of the GDR).

Others have evoked the realist theorem that the *geo-political position* of a state shapes its foreign policy. Thus, it has been pointed out that, due to the breakdown of the Warsaw Pact, Germany finds itself in a "new middle position" (*neue Mittellage*) between a stable West and an unstable East, which is likely to cause it to redefine its foreign policy interests.

Representatives of other schools of thought have criticized the realist analysis of foreign policy for overestimating the significance of the international distribution of power. From an *institutionalist perspective*, the enmeshment of Germany into various international institutions, first and foremost the European Community/Union and NATO, is a most important fact, because it is assumed that deep institutional commitments such as those that Germany has entered into in the past decades tend to undermine the value of power as a foreign policy goal. ([Footnote 4](#)) The *liberal* school of thought places greater importance upon intra-state and inter-societal, rather than interstate, structures and processes for explaining foreign policy. As a result, authors representative of this school warn against overrating the discontinuity in the conditions under which German foreign policy is made. ([Footnote 5](#)) It is not that these authors deny that Germany faces new challenges in its foreign relations and that change is likely to occur. Change will come and is taking place already, but not as a result of a sudden increase in power. What is really taking place, according to these authors, is a process in which Germany as well as other states have to adapt to a new form of world politics which is no longer driven exclusively by states, but in which societal and economic actors have become "global players" and are increasingly constraining state action. This new form of world politics has been emerging for decades, but has gained further momentum and special importance for Germany by virtue of the processes of transformation taking place in central and eastern Europe.

2.1.3. Germany After 1990: Does It Use More of Its Power?

Different assessments of current developments in global politics have produced different expectations for German foreign policy. While realists interpret "1990" as a watershed and expect to see a shift towards power politics in German foreign policy, both institutionalists and liberals do not envisage a greater role for power in the foreign policy of the "new" Germany. According to their respective interpretation of the current world scene and the factors that are most salient in determining its future, they foresee a German foreign policy that is marked by fundamental continuity or one that is pre-occupied with the adaptation to the emerging post-Westphalian world politics.

More explicitly and more self-consciously than their German counterparts, realists in the U.S. tend to base their predictions about Germany's foreign policy on theoretical assumptions, suggesting that voices in the German foreign policy, like calling for a return to power politics and a re-orientation towards unilateral assertion of interests are likely to carry the day (cf. Mearsheimer 1990; Waltz 1993). They do not fail to notice that as yet German foreign policy continues to display a preference for multilateral coordination. At the same time, however, they point to a multitude of particular foreign policy decisions and demands which they interpret as harbingers of the imminent re-orientation of Germany's foreign policy. Among these events are the politics preceding the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, the demand for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, and for the recognition of German as an official working language of the EC/EU (cf. Kaiser 1993; Layne 1993: 37f.; Schöllgen 1993: 28). ([Footnote 6](#))

The books of Schwarz (1994) and Hacke (1993) are exemplary of the realist standpoint within the German discourse. According to Schwarz, the Federal Republic of Germany has always practiced "small state virtues", that is to say, it expressed its desires only in concert with others. Germany "wants to continue practicing small state virtues. However, the nature of the European state system is such that it cannot do so if it wants to meet its political responsibility" (Schwarz 1994: 10). Germany is assuming the role of the "central power of Europe", whether it likes it or not.

Hacke (1993: 467) observes that Germany had, for the first time, defined its interests in the manner of other nation-states, when it identified the stability of Eastern Europe as a key foreign policy goal. For Hacke this meant that Germany was assuming all-European responsibility foreshadowing its future role in Europe. He uses the example of Germany's policy in the Yugoslavian conflict to illustrate this new role, claiming that European diplomacy failed because Germany backed out of the more assertive policy stance it had taken in the beginning of the conflict and failed to bring its power to bear on its partners to secure a more coherent European policy (Hacke 1993: 495). However, in the near future he expects Germany to base the definition of its immediate policy goals more firmly on a self-conscious analysis of its national interest and to no longer eschew the use of power resources to further these goals.

The analyses offered by authors adhering to the institutionalist or liberal school of thought stand out from those shaped by a realist perspective not by virtue of how they describe the current German foreign policy. Not surprisingly, the main difference is one of interpretation: they stress the observable continuation of a multilaterally coordinated foreign policy as particularly important, downplaying the mentioned cases of irritating German unilateralism as exceptions to be explained with reference to specific and unusual domestic constellations. Thus, in the case of Yugoslavia,

both Wagner (1992: 38) and Müller (1992) put down the German behavior to domestic pressures, denying that strategic considerations had a significant part in the decisionmaking.

2.1.4. Research Deficits

In sum, the recent literature on German foreign policy displays the following shortcomings: Discourse analysis and prescriptive studies are clearly overrepresented, whereas theory-based and comparative descriptions and explanations of the development of German foreign policy before and after the turning point of 1990 are scarce. As a rule, theory-based analyses do not go far beyond stating rather general expectations of behavior. Empirical evaluations of these expectations do exist, but they fail to meet the requirements of sound validation. Case studies either concentrate on single striking events whose potential for generalization is doubtful, such as German foreign policy in the case of Yugoslavia, or they remain essentially atheoretical.

The questions raised in the recent debate on German foreign policy regarding continuity or change and, more generally, the explanation of German foreign policy after 1990 could not be satisfactorily answered this way. There is yet another reason which in part accounts for the scarcity of compelling analyses of this subject. Various authors have argued that the foreign policy of Germany is still in a transitional phase, and that, therefore, the time has not yet come for a meaningful empirical test of the various theoretical expectations (cf. Bredow/Jaeger 1993: 24). Yet, the nature of this argument is such that it keeps losing force with every year that goes by. By the end of our project, almost one decade will have passed since the unification. Within this time frame, a causal influence (if there is any) of the change of the international system upon the foreign policy of Germany must be observable. ([Footnote 7](#))

2.2. Research Background of the Project

2.2.1. Analysis of German Foreign Policy

In our own pertinent work prior to, and immediately after, the unification, we focused on identifying *basic patterns and determining factors* of Germany's foreign policy (Rittberger 1987). In so doing, it proved advantageous to differentiate various *issue areas* ("security", "welfare", "system of rule") as well as different *macropolitical contexts* ("West", "East", "South", "global") of foreign policy (Rittberger 1990; 1992a). All in all, the "old" Federal Republic could be characterized as an "internationally cooperating democratic trading state" (Rittberger 1990: 19). The alternative claim advanced by some authors already before the unification, that Germany held a hegemonic position within Western Europe or could even be regarded as a world power against its will, was rejected as lacking convincing empirical support.

We also sought, at an early stage, to contribute to the *discussion concerning the status and the foreign policy* of united Germany (Rittberger 1992a, 1992b). ([Footnote 8](#)) We pointed out that this discussion could be seen as the extension of a debate that started well before the watershed of 1990 (e.g. Rittberger 1992b: 207ff.) and examined the propositions that there had been an increase in German power and, as a result, a "new" German foreign policy was emerging. The thrust of these early studies is skeptical, arguing that the claim that German foreign policy is undergoing a change

in favor of more power politics is pre-mature at best.

Amongst other things, these essays draw attention to the fact that the accession of the GDR has led to no more than a 10 per cent increase in Germany's economic resources as measured by total GNP (Rittberger 1992a: 251) and that its economic strength may have actually decreased if we look at indicators such as GNP per capita or balance of payments (Rittberger 1992b: 213f.). In addition, it is noted that Germany's military strength was reduced due to the cutbacks stipulated in the Two-plus-Four Treaty (Wolf 1991: 257; Rittberger 1992b: 211f.). Accordingly, an increase in German power, at least in its conventional material sense, can by no means be taken for granted. (The picture may change, though, if we take into account the considerably greater political leeway Germany appears to have gained due to the structural changes of "1990".)

In those previous studies, the claim that a shift towards power politics has taken place in German foreign policy or that there are clear signs of such a shift occurring in the foreseeable future is assessed with caution. On closer scrutiny, even the realists' prominent cases of the new German unilateralism and its claim to hegemony - i.e. the diplomatic recognition of the successor states of Yugoslavia and the creation of a European currency union - do not prove what they are intended to prove. At a minimum, the behavior of Germany with regard to these issues reveals a considerable measure of continuity with its traditional "small state virtues": as before, Germany exhibits a great eagerness to reach agreement with its Western European partners and a strong commitment to deepening the Western European integration.

These findings are accounted for in terms of the *continuity of the institutional setting* in which German foreign policy takes shape. Domestically, this continuity is due to the fact that the GDR simply acceded to the Federal Republic whose central political and social institutions, including the Basic Law, remain in place. Internationally, continuity is provided by Germany's unquestioned membership in NATO and the EC/EU. In the absence of any indications that this institutional setting is likely to be replaced or fundamentally altered in the near future, it is predicted that the basic orientations of German foreign policy will remain unchanged.

Thus, our previous work on German foreign policy heavily draws on the theoretical resources provided by the liberal and institutional schools of thought. None of these studies, however, aspires to offer a theory-guided comparative analysis of the transformation of German foreign policy. In fact, the thematic focus of some of these studies is clearly placed upon the foreign policy of the old Federal Republic. Others deal with the united Germany but were written early after unification and are primarily of an essayistic nature.

2.2.2. Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis

The project described in the second part of this paper (sec. 3) is the continuation of an earlier study in theory-guided comparative foreign policy that we conducted in recent years. This study focused on the responses, of four industrialized countries, to the "UNESCO crisis" (Rittberger 1995). More specifically, its goal was to explain the strongly divergent policies of the USA, the Soviet Union, France, and Germany toward, and within, UNESCO during the conflict over the "New World Information and Communication Order" between 1978 and 1987. Explanatory factors of numerous theoretical approaches were integrated into a coherent foreign policy model and empirically tested.

A major concern was establishing the relative explanatory power of systemic (i.e. realist) and subsystemic (i.e. liberal) variables in accounting for these outcomes: could the variance in behavior have been predicted on the basis of differences in the power position occupied by states or was that variance a consequence of certain domestic structures? In addition, we were interested in finding out whether the policies of the four countries were reflective of their issue area-specific interests or could be more plausibly analyzed as instantiations of pre-established policy styles.

The results of the project did not clearly favor either a realist or a liberal explanatory approach. Both the position of a state in the general power structure and its preferences concerning political and societal order (as they are expressed, for example, in its media system) proved to be variables that can account for the observed variation in foreign policy interests and behaviors. However, a more exact prediction of the conflict positions and behavior of the four states required taking into consideration the changing party composition of national governments - a fact which speaks to the liberal, but not the realist, theory of international relations.

The controversy between realism and liberalism (along with institutionalism) also lies at the heart of the differences between the various assessments of German foreign policy after unification. However, while the UNESCO Project conducted a basically synchronous comparison of the foreign policies of several countries within a precisely defined context, the new project takes a quite different, though still comparative, approach in that it traces the foreign policy of a single country over time in various issue areas.

3. Research Design

3.1. Guiding Questions and Hypotheses

The central goal of this project is to reduce the lack of theory-guided empirical analyses of German foreign policy after the end of the East-West conflict. More specifically, we seek

- (1) to answer the basic questions raised in the literature concerning the factors determining continuity and/or change in German foreign policy;
- (2) to tie the assumptions concerning foreign policy change implicit in the recent literature back to theories of international relations and to reformulate them as testable hypotheses;
- (3) to analyze the development of German foreign policy in specific issue areas from the early 1980s to the end of the 1990s in the form of focused and structured case studies, and, finally,
- (4) to arrive, on the basis of these case studies, at an empirically sound assessment of the realist predictions concerning the development of German foreign policy.

As discussed earlier, the differing expectations as to how the new Germany would conduct its foreign policy can be assigned to specific schools of thought in International Relations. In the next three sections, we take a closer look at the realist, institutionalist and liberal theories of international politics in order to identify the factors which, from the perspective of each theory, shape the foreign policies of states and pinpoint the predictions they entail for German foreign policy behavior in the 1990s.

3.1.1. Realism

The argument that dominates the current public and academic debate consists of two linked propositions. It states (1) that Germany has gained power as a result of unification and the global structural and political changes which made it possible and (2) that therefore its foreign policy style will shift towards power politics. This argument is clearly inspired by the realist school of thought. [\(Footnote 9\)](#) The central assumptions of realism can be summarized as follows: states are rational actors; anarchy and the distribution of power among states are the essential structural characteristics of the international system; under anarchy, the main goal of states is to ensure their survival and autonomy; the most important means to achieve this goal is their (relative) power; therefore they strive to maintain their (relative) power in comparison to that of competitor states (defensive positionalism) and, if possible, to increase it (offensive positionalism). [\(Footnote 10\)](#)

Realists predict that when the power position of a state improves, its foreign political behavior will also change according to its enlarged room for manoeuvre. [\(Footnote 11\)](#) Due to the increase in power the state is better equipped to pursue its interests and can widen both its sphere of action and its influence, as it has to worry less about other states' goals and policies (Waltz 1979: 194; 1986: 332). A marked increase in power may even induce a state to work towards a revision of the international status quo seeking to make the institutional framework of world politics more reflective of its increased power potential and more favorable to the pursuit of its goals (Gilpin 1981: 50ff).

According to Waltz (1993: 66), the nascent superpower, Germany, can be expected to undergo such a change in its foreign policy. *In the context of this project, we accept the analysis, advanced by Waltz and other neorealists, according to which Germany's (power) position within the international system has significantly improved.* Even if the population growth, the territorial gain and the enlarged social product are not regarded as sufficient to warrant the conclusion that the new Germany commands a significantly greater amount of power resources, the fact that external constraints as important as the threat posed by the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the restrictions on German sovereignty imposed by the Four Powers have vanished suffices to make an increase in Germany's overall power plausible. [\(Footnote 12\)](#) In principle, one might seek to integrate additional categories of power, such as "civilian power" (Maull). Clearly, however, such immaterial power categories are alien to realist theory, although they are quite akin to other theoretical approaches. Consequently, such categories are ignored when it comes to specifying the realist predictions, but, being deducible from competing theories of international relations, resurface in the process of identifying appropriate control variables (see below). [\(Footnote 13\)](#)

In the following, we distinguish two realist motivational assumptions leading to different *behavioral expectations*, i.e. autonomy maximization and influence maximization. Both behavioral expectations are variants of "power politics", the central concept of the realist school of thought. The assumption that states maximize autonomy is most clearly presented in Waltz's structural realism. In contrast, the notion of influence maximization is consistent with traditional realism as well as less rigid strands of contemporary realist theory.

(1) In light of the assumption of *autonomy maximization*, one would expect German foreign policy to move towards independence and unilateral action, particularly in the sphere of "high politics",

the core of which is constituted, according to realist theory, by security policy. Over the last forty years the "old" Federal Republic has tied itself in many ways to international institutions. Thus, one would have to assume that Germany, having become more powerful in material terms and facing less narrow structural and juridical constraints than before, will now attempt to disentangle itself from, or at least reduce its commitment to, these institutions. Hence, the prediction derived from *autonomy-oriented realism* for German foreign policy is as follows:

Prediction 1: Due to its improved power position, Germany will adopt a foreign policy more strongly oriented towards independence and unilateral action and will attempt to liberate itself from the numerous restrictions imposed upon it by multilateral institutions.

(2) The alternative realist assumption we are taking into account attributes to states a desire to maximize their influence on international political outcomes. *Maximization of influence* as a fundamental goal of foreign policy means that states primarily strive to gain as much influence as possible on the (collective) decisions made in international politics, which essentially allows them to pursue their "national" interests more efficiently. This argument differs from the first one in that international institutions are regarded less as a restriction of autonomy than as an opportunity for the effective and efficient pursuit of "national" interests.

The idea that states care for influence more than for independence can be seen as underlying the realist - *theory of hegemonic stability*, according to which international institutions can be established and maintained if and only if a superior power is able and willing to bear the costs associated with their creation and maintenance (cf. Kindleberger 1981; Keohane 1984). The investment is worthwhile for the hegemon, since it is in a position to tailor the institution to its own interests (although other states will benefit as well). If Germany were the aspiring regional hegemon in Europe, as it is often described, it might well be in its best interest to seek to dominate the European institutions rather than to desert them. A similar idea is expressed in recent realist work on the EU. According to the *voice-opportunity* thesis (Grieco 1995), states accept their institutional enmeshment when, as a result, they possess greater leverage over collective political decisions that might affect their interests. Although Grieco applied this thesis to the smaller EU member states, the same logic could plausibly explain Germany's continuing commitment to the EU.

Nevertheless, from a realist perspective, an increase in power could not fail to have political consequences. Since Germany, according to this view, would primarily seek to gain as much influence as possible, German foreign policy would concentrate on using its improved power base to increase its influence capacity within (regional and global) multilateral institutions. Maximization of influence may, but need not, include attempts to change the (formal) rules that define international institutions. Hence, *influence-oriented realism* offers the following prediction for German foreign policy:

Prediction 2: Due to its improved power position, Germany will seek to increase its influence on collective decisionmaking in institutional institutions, which it strives to instrumentalize for the pursuit of its own interests.

Both predictions agree that *power politics* will be a key characteristic of the new German foreign policy. They differ in how they expect this general characteristic to materialize in concrete action, expecting Germany to reduce its institutional commitments for the sake of greater *independence* in

the first case or instead to maintain (or even intensify) those commitments in order to enhance its *influence* in these institutions in the second.

A central problem with testing theory-guided predictions is the potential influence of variables that are not part of the analytical model upon which the research is based. If these variables go unnoticed and their influence on the dependent variable is not taken into account, the results of theory testing may be highly misleading. [\(Footnote 14\)](#) For this reason, such variables should be integrated into the analytical model, and their influence upon the independent variable should be controlled.

Theoretically meaningful *control variables* can be derived from two schools of thought that compete with realism, i.e. institutionalism and liberalism. Institutionalism attributes a significant influence on the foreign policy of states to international institutions; liberalism traces a state's foreign policy back to societal interests, values, and norms. Both institutionalists and liberals claim that the explanatory variables they emphasize have an impact on foreign policy which is independent of the international distribution of power. [\(Footnote 15\)](#)

3.1.2. Institutionalism

Institutionalism, like realism, proceeds from the level of the international system in order to explain the foreign policy behavior of states. Furthermore, institutionalism shares with realism the emphasis on the anarchic structure of the international system in which states interact as unitary and rational actors. However, institutionalists conceive of the implications for state behavior of this structure differently from realists. Two analytical approaches within the institutionalist school of thought can be distinguished. (1) In contrast to neorealism, rational (or "weak") institutionalism assumes that, in spite of international anarchy, states maximize absolute rather than relative gains and cooperate with other states in problematic social situations (Schelling's mixed-motives games) when doing so promises greater absolute gains (for themselves) than does unilateral action (cf. e.g. Grieco 1988; Keohane 1989; Zuern 1992). For the purpose of regulating their interaction and the monitoring of cooperative behavior, states establish international regimes and organizations (subsumed under the generic concept of international institutions). Rational institutionalists hold that, when the distribution of power among members of an institution shifts, the beneficiaries of the shift are not likely to leave the institution in an attempt to become less dependent on the choices and preferences of others, but are likely to make an effort to maximize their gains within the institution.

The similarity between rational institutionalism and realism, especially influence-oriented realism, is obvious. Like realism, rational institutionalism assumes that state interests are exogenously given (relative gains in neorealism, absolute gains in institutionalism) and that states behave as self-interested and goal-rational actors. Like influence-oriented realism, rational institutionalism expects a state whose power has increased to seek a greater say in collective decisionmaking within institutions. By virtue of this far-reaching consensus, there is no point in adding rational institutionalism as a separate analytical perspective to our research agenda. [\(Footnote 16\)](#) (2) In contrast, reflexive (or "strong") institutionalism [\(Footnote 17\)](#) attributes to international institutions a greater degree of robustness and a greater capacity to influence state behavior. Although a given institution (or set of institutions) may have been originally created as an

instrument to further specific state interests, over time it is likely to develop, through a process of transforming initial state interests and identities, into an independent determinant of behavior. In contrast to both "weak" institutionalism and neorealism, strong institutionalism does not view state interests as exogenously given and relatively constant over time. Rather, state interests are themselves results of ongoing, cooperative or uncooperative, processes of interaction and are subject to learning processes taking place within institutions. [\(Footnote18\)](#) Institutionalized cooperation may, according to this view, induce a state to fundamentally change its perceptions of other states: a competitor may turn into a reliable partner. As a result, the mechanism of power maximization, supposedly a logical corollary of the anarchic structure of the states system, may be suspended. Power politics itself has to be understood as an institution that can be controlled, if not overcome, in the context of a "mature" or "regulated" anarchy (Buzan 1983: 96; Keohane 1989: 161; Rittberger/Zürn 1990; Wendt 1992: 409).

From the perspective of "strong" institutionalism, the gain in power of a state does not inevitably lead to a behavior which is more oriented towards power politics. This is just one possibility among several. Whether it becomes reality or not is dependent upon the nature of international norms which, in turn, influence the interest and value structure of the actor concerned. Anderson and Goodman (1993: 60) support this opinion in their analysis of (West) German foreign policy before and after 1990:

"Over the course of forty years, West Germany's reliance on a web of international institutions to achieve its foreign policy goals, born of an instrumental choice among painfully few alternatives, became so complete as to cause these institutions to become embedded in the very definition of state interests and strategies. In effect, this is what we mean when we describe Germany's institutional commitments in the post-1989 period as reflexive, they have become engrained, even assumed."

Thus, students of German foreign policy who subscribe to reflexive institutionalism point out that Germany has been enmeshed into a tight web of international institutions which support cooperative practices and discourage competitive maximization of gains. Moreover, these institutions have survived the turning point of 1990 intact and fundamentally unchanged. As a result, reflectivists expect that Germany's increase in power will lead neither to a foreign policy more strongly oriented towards autonomy nor to one more strongly concerned with maximizing one's own influence on collective decisionmaking.

3.1.3. Liberalism

The liberal school of thought differs from both realism and institutionalism in its emphasis on subsystemic (unit-level) factors. According to Moravcsik (1992: 2), this theory is grounded in three basic assumptions:

- (1) individuals and social groups are the fundamental actors in international politics;
- (2) governmental policies represent the interests of society as a whole or, more commonly, those of its most powerful component groups; and
- (3) international politics is determined by the convergence or divergence of (societal) interests (advocated by governments) rather than by the distribution of power at the international level.

Thus liberals, in contrast to realists, assume that the interests and the margins of action of the state

apparatus are (at least in liberal democratic, industrialized countries) determined, to a large extent, by societal actors and structures. Societal groups are primarily concerned with achieving their own goals, which need not, and often will not, include increasing the power of the state in the international system. Societal actors are not committed to the *raison d'etat*. This is not to say, however, that liberalism rules out the possibility that power politics, in the sense of the maximization of state autonomy or influence, may, in a particular situation, lie in the interest of influential societal groups.

Liberalism identifies two kinds of factors which can cause a power increase not to lead to a stronger orientation towards power politics: (1) the constellation of societal interests and (2) the values and norms which are internalized and institutionalized in the society. Those who emphasize the first set of factors can be referred to as utilitarian liberals; by contrast, idealistic liberals are characteristically concerned with the second source of stability and change in foreign policy behavior.

(1) According to *utilitarian liberalism*, influential societal groups and organizations may perceive their interests to be best served by the government not changing its foreign policy, even though the range of options Germany faces may indeed have increased. One could argue that the economic and political elites of the Federal Republic have adapted to the established restrictions on action and have fared well with the old foreign policy. A foreign policy change towards more power politics would cause not only "adjustment costs" but also pursue "autonomy gains" for which there is no politically influential demand in German society. It could be argued that in a "trading state" such as Germany (Rosecrance 1986), there are simply no societal groups who are both influential enough to force a change upon foreign policy and have interests that are better served by power-political unilateralism than by cooperative means.

From this, the *utilitarian-liberal expectation* follows that Germany, despite its general increase in power, will neither attempt to free itself from its multilateral ties nor try to increase its influence on collective decisionmaking in international institutions.

(2) According to *idealistic liberalism*, the "foreign policy culture" of a society, the entrenched policy style, or the institutionalized values and norms will often prove robust in the face of changes in the power status of the country. Moreover, such practices and beliefs may prevent the state from using its enhanced power to engage in power politics - even if a re-orientation of foreign policy along these lines promises considerable gains for the economic and political elites. Examples of such factors operating in the German case are laws regulating and restricting foreign policy choices and societal mechanisms of interest formation directed towards cooperation and compensation. Thus, the German Basic Law requires the government to work for peace and is supportive of a policy of integration; domestic political practices which create and sustain a climate which is hostile to unilateralism and relentless maximization of gains at all levels of politics include the tradition of corporatism and the principle of social partnership (cf. Katzenstein 1991).

Accordingly, the *idealistic-liberal expectation* concerning German foreign policy is that, due to societally anchored norms operating as constraints on foreign policy behavior, the growth in German power will not be followed by a foreign policy change which is characterized by an increased projection or use of power.

Figure 1 summarizes the analytical model of the project (and is not implemented in the WWW-Text. Please see the paper-version of the text.)

The model includes four independent variables. The value of the *test variable* "overall power", as derived from realist theory, changes during the period of inquiry, i.e. there is an "increase in overall power". By contrast, the values of the *control variables* "international institutions", "social interests", and "social values and norms", as derived from institutionalist and liberal theory, respectively, are expected to remain constant. The realist cause-and-effect relationship which is to be investigated is represented by the double line. Realism claims that the distribution of power is the most important determinant of foreign policy. Consequently, in the case at hand, realists predict that the causal tendencies inherent in the shift of power in favor of Germany (i.e. tendencies towards power politics) will prevail over the competing influences of international institutions, social interests, and social values and norms - factors which would lead us to expect continuity rather than change in German foreign policy. For this reason, realists expect either an autonomy-oriented or an influence-oriented, power-political profile to emerge in German foreign policy.

3.2. Cases and Methodology

3.2.1. Criteria for the Selection of Cases

In principle, various methods can be applied in hypothesis testing. Basic methods include the experiment, the statistical method, controlled comparison, ([Footnote 19](#)) and the (single) case study. These four methods differ, among other things, in the way they handle the problem of control (i.e. the consideration of the potential influence of other variables not explicated in the hypothesis). In that, they vary strongly in respect of their efficiency and the reliability of their results. The experimental method copes best with this problem, followed by the statistical method and the controlled comparison, whilst the (single) case study method refrains completely from controlling "confounding variables".

While the experimental method is inapplicable to foreign policy analysis for obvious reasons, the statistical method could, in principle, be applied. However, the virtues of statistical analyses do not unfold unless a minimum number of independent cases are available. Only when N is sufficiently large is it guaranteed that the random selection of cases will not lead to distorted results and that the influence of confounding variables is filtered out. Though a variety of issue areas can be distinguished in German foreign policy, its number is hardly large enough to justify employing the statistical method of evaluation.

The method of controlled comparison solves the problem of control by means of the intentional selection of cases. Thus, in contrast to the statistical method, it is applicable to a smaller universe of cases. Another advantage of the method of controlled comparison is that it allows for an intensive and detailed examination of the cases. Hence, this method is particularly appropriate to our research purpose.

The *method of controlled comparison* specifies certain criteria to be observed in the selection of cases: cases are suitable if they (1) vary on the independent ("test") variable and (2) exhibit as

little variance as possible on other explanatory ("control") variables:

(1) For all issue areas of German foreign policy, the first requirement, in regards to the realist hypothesis, is met by the choice of points of time for observation: variance in the independent variable (overall power) is guaranteed in all areas of foreign policy through the choice of one point of time for observation before unification and a further one thereafter.

(2) The second condition is also met by our research design: The values of the control variables (international institutions, societal interests, societal values and norms) can be regarded as constant throughout the period of inquiry. In addition, it is necessary (or, at least, highly desirable) that a basic continuity exists in an issue area: i.e., in the areas of German foreign policy to be studied, issues and addressees should be the same before and after 1990. ([Footnote 20](#)) In general, very little should have changed in the foreign policy issue areas to be studied save Germany's power position.

Two further criteria for the selection of cases are taken into account in order to make sure that the results of the project are representative and persuasive:

(3) This research project is neither intended to provide a comprehensive descriptive account of German foreign policy, nor is it designed to classify German foreign policy decisions according to whether they conform to realist or rather to liberal and institutional expectations. On the contrary, the project is primarily oriented towards explanation; it asks whether realist theory and realist predictions hold up in the case of German foreign policy. Nonetheless, the project strives for robust findings regarding the totality of German foreign policy after unification. Therefore, it is indispensable to study cases from a variety of issue areas of German foreign policy. The distinction made by Czempiel (1981) between three broad policy areas of international politics (security, welfare, and system of rule) is helpful when it comes to making sure that the cases are representative of the whole spectrum of German foreign policy, suggesting the selection rule that the (set of) case studies should cover all three policy areas. In addition, representativeness in terms of the "macropolitical contexts" ("West", "South", etc.) considered is sought as well (see sec. 2.2.1. above).

(4) General theories of international relations such as realism, institutionalism, and liberalism claim to explain the whole range, but not all the details, of international relations. The view is widespread, though, that the explanatory power of any given theory varies from one issue area of international politics to another. Accordingly, issue areas for which a given theory is assumed to possess a great deal of explanatory leverage provide "easy cases" for this theory; conversely, cases taken from issue areas where the explanatory power of other theories is generally regarded as greater can be viewed as "hard cases" for the theory in question. Therefore, we have made sure that both hard and easy cases for realist theory are included in our sample in order to secure fair testing conditions for its predictions. "High politics", i.e. problems pertaining to the security and the essential contents of the sovereignty of a state, are commonly viewed as the "home ground" for realism. Realism, therefore, should face little difficulty explaining foreign policy behavior in cases belonging to these issue areas. Conversely, the less relevant an issue area is to national security and the less it touches upon the sovereignty of a state, the more closely it resembles the ideal-type of "low politics" and the more justified is its classification as a hard case for realism. The implications of this distinction are clear: a failure of realism to account for observable behavior in

cases of "high politics" should be regarded as a major blow to its credibility as theory; whereas lack of success in "low politics" cases alone would not suffice to weaken its standing to any great extent.

3.2.2. Cases Selected for Study

Five case studies on German foreign policy will be done in this project: security policy in and vis-a-vis NATO, policy regarding constitutional issues of the EU, foreign trade policy, development aid policy and human rights policy. These case studies display sufficient variance in regard to the issue areas and macropolitical contexts of international politics, as well as in regard to the level of difficulty they present for realism.

In the following, we outline the cases selected for in-depth study concentrating on three aspects that are of particular relevance at this stage:

(a) *Case description*: Which issues will the case study focus on? (b) *Appropriateness of the case*: How well does the case meet the criterion of constancy over time? (i.e. how well are "confounding variables" controlled for?) (c) *Case-specific predictions*: How could the two realist predictions to be examined be concretized with regard to the issues defining the case?

Table 1: The distribution of case studies over issue areas, macropolitical contexts, as well as "hard" and "easy" cases

case study	issue area	macropolitical context	difficulty for realism
policy towards/in NATO	security	West (transatlantic)	high politics: easy case
EG/EU constitutional politics	rule	West (European)	high politics: easy case
foreign trade policy	welfare	global	low politics: hard case
development aid policy	welfare	South	low politics: hard case
human rights policy	rule	global	low politics: hard case

3.2.2.1. Case study "Policy Towards NATO"

(a) *Case description*: The case study on NATO policy shall cover the most important aspects of German security policy. German security policy was, at least until 1990, firmly embedded in the North Atlantic alliance. Ranging from disarmament over military-political strategy to military deployment planning, all activities in this field were coordinated with the allies. Even after 1990, the crucial questions of security policy are dealt with in the context of NATO. However, many observers are unsure as to whether or not the united Germany will behave in the same manner as before inside of this organization.

(b) *Appropriateness of the case*: In many respects, the issue area of security certainly does not meet the criterion of constancy over time. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union fundamentally changed the coordinates of security policy. This does not make this case an inappropriate one for our purposes, though. Two reasons account for this: First, it is true that the level of external threat that Germany is exposed to has decreased dramatically since 1990/91.

However, "external threat" is not a control variable to be kept constant; rather the changes that have taken place in this regard account for part of the increase in Germany's power and hence must not be controlled for. Second, the focus of the study is on the security policy *within* NATO, and this organization has not changed with respect to its membership, its basic norms and values, and its principal political goals - i.e. the collective guarantee of peace, security, and stability in Europe. Moreover, even though there are new items on the agenda of NATO (first of all, the eastward extension of the alliance), it may be instructive to look at how these issues are dealt with by the new Germany. Does it now seek to influence the alliance's collective decisions in a way which was unprecedented in the pre-1990 era?

(c) *Case-specific predictions: Autonomy-oriented realism* (realist alliance theory) stresses (1) the "balancing" behavior of states vis-...-vis external threats and (2) the pursuit of as much independence as possible, which manifests itself in the capacity to self-help in matters of defense. Realist authors agree that Germany will seek to distance itself more and more from NATO. Due to the external threat having diminished, a stronger Germany has no longer the need to accept a narrow limitation of its margins of action through NATO. ([Footnote 21](#))

Prediction 1: Due to its improved power position, Germany will distance itself from NATO and pursue a security policy leaning more towards unilateralism.

In light of this prediction, one must, however, expect a slow return of German security policy to national structures of defense, along with a decreased solidarity with the alliance - for example regarding the deployment of NATO forces.

A different expectation results from the perspective of *influence-maximizing realism*. Proponents of this view may argue that contemporary security policy takes place under conditions (in particular, high costs and risks of a unilateral security policy) that make it rational to place higher priority on having a say in the relevant multilateral institutions than on conducting a nationalist, autonomous security policy. They may point out that even France realized that there can be no influential security policy in Europe today outside of NATO. Therefore, the main goal of German security policy would consist in securing a greater (possibly a decisive) say in the politics inside of NATO.

Prediction 2: Due to its improved power position, Germany will seek to increase its influence in NATO and to instrumentalize the alliance more strongly for its own security interests.

According to this prediction, Germany would, for instance, seek to gain greater influence in NATO organs and on decisions regarding NATO military deployment, and likewise on the issue of how NATO's eastern expansion is to be implemented.

3.2.2.2. Case Study "EC/EU Constitutional Politics"

(a) *Case description:* Since the establishment of the European Community in the 1950s, both an intergovernmental and a supranational level of governance have coexisted within the community. A crucial difference between these two levels of governance is that, on the supranational level, state sovereignty is more strongly constrained and the opportunities for individual states to practice power politics are fewer. On the agendas of past Governmental Conferences, the relation between

the two levels of governance was the most prominent issue, along with the question of the distribution of competences between the community and its member states. Until recently, the Federal Republic of Germany has been among the supporters of a further strengthening of the supranational level of governance. As a matter of fact, this policy formed a core element of the European policy of the "old" Federal Republic and was the clearest expression of its preference for deeper European integration.

(b) Appropriateness of the case: Issues of constitutional politics have concerned the EC/EU since its establishment. Moreover, they have largely remained untouched by the momentous changes of the international system at the end of the 1980s. This is explained by the fact that the question concerning which of the two levels of governance is to be strengthened at the expense of the other needs to be answered no matter how broad the range of community competences or how large the number of member states. Thus, German policies at the Governmental Conferences in 1986/87 (Single European Act), in 1990/91 ("Maastricht"), and in 1996/97 ("Maastricht II") can be compared very well with one another. At all conferences, the issue of strengthening the supranational level of governance (particularly the expansion of the powers of the European Parliament and the expansion of majority decisions in the Council of Ministers) has been on the agenda.

(c) Case-specific predictions: From the perspective of realist theory, a change in Germany's European policy is to be expected. *Autonomy-oriented* realists do not foresee Germany's near withdrawal from the EU. However, they predict that, contrary to its previous preferences, Germany will seek to prevent a further extension of EU functions and to secure a maximum opportunity for autonomous action.

Prediction 1: Due to its improved power position, Germany will resist intensified cooperation on the European level and will seek to secure for itself ample room for unilateral action.

From the *perspective of influence maximization*, Germany will work towards a "constitution" for the EU which will enable it to use its power resources effectively. This means that, although Germany will not generally reject the Europeanization of issue areas, it will strongly prefer their treatment on the intergovernmental, rather than on the supranational, level of governance and, consequently, will not support a further strengthening of the institutions operating at that level, i.e. the Commission, the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice. Moreover, Germany will attempt to change voting rules in the various EU bodies in a way that will enhance its own influence.

Prediction 2: Due to its improved power position, Germany will work towards strengthening the intergovernmental level of governance at the expense of the supranational one and towards increasing its own voting weight within established institutions.

3.2.2.3. Case study "Foreign Trade Policy"

(a) Case description: Negotiations under the purview of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) with the goal of minimizing all kinds of obstacles to free trade play a central role in the politics of international trade. The Uruguay Round of the GATT (1986-1994) offers itself for a comparison of German foreign policy before and after unification. The Uruguay Round included

negotiations about a wide array of issues, ranging from traditional tariff cuts to completely new issues such as trade in services, protection of intellectual property, and the establishment of a World Trade Organization (WTO).

A methodological difficulty results from the fact that Germany's foreign trade policy cannot be observed directly in the GATT negotiations of the Uruguay Round. The EEC treaty stipulates that member states must coordinate their foreign trade policy with the EC/EU. As a result, the EC/EU Commission has been charged with conducting the negotiations in the GATT. Consequently, Germany's foreign trade policy towards the GATT can be examined only at the European level, i.e. by looking at the processes of coordination from which the European position within the GATT negotiations results. One implication of this complication for the case study is that it should focus on those issues which are controversially discussed within the EC/EU. This applies to the incorporation into the GATT of agricultural trade, as well as to the negotiations concerning an agreement on trade in service (GATS). At the same time, these topics were among the most controversial ones in the Uruguay Round which had originally been planned to last no more than four years.

(b) Appropriateness of the case: The issue area "foreign trade policy within the GATT" meets the criterion of constancy over time to a large extent: Both the framework of the negotiations and the participating actors, as well as the issues of negotiation, did not undergo fundamental changes during the period of inquiry (i.e. before and after unification). East-West détente did not have much impact on the negotiations because the former Eastern-bloc states only joined GATT after the conclusion of the Uruguay Round. The fluctuations of the world economy that took place during the Uruguay Round did not exert an important influence on the negotiations, either.

(c) Case-specific predictions: The realist predictions can be specified as follows for the case of foreign trade policy: Again, it is not necessary to interpret the *autonomy maximization prediction* to imply that Germany seeks to completely withdraw from the GATT agreement. A more plausible scenario is that the united Germany will reduce its commitment to multilateralism by increasingly violating or bypassing specific GATT rules, while it continues to adhere (formally) to the GATT. [\(Footnote 22\)](#) Furthermore, Germany might attempt to apply pressure to the EC/EU to act in a way contradicting the rules and principles of the GATT. Accordingly, the prediction of autonomy-oriented realism for German foreign trade policy reads as follows:

Prediction 1: Due to its improved power position, Germany will, either unilaterally or through the EC/EU, violate or bypass GATT rules.

Germany, should it act in accordance with the *influence maximization hypothesis*, will attempt to convert its power increase into greater influence on the course and outcomes of GATT negotiations. As noted earlier, any such attempt could not bypass the EC/EU, but would have to take place in the EC/EU negotiations over the common negotiating position of the community members in GATT.

Prediction 2: Due to its improved power position, Germany will pursue its trade policy interests more vigorously during the EC/EU's coordination of its position for GATT negotiations.

3.2.2.4. Case study "Development Aid Policy"

(a) *Case description:* The development aid policy of the state, which is the exclusive focus of the case study, can be broken down into a bilateral and a multilateral sector. Bilateral development aid refers to contributions that are transferred directly to a partner country. By contrast, multilateral developmental aid comprises Germany's financial support to, and personal involvement in, UN organizations and programs conducting and promoting development activities. In addition, Germany, being an important contributor to the international financial institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Regional Development Banks), exerts influence on the allocation of loans and grants to developing countries. Finally, German participation in the European development aid policy is also a part of the multilateral sector.

In the public debate about the future orientation of German development aid policy which began in the early 1990s, some expected that Germany, having gained greater room for manoeuvre as a result of the events of "1990", would instrumentalize its development aid policy more strongly than before for the pursuit of its own strategic or economic interests. This case study will seek to establish whether this expectation is born out by the actual behavior of Germany in this issue area.

(b) *Appropriateness of the case:* The criterion requiring a fundamental continuity in the issue area is met with regard to both bilateral and multilateral development aid policy. Institutional conditions remained constant on the national as well as the international level. New actors, who could have an independent influence upon Germany's development aid policy behavior, did not appear. Thus the policy of development aid appears to represent a good test case for the realist theory of foreign policy. ([Footnote 23](#))

(c) *Case-specific predictions:* In order to avoid excessive complexity and to ensure comparability with other case studies, it is planned to test the realist predictions regarding German foreign policy behavior after 1989/90 primarily by analyzing Germany's multilateral development aid policy. Bilateral aid is only considered in its (quantitative) relation to multilateral aid and not in its internal structure.

The application of the realist behavioral assumption of *autonomy maximization* to the case at hand yields the following prediction:

Prediction 1: Due to the improvement of its power position, Germany will gradually reduce its commitment to international institutions for development aid and will distribute a larger share of its development aid according to its own security and economic interests.

Proceeding from the alternative realist assumption which identifies influence maximization as the pervasive goal of foreign policy, the prediction reads as follows:

Prediction 2: Due to its improved power position, Germany will attempt to secure greater influence in multilateral institutions for development aid or concentrate its allocation of resources on those institutions in which its influence is greatest.

From this perspective, a noticeable reduction of financial contributions to UN development programs (such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA) is to be expected because, given the fact that in these institutions developing countries possess a majority of votes, their instrumentalization for

German interests is nearly impossible. An influence-oriented policy is more likely to meet with success within European development programs. Accordingly, attempts to increase Germany's say in collective decisions should be first and foremost observable in this framework. ([Footnote 24](#))

3.2.2.5. Case study "Human Rights Policy"

(a) *Case description:* Human rights refer to institutional arrangements of the relations between the rulers and the ruled with a view to protecting the latter from specified encroachments or neglect by the former. Since World War II, many (in particular, Western) countries have committed themselves to the worldwide protection of human rights. International organizations have set human rights policy goals for themselves on both global and regional levels and have established political and legal protection procedures for the achievement of these goals. This case study will deal with Germany's human rights policy, i.e. its efforts to promote human rights in other countries, in both multilateral and bilateral contexts. The human rights policy of the "old" Federal Republic is commonly regarded as both multilaterally oriented and, at the same time, as passive and as displaying a "low profile". Although Germany showed a remarkable willingness to join, and comply with, international human rights treaties, it used to act overly hesitant when it came to denouncing and condemning human rights violations in other countries.

(b) *Appropriateness of the case:* The United Nations (UN), more than the Council of Europe and the OSCE, exhibits the required constancy over time. An especially appropriate case for in-depth study within this project is the *political treatment of gross human rights violations* in specific countries by the UN Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly. This is because here (if anywhere) gains in power are likely to have a notable impact upon German policy. Other areas of human rights policy, such as standard-setting of human rights norms, can hardly be instrumentalized in the competition for power between states. Similarly, the institutional context of the CSCE/OSCE does not suggest itself as a case, because it was too strongly affected by the upheaval of world politics in the wake of the end of the East-West conflict and by institutional change. In this context, the necessary constancy of the coordinates of action cannot be assumed. Regarding Germany's *bilateral human rights policy*, an examination of Germany's relation with China and/or Iran may be especially fruitful because these relations are also characterized by relatively constant conditions.

(c) *Case-specific predictions:* Realism interprets human rights policy as goal-rational. A state will accuse another state of human rights violations only if doing so is in its political interest; conversely, a state will decline to denounce a human rights violator if such an act is likely to create political and/or economical costs for itself. The realist assumption of *autonomy maximization* thus leads to the following prediction:

Prediction 1: Due to its improved power position, Germany will gradually or rapidly move towards a human rights policy in which unilateral action is more frequent and which is always mindful of Germany's own economic and security interests.

The realist assumption of *influence maximization*, on the other hand, entails the prediction:

Prediction 2: Due to its improved power position, Germany will seek to increase its influence on the procedures and instruments of the international protection of human rights and to use them

more vigorously for the pursuit of its own economic and security interests.

3.2.3. Essential Tasks to be Performed by the Case Studies

Each of the case studies will essentially do three things: (1) the various *independent variables* and (2) the *dependent variable* "foreign policy" must be measured for the period before and after "1990", and (3) the *process* that led to either change or continuity in the foreign policy of Germany must be traced.

(1) *Measuring the independent variables*: A preliminary assessment of (the values of) the independent variables has already been made in order to select appropriate cases. However, this preliminary assessment needs careful re-evaluation in each of the case studies:

(a) In respect to the test variable "power", it could turn out that "overall power" and "issue area power" diverge from one another. Even if Germany experienced a general increase in power, this increase may vary from one issue area to another. In some issue areas, a power increase might not have occurred at all. If the increase in power proved to vary significantly across issue areas, a central assumption of realism - viz. that power is fungible - would be called into question. Even so, the "explanatory power of power" need not be low: it may still be the case that the relative strength of Germany's inclination to practice power politics in a given issue-area can be predicted on the basis of its issue-specific power.

(b) In particular, the *control variables* need to be re-examined very carefully as to whether they indeed remained constant before and after the turning point of 1990. Should their values have changed contrary to our initial expectations, this would have to be taken into consideration in the assessment of the test results. Should it turn out that the control variables remained constant in each individual case but varied across issue areas, the question would arise as to whether conditions can be specified under which the explanatory power of realist theory is especially strong (or weak). Suppose we find that the level of institutionalization of international politics in the examined issue areas co-varies with the accuracy of the realist predictions with respect to these issue areas; such a finding could be regarded as supporting the institutionalist assumption that the causal mechanism that, according to realism, converts a power increase into an inclination towards power politics can be offset by strong international institutions.

(2) *Measuring the dependent variable*: Generally speaking, the dependent variable "foreign policy" can take on only one of two values within the framework of our project: "continuity" or "change". On the other hand, "change" (as expected by realists) can mean different things in this context: it may manifest itself as either "autonomy maximization" or "influence maximization". The project team will have to operationalize these concepts very carefully to secure the commensurability of their results. The next task will be to describe German foreign policy in each of the issue areas selected from the early 1980s through the present in order to determine whether or not a change towards increased power politics has taken place and, if so, whether it is best classified as autonomy maximization or as influence maximization. As soon as the values of the independent and dependent variables are measured, the realist predictions can be tested by way of a simple *covariance analysis*. This covariance analysis, however, must then be supplemented by a process tracing analysis.

(3) *Process tracing*: In process tracing analyses of foreign policy (cf. George/ McKeown 1985), researchers look for evidence that an assumed factor of influence was in fact operative in the decision-making process. In order to reconstruct the development of the foreign policy of a country over a twenty-year time period, a detailed historical examination of the cases is essential. Two reasons make it necessary to examine not only the covariance of the independent and dependent variables but also the causal process that links them:

(a) On the one hand, process tracing offers the opportunity to once again test the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The mere covariance analysis is susceptible to explanations by spurious causes. Even if the expected association between the variables can be empirically established, our understanding of the case and the explanatory power of the theory are improved by the process tracing analysis in that this technique can show *how* an increase in power resulted in a change of foreign policy and, generally, *how* a change of the power position of a country is converted into a different foreign policy style and/or different foreign policy goals.

(b) On the other hand, should the realist predictions be disconfirmed, process tracing offers the opportunity to examine which of the three control variables should be assigned the greatest explanatory power for the continuity of German foreign policy. Since (or as far as) all three control variables remained constant before and after the turning point of 1990, merely inspecting their values does not give any indication as to which of them has been responsible for the increase in power being "neutralized". If, however, it could be shown, by means of an analysis of the decision-making process, that, e.g., certain societal interest groups, which benefited from a continuation of the "old" foreign policy, prevailed over other groups, who pressed for a stronger power-political profile, this would support the view that the factor "societal interests", associated with utilitarian liberalism, was in fact decisive.

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Notes

1 Notable contributions to this strand of research include Hellmann (1996); Kreile (1996); Wette (1994, 1996).

2 In this project outline, the year 1990 stands for a series of major political events spanning the period between the collapse of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 and the conclusion of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Germany on 1 September 1994.

3 Arnold (1995); Bedrow/Jäger (1993); Hacke (1993); Haftendorn (1994); Kaiser (1995); Schwarz (1994) belong to this group.

4 Pfetsch (1993: 212) argues that, in Western Europe, the EC/EU has effectively and durably neutralized traditional power factors such as territory and population.

5 Czempiel (1993), Maull (1992), Senghaas (1993, 1994), and Wolf (1995) may be seen as belonging to this group.

6 Horsley (1992) lists the seven "cardinal sins" of the "new" Germany which have irritated its partners. These include: (1) Chancellor Kohl's ten point plan of November 1989; (2) the handling of the issue of the Western border of Poland; (3) the hesitant support offered to the allies during the Second Gulf War; (4) the German-French plan for a European force; (5) the way Germany uses its influence in the EC/EU; (6) the events leading to the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia; (7) the interest rate policy of the Bundesbank.

7 For a similar assessment see Blumer/Paterson (1996).

8 See also the article by Wolf (1991), a member of our research team in Tübingen at that time.

9 There are several variants of realism. Our focus is on the currently dominant one, which is commonly referred to as "neorealism" (or "structural realism"). The seminal neorealist work is Waltz (1979). Other major representatives include Mearsheimer and Grieco. Clearly, the realist school is not a monolithic block and hence not free from internal differences. This research project takes this fact into consideration by examining two non-congruent predictions: one based on the assumption that actors maximize their autonomy and another assuming that actors maximize their influence. Other controversies within the realist school of thought are not vital to

our plan of research.

10 Neorealists do not agree as to whether states are offensive (Mearsheimer and Gilpin) or defensive positionalists (Waltz and Grieco). It is, however, generally accepted that a state which has experienced a relative increase in power (whether achieved by its own aspirations or not) will use this power to its advantage. Accordingly, despite their theoretical differences, Mearsheimer and Waltz reach the same conclusion as far as the likely pattern of the "new" German foreign policy is concerned.

11 According to Waltz's formulation, neorealism is a (systemic) theory of international politics as opposed to a (sub-systemic) theory of foreign policy. However, there is nothing wrong with also using this theory for the analysis of foreign policy as long as one is aware of the different levels of analysis and transforms the systemic variable, "international distribution of power", into a positional variable, "relative power position of a state". As previously shown, representatives of neorealism regularly use this theory when predicting foreign policy behavior.

12 Realism does not attach any theoretical importance to "issue-specific power capabilities" (cf. Keohane/Nye 1977: 30f., 53). Consequently, we do not address the problem that Germany's increase in power may present itself differently in different issue areas. Different conceptions of power will, however, be taken account of in the process of theory testing (see below).

13 Maull distances himself from the realist school of thought in his essay on the "Civilian Power Germany" (Maull 1992: 269f.).

14 Cf., e.g., the discussion of "omitted variable bias" in King/Keohane/Verba (1994: 168ff.).

15 This research project is set up as a test of the realist theory as it applies to German foreign policy. Since controlling for all potential confounding variables is not feasible, we selected those explanatory variables that play a key role in either institutionalism or liberalism, the two most important competitors of realism.

16 If influence-oriented realism bears so much resemblance with rational institutionalism, why not call it "institutionalism" and reduce the realist predictions about German foreign policy to one? One may indeed argue that influence-oriented realism represents a theoretical concession to institutionalism. Still, we regard our assignment as justified in consideration of the fact that the causal nexus of power and power politics underlying this prediction is typically realist. This decision is in line with Wendt's (1992: 392) terminology who labels rational institutionalists as "weak realists", as well as with Keohane's (1986: 191) earlier description of his own institutionalist theory as "modified structural realism".

17 For more extensive characterizations of these two variants of institutionalism see, e.g., Anderson/Goodman (1993); Hasenclever/Mayer/Rittberger (1996); Keohane (1989: 170f.).

18 This "feedback-function" of international institutions has already been discussed by Krasner (1983: 361f.).

19 This method is also referred to as the "comparative method" (Lijphart 1975) and the "method of structured, focused comparison" (George 1979).

20 This is why, for example, the "Ostpolitik" of Germany is excluded from the selection of case studies.

Thus, for instance, Waltz states: "[...] once the new Germany finds its feet, it will no more want to be constrained by the United States acting through NATO than by any other state" (Waltz 1993: 76).

22 It must be kept in mind, though, that an independent trade policy is no longer a legal possibility for EC/EU members. Protectionism, therefore, is most likely to take the form of

domestic measures (industrial policy etc.).

23 The researcher who conducts this case study must seek to control the effects of those contextual conditions that did change during the period of inquiry. Thus, the interpretation of the data will have to take into account the fact that new states receiving development aid have emerged in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

24 In regard to international financial institutions, upgrading the German influence would appear to be difficult. It could only be achieved through a drastic increase of the German share of capital to which national voting rights are linked.

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