



**Corvinus University of
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**Doctoral School of
International Relations
and Political Science**

**THESIS OF DISSERTATION
of**

Terézia Erika Tóth

A normal Germany?

**Normalisation Discourses and
the Normalisation of German Foreign Policy
Since Reunification**

Supervisor:

Dr. László Kiss J. CSc
Professor Emeritus

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Programme of International Security Studies

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1. Research History and Explanation of the Topic

Three decades have passed since, with the approval of the international community, a unified German state was reborn in the centre of Europe and Germany regained its sovereignty. The German leadership promised to continue the successful West German policy, but German foreign policy has undergone significant changes in recent decades. The euro crisis in particular has shown that Germany is in many ways no longer the same as post-reunification Germany. In this context, debates about a 'normal' Germany have also resurfaced, and it has become urgent for German foreign policy to define what kind of Europe Germany, having come of age, wants and what role it wants to play in it.

One narrative of the changes in German foreign policy is that we are witnessing a "normalisation" of German foreign policy. German foreign policy, which after the Second World War was characterised above all by guilt over National Socialism and the self-limitation that followed, by pacifism and an unconditional commitment to the cause of European unification, has now changed: Germany is once again a 'normal state', representing its own national interests, as other states do. The aim of my thesis is to interpret the 'normalisation' of German foreign policy, i.e. how to interpret the opinions that German foreign policy has been 'normalised' since reunification.

My choice of topic is partly justified by the fact that the Hungarian-language literature has devoted relatively little attention to the analysis of German foreign policy in recent decades, while the interpretation and recognition of the directions of German foreign policy is of strategic importance for the shaping of Hungarian foreign policy. Germany's behaviour during the Iraq war and the resolution of the Euro crisis has attracted in Hungary the attention of researchers and the public, as it did later during the migrant crisis. However, opinions

expressed on German foreign policy are often lacking in objectivity, showing ignorance or bias, either by claiming that Germany is seeking to represent its self interests in Europe and has 'excessive' ambitions for power, as in the past, or, on the contrary, by accusing German decision-makers of inexplicable naivety and indecisiveness. This is often done without any attempt to understand the complex background to German foreign policy decisions. I hope that my thesis, by analysing where German foreign policy started after reunification and the path it has taken since then, will provide a better understanding of the motivations and considerations behind German foreign policy thinking and behaviour, and of the specific factors, especially those arising from German foreign policy culture. My research was guided by the unconcealed intention to use the results of my thesis in Hungarian foreign policy thinking and hopefully also in decision-making, in order to contribute to some extent to the further shaping of the strategy of Hungarian foreign and European policy towards Germany.

2. Research Questions, Hypothesis

My research seeks to answer the following questions:

- How can the normalisation of German foreign policy after reunification be interpreted, what does the German anomaly mean?
- How is the normalization of foreign policy reflected in the German foreign policy discourse and how is it reflected in foreign policy practice?
- Has Germany's role perception changed?
- What is the link between the normalisation of German foreign policy and Germany's future international role?

My hypothesis is the following:

Germany's foreign policy has been normalised in the quarter of a century following reunification, German foreign policy is that of a 'normal state' in the sense that Germany, like other states, represents its own national interests. However, a normal German foreign policy does not imply exceptionalism, the abandonment of the role of 'civilian power', multilateralism, European and Atlantic solidarity.

In proving my hypothesis, I point out that the process of normalisation of German foreign policy is the result of a combination of internal and, above all, external factors. I will start

from the premise that the change in German foreign policy is not without transition, that the new German foreign policy, which is in its own national interest, is the result of a learning process that can by no means be considered closed.

In my thesis I argue that the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany was a political "anomaly". I point to the factors in which this anomaly, this deviation from the norm, manifested itself. I describe the process of normalisation of German foreign policy as a gradual departure from the German anomaly. I outline the narratives that preceded reunification in Germany regarding Germany's place in Europe and the world, and the extent to which these narratives have been realised.

My aim is to examine how the debate on normalisation has evolved and how German foreign policy has undergone significant changes towards normalisation since reunification. In the context of constructivism as a meta-theory, I examine the background to these changes, what factors have shaped and continue to shape Germany's foreign policy culture, how these have shaped Germany's perception of its role as a 'civilian power', and how this role has changed since reunification.

I examine how German political culture strongly determines the way Germans see themselves, and thus what considerations motivate or constrain German political discourse and foreign policy action. While the focus of my research is on German foreign policy discourse and practice, normalisation is a phenomenon embedded in the process of social and political economic development in Germany and I therefore try to place it in a broader context. I define the concept of national interests, the German national interest, and the relationship between normalisation and the representation of German national interests as a key concept of normalisation. I also seek to answer the question to what extent national interest representation in the case of Germany seems to be compatible with the representation of European interests. I examine the extent to which Berlin can and will meet the increasing expectations of the European Union and the international community, which are directed at it because of the increased European and global weight of a reunified Germany. I seek to answer the question of whether Germany, as a foreign policy actor, is able to meet the criteria that would make it capable of assuming a leading role in the international arena.

One of the most intriguing questions of my thesis is how normalisation is linked to Germany's international role, whether the apparent increase in German involvement represents a greater assumption of *responsibility* or a quest for greater *power*. In this context, I draw on discourse

analysis to point out that the meaning of key concepts associated with the normalisation of German foreign policy has changed over time.

My dissertation covers the quarter of a century after reunification, up to 2015, given the changes that have taken place or intensified in Germany's foreign and domestic policy since then, which provide a rich basis for further research¹. After summarising the results, I will also briefly look beyond the research period.

3. Applied Methods

In the constructivist theoretical grounding of my thesis, I approach the concept of normalisation through the specificities of German foreign policy culture and national identity. I examine the process of normalization in domestic political and philosophical discourses on the one hand, and in German foreign and European political practice on the other. As a starting point, I take as a starting point that the world and the international environment around Germany changed at the same time as and after German reunification, and that Germany's foreign policy had to change as a consequence. After presenting the theoretical context and the changes in the discourse, I will highlight some of the points of rupture and relations where continuity in German foreign policy has changed, where the '*change of continuity*' is taking place and has become visible, and I will try to show with examples how and in which areas of foreign policy in particular the normalisation of German foreign policy can be seen in practice, in terms of the content of foreign policy.

I have endeavoured to draw on as wide a range of secondary sources on the subject as possible, mainly in German and English. In doing so, I have taken into account the fact that in the discourse on the new foreign policy of a reunified Germany there are basically two main groups of opponents: one group of those who advocate continuity in German foreign policy and the continuation of German 'civilian power', i.e. multilateralism and the primacy of non-military means, and the other group of those who advocate change and the normalisation of the traditional role of a great power. To get to know the concepts of normalisation, I have gone back to the so-called '*Historikerstreit*' (Historian's dispute) that unfolded in the 1980s. The normalisers, in the spirit of the realist school, had already stressed that the Federal Republic should finally break with its taboos and limitations and act emancipated and self-

¹ In addition to the migrant crisis, I need only refer to Brexit or the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, not to mention the impact of the subsequent COVID pandemic, the end of Angela Merkel's 16-year term as Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and, even more so, Russia's war against Ukraine.

consciously in its own interests on the international stage, and after reunification they argued that Germany's military responsibility should be extended beyond the geographical boundaries of NATO.

The *right-wing realist* historian Michael Stürmer was already calling for the Federal Republic to assume "*world political and world economic responsibility*" in order to ensure Germany's foreign policy predictability (Stürmer [1987]).² Hans-Peter Schwarz, in the mid-1980s, wrote about the "tame Germans", about the fact that the German attitude oscillated between the extremes of "*Machtbesessenheit*" ("power obsession") and "*Machtvergessenheit*" ("power oblivion") and called attention to the need for responsible management of power (Schwarz [1985]).³ After reunification, Schwarz wrote about Germany as the "*central power of Europe*", arguing that continuity requires change, that Germany became the largest economic, central power on the continent for objective reasons after reunification, that it must therefore take on new tasks and will in any case have a greater impact on its environment than before, whether it wants to or not (Schwarz [1994]).⁴ Christian Hacke believed that Germany was "*a world power against its will*" (Hacke [1993]).⁵ Like Schwarz, Gregor Schöllgen called for „*Germany's return to the world stage*” (Schöllgen [2003]).⁶ Egon Bahr, as a left realist representative of a "normal" foreign policy, argued for following "*the German way*" and that after reunification Germany had an almost obligation to establish normality, that the Holocaust should not block the path to normality, that Germany should assert its interests in the same natural way as the other states of Europe. In the service of Europe, Bahr called for a Germany that "*pursues its interests as a normal state and does not allow its future to be hindered by the past: the future of Europe is more important than the past of Germany.*" (Bahr [2003]).⁷ The main critic of the normalisers was the left-wing *idealist philosopher Jürgen Habermas*, who argued that *normalisation undermined the creation of a Western-style*, liberal democratic, post-national political culture and feared that normalisation would

² Stürmer, Michael [1987]: *Geschichte in geschichtslosem Land*. In: Historikerstreit. Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung, München

³ Schwarz, Hans-Peter [1985]: *Die gezähmten Deutschen. Von der Machtbesessenheit zur Machtvergessenheit*, Stuttgart, DVA

⁴ Schwarz, Hans-Peter: [1994]: *Die Zentralmacht Europas. Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne*. Berlin, Siedler

⁵ Hacke, Christian [1993]: *Weltmacht wider Willen. Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, aktualisierte und erweiterte Neuauflage, Frankfurt a.M., Berlin

⁶ Schöllgen, Gregor [2003]: *Der Auftritt. Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne*. München, Propyläen

⁷ Bahr, Egon [2003]: *Der deutsche Weg: Selbstverständlich und normal*. Karl Blessing Verlag, München, 2003, p. 155

weaken the country's Western attachment, lead to militarism and a resurgence of nationalism (Habermas [1990]).⁸

The proponents of the concept of "*German civilian power*", which was coined by Hanns W. Maull, Knut Kirste and Sebastian Harnisch, used the tools of constructivism in the debate against the normalizers to argue that *German "civilian power" embodied a new type of international power*, and that Germany should not become like other countries, but that *other countries should become like Germany* (Kiss [2005]).⁹ Thomas Risse stressed the "*permanence that can be achieved through change*" (Risse [2004])¹⁰, Gunther Hellmann, on the other hand, saw German foreign policy as *oscillating* between the ideals of a "*normal nation of a great power*" and a "*self-conscious civilian power*" (Hellmann [2003b]).¹¹

For the research I mainly used the various studies of *Hanns Maull, Gunther Hellmann, Sebastian Harnisch, Thomas Risse* and *Rainer Baumann* analysing the motives and changes in German foreign policy, and also the summarising works on German foreign policy such as the volumes of studies entitled "*Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*" (Hellmann/Wolf/Schmidt [2007])¹² and „*Deutsche Außenpolitik*” (Jäger/Höse/Oppermann [2011]).¹³ The theoretical background was based on the Hellmann-Wagner-Baumann book of the same title (Hellmann/Wagner/Baumann [2014]),¹⁴ and on Marcus Hawel's work "*The Normalised Nation*" (Hawel [2007])¹⁵, as well as the volume on *German international leadership* edited by Harnisch and Schild (Harnisch / Schild [2014]).¹⁶ Among more recent works with a realist approach, I have also used, for example, Stephan Bierling's "*Vormacht*

⁸ Habermas, Jürgen [1990]: *Die nachholende Revolution*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1990

⁹ Kiss, J. László [2009]: *Változó utak a külpolitika elméletében és elemzésében*. Osiris

¹⁰ Risse, Thomas [2004]: *Kontinuität durch Wandel: Eine „neue“ deutsche Außenpolitik?* In: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B11/2004, 8 März 2004, pp. 24–31., http://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/27149/10_Risse-04-2.pdf, Letöltés: 2019.10.11.

¹¹ Hellmann, Gunther [2003b]: *Agenda 2020. Krise und Perspektive deutscher Außenpolitik*. In: *Internationale Politik*, 58 (2003) 9, pp. 39–50

¹² Hellmann, Gunther / Wolf, Reinhard / Schmidt, Siegmund (Hrsg.) [2007]: *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden

¹³ Jäger, Thomas / Höse, Alexander / Oppermann, Kai (Hrsg.) [2011]: *Deutsche Außenpolitik*. 2. aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Springer Fachmedien, Wiesbaden GmbH

¹⁴ Hellmann, Gunther / Wagner, Wolfgang / Baumann, Rainer (Hrsg.) [2014]: *Deutsche Außenpolitik*. Eine Einführung, Springer VS, Wiesbaden, Grundwissen Politik, Band 39

¹⁵ Hawel, Marcus [2007]: *Die normalisierte Nation. Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Außenpolitik in Deutschland*. Offizin Verlag, Hannover

¹⁶ Harnisch, Sebastian / Schild, Joachim (Hrsg.) [2014]: *Deutsche Außenpolitik und internationale Führung. Ressourcen, Praktiken und Politiken in einer veränderten Europäischen Union*. In der Reihe „Aussenpolitik und Internationale Ordnung“, Prof. Dr. Hanns W. Maull, Universität Trier, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 2014

wider Willen" (Bierling [2014])¹⁷ and Herfried Münkler's *"Macht in der Mitte"* (Münkler [2015]).¹⁸ From the English literature on my research topic, I found Hans Kundnani's work *"The Paradox of German Power"*, a work of historical-philosophical character, and his other relevant studies particularly noteworthy (Kundnani [2014]).¹⁹ From the Hungarian literature, I must highlight the works of *László Kiss J.*, who in several books and studies has dealt with the roots of German identity, explored the driving forces of German foreign and European policy, the stages of German normalisation, and who as a subject leader has continuously inspired me with his advice in the preparation of my thesis.

In terms of both methodology and conclusions, my thesis is primarily intended to contribute to the work of Maull, Harnisch, Hellmann, Baumann and Risse and Professor László Kiss J., by using a constructivist analysis of German foreign policy, Maull's concept of the German "civilian power" role, and Hellmann's descriptive discourse analysis method.

First and foremost, I would like to contribute novelty to research, in particular by

- my research topic *does not focus on a selected sub-area of international relations and German foreign policy* (not on a specific bilateral or multilateral geographical relation and/or functional area), *but rather on a complex, historically defined phenomenon* of German foreign relations as a whole, embedded in German social and economic processes, crossing foreign and domestic policy behaviour, in the dynamics of German foreign policy thinking and action after reunification,
- *for the first time in the Hungarian literature*, I attempt to *present a summary of the above phenomenon* from the perspective of a quarter of a century, and to review and examine the typical German interpretations and manifestations of this phenomenon in the field of foreign policy from a functional perspective. The results of my thesis also open the way for further research, either on the whole or on a specific subfield of German foreign policy, and the temporal dimension can be further extended in the light of more recent developments.

To examine the ideas, concepts and possible strategies of the role of German foreign policy, I use the theories and methods of constructivism from the schools of international political

¹⁷ Bierling, Arnulf [2014]: *Vormacht wider Willen. Deutsche Außenpolitik von der Wiedervereinigung bis zur Gegenwart*, Verlag C.H. Beck, München 2014

¹⁸ Münkler, Herfried [2015]: *Macht in der Mitte*. Edition Körber-Stiftung, Hamburg 2015

¹⁹ Kundnani, Hans [2014]: *The Paradox of German Power*, Hurst&Company, London

theory, including the theory and comparative method of the role concept and the method of descriptive discourse analysis of conventional constructivism. In particular, the use of constructivist methods is justified by the fact that they do *not* view these phenomena *in their static existence*, but in the process of "*becoming something*" (Adler [2012]).²⁰ which for my research makes them particularly suitable for examining changes in German foreign policy.

My analysis takes place *in two dimensions*: 1. the German "*foreign policy discourse*", 2. the German "*foreign policy behaviour*". I try to support my hypothesis by analysing the combined results of the changes measured in both dimensions. To test my hypothesis, I apply *Holsti's role concept theory*,²¹ including the "*civilian power concept*" theory used to characterize Germany, and the methods that can be associated with it. In examining Germany's foreign policy behaviour, *Maull and Kirste* identified *three central normative elements of 'civilian power'*: the initiative and ability to civilise international relations through multilateral action; the transfer of sovereignty to international organisations, the promotion of collective security measures; the creation of a civilised international order, even when this conflicts with short-term national interests (Kirste/Maull [1996]).²² Universal values are part of the national interest of "civilian power"; it considers the *threat and use of force inappropriate for conflict management*, but does not exclude military intervention ultimately, but makes it strictly dependent on the appropriate legitimacy. „*Civilian power*" is a role concept that *seeks to influence international relations in order to civilise them*. Germany has embodied such a 'civilian power' since the Second World War. The assumption of this foreign policy role was historically determined; the Republic of Bonn, deprived of its sovereignty, had no other choice. German political culture has not only banished the concept of 'national interest' from its political vocabulary, but has also tabooed legitimate forms of power and violence. (Kiss [2005]).²³ Non-violence, the ability to build effective consensus in the face of social conflict, has become a primary value, the main manifestations of which are the prospect of military force as a last resort in foreign policy; a focus on economic power; the drive to develop supranational European and international institutions and the prioritisation of multilateralism over national interests.

²⁰ Adler, Emanuel [2012]: *Constructivism in International Relations: Sources, Contributions and Debates*. In: SAGE Handbook of International Relations. Szerk: Carlsnaes, Walter / Risse, Thomas / Simmons Beth, A. SAGE Publications, London. pp. 112-144, p. 113

²¹ Holsti, Kalevi Jaakko J. [1970]: *National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy*. In: International Studies Quarterly, Volume 14, Issue 3, 1 September 1970

²² Kirste, Knut/ Maull, Hanns W. [1996]: *Zivilmacht und Rollentheorie*. In: Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen, 2 (1996)

²³ Kiss, J. László [2005a]: *A nemzetállam nélküli integrációtól az integrált nemzetállamig. A német Európa-politika történelmi gyökerei és mai dilemmái*. In: A huszonötök Európái. Osiris 2005. Szerk. Kiss, J. László

In the *discursive dimension* of the research, I examine the changes in the rhetorical manifestations of German "civilian power" using the method of *descriptive discourse analysis*. I examine the continuity and especially the changes of the German role of "civilian power" *in the practical dimension* of foreign policy: *using an explanatory, empirical method*, I examine the *interaction between role conceptions and role behaviour*.

The research is a *trend analysis* for a specific interval. I examine the process of normalisation of German foreign policy from German reunification through three stages (see the structure of the thesis), *highlighting events that can be considered important milestones* for the study of the topic. I will analyse German behaviour *in three short case studies*:

- *in relation to the war in Iraq*: the normalisation of Germany's foreign policy *towards its NATO allies, in particular the United States*;
- in the context of the *sovereign Greek debt crisis*, I approach the German normalisation from the perspective of *Germany's European policy*, in particular its policy towards *France*, and I make the analysis more *complex by including economic considerations*;
- the so-called "*NSA scandal*", which was a particular episode in *German-American relations*, and the examination of which highlights the changing and vulnerable nature of the relationship with the United States

My analysis is of a *functional*, qualitative, evaluative-analytical nature, partly using content analysis and comparative analysis to examine changes in Germany's role as a "civilian power". My thesis takes a *multidisciplinary approach*, drawing on relevant theories and methods from various border studies, international political theory, political science, history of ideas, international economics, sociology, philosophy, history, international law and European studies. The results of my research may be of particular relevance to international relations studies.

The research is *deductive*, moving from the abstract to the concrete. In order to measure the changes and prove my hypothesis, I focus on those areas and relations in foreign policy that can be characterised as particular *breaking points in the continuum* of German foreign policy, where I analyse German responses to *the changed environment*. I examine Germany's relations *in three relations or areas* in particular: *European integration, security policy and transatlantic relations*. In order to support my hypothesis, I point to *significant changes* in

Germany's relations and foreign policy practices with *some of its key partners, France, the European Union, the United States, Russia and Israel*. Finally, an examination of the changes in Germany's concept of its role as a „civilian power” leads to a consideration of *international leadership as a possible new role concept*.

4. Structure of the Dissertation

In my dissertation, in addition to the introduction, the summary and the outlook, I examine the theme of the title in six chapters.

After the introduction, the *second chapter* introduces the theoretical framework, theories of constructivism and methods of discourse analysis and operationalises *key terms/concepts* used in the analysis, such as: *political culture, national identity, foreign policy roles, German 'civilian power', German national interests, German semi-sovereignty*, the interpretation and analysis of the relationship between *norm and normalisation*. On the issue of foreign policy culture and national identity, it is important to recall that the development of the state and the foreign policy of the post-World War II Germany was fundamentally determined by the guilt of the Holocaust, which compromised the notion of nationalism and national interests in German political thought and public consciousness, and *replaced German nationalism with Europeanism, 'European homeland' and cosmopolitanism*. *Following reunification*, however, *there was no dramatic turn of events* that fundamentally shook this Europeanised national identity, so it remained unchanged (Risse [1999]),²⁴ and Germany retained its voluntary role as a 'civilian power' after reunification.

In the *third chapter*, I outline the German normality debate in chronological order: the "*German anomaly*", an important element of which is the paradox of the Federal Republic "*regaining*" its sovereignty by giving up its otherwise non-existent sovereignty in favour of European integration, and the fact that the Bonn Republic was characterised by the analogy of the "*economic giant and the political dwarf*". As regards the *period around reunification*, I highlight the fact that *the conditions for the normalisation of foreign policy were created*, presenting the *main schools of thought* and analysing the typical political positions on normalisation. I will then look at the *second phase*, the period of normalisation of the foreign policy of the *Social Democratic-Green coalition*, from the point of view of 'enlightened self-

²⁴ Risse, Thomas [1999]: *Identitäten und Kommunikationsprozesse in der internationalen Politik - Sozialkonstruktivistische Perspektiven zum Wandel in der Außenpolitik*. In: Medick-Krakau (Szerk.): *Außenpolitischer Wandel in theoretischer und vergleichender Perspektive: Die USA und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Baden-Baden*, pp. 33-57

interest', in particular the 'self-regulating' German foreign policy in connection with the Iraq war, the *normalisation in the field of military policy*, which, in the context of the Srebrenica massacre, the Kosovo war and the Iraq war, posed *an extraordinary challenge to the left-wing, pacifist-oriented federal government*. In the third section, I highlight the Libyan crisis and, above all, the *sovereign Greek debt crisis as a key economic policy event* in the normalisation process during *Angela Merkel's chancellorship*.

In the *fourth chapter*, I discuss *the changed international environment* of foreign policy, how the changes in the external political and economic environment affected the scope of German foreign policy and the constraints of adaptation it had to meet.

In the *fifth chapter*, I discuss the paradoxical relationship between *foreign policy continuity and the process of change*, pointing out that the world around Germany has changed, and that it is precisely the insistence on permanence that has brought about change in German foreign policy. Using Baumann's qualitative discourse analysis method, I highlight the *changes in German foreign policy discourse*, showing that *key concepts* such as national interest, agency and responsibility *have changed in German vocabulary, with a shift in emphasis from moral commitment to status*.

In the *sixth chapter* of the thesis, I examine *the normalisation of foreign policy itself*, practical measures, decisions and actions. I have chosen to analyse the central areas from which the *substantive changes in German foreign policy* can be discerned: *Franco-German relations, Germany's European policy, security policy and military normalisation*, relations with the *United States*, relations with *Russia* and then with *Israel*. I outline the differences in European economic policy approaches and show how, during the eurozone crisis, Germany sought to assert its economic policy interests while making the defence of European integration, in its own interest, its primary goal. I examine the most visible area of normalisation, the normalisation of security policy, pointing out that there has been a *'radical paradigm shift'* in the deployment of the *'Bundeswehr' out-of-area*, but *not an abandonment of German 'civilian power'*. In a further sub-chapter, I draw attention to the *transformation of the "friendly" relationship with the United States*, the effects of the "NSA scandal" and the complexity of the transatlantic relationship, addressing not only security policy aspects but also economic policy issues. I then turn to the complexity and changes in the *'pragmatic' relationship with Russia*. Lastly, I do not forget the development of the *special German-Israeli relationship*, given Germany's commitment to Israel because of German history.

In *chapter seven*, I examine the concept and conditions of *international leadership* and how Germany can become an international leader without arousing the suspicion of others and the accusation of German dominance. The need for German leadership was most evident in the eurozone crisis, but it was clear that this leadership was service-oriented rather than dominant, with the main pillar being the *representation of common interests* and the search for compromise.

The thesis concludes with a summary of the findings and a brief outlook beyond the research period.

5. Findings of the Dissertation

In my thesis, I tried to get to the bottom of what we mean, what we can mean by German foreign policy becoming normalised, normalising. It is obviously a very complex concept, because normalisation is associated with different meanings, which also change over time. From the more general meanings of the concepts of normality and normalisation, I have arrived at the meaning which, in my opinion, also denotes a change in German foreign policy *discourse* and a change *in the essence* of foreign policy. In analysing the normalisation of German foreign policy, I started from the German *foreign policy culture*, examined the nature of the '*German anomaly*' and the phenomenon of German foreign policy *moving towards normality*, i.e. *Germany becoming more and more like other countries, in the face of and in interaction with the conditions of a changing external world, while maintaining a high degree of permanence and continuity*.

In my dissertation, I have primarily sought to review the process whereby Germany is acting more confidently and self-consciously vis-à-vis its European partners and on the international stage, with the result that the representation of German national interests is becoming more prominent in German foreign policy thinking and behaviour. In this context, I have also drawn some conclusions about the country's international engagement and the options for German foreign policy.

My research hypothesis is confirmed by the following main findings:

For the first part:

Germany's foreign policy has been normalised in the quarter of a century following reunification, German foreign policy is that of a "normal state", in the sense that Germany, like other states, represents its own national interests.

My research has shown that Germany has evolved in symbiosis with European integration, Europeanising its national interests and national identity, thus becoming the most Europeanised, normative European state, characterised by a high degree of permissive consensus towards European integration. Because of its economic strength, it was prepared to make sacrifices to promote integration for the common good, for the common European interest.

In recent times, however, the congruence between German and European interests has been lost, and what is good for Europe is no longer necessarily good for Germany, and vice versa. In the changed circumstances, Germany is less willing to take on the role of 'paying master', but instead takes pragmatic, cost-benefit decisions while trying to mould Europe in its own image (as it did in the resolution of the euro crisis). Germany's foreign policy autonomy has also been reinforced by a generational change in its politicians.

German foreign policy has become *more assertive and self-conscious* in recent decades, and this change in mentality can be traced in foreign policy discourse. The meaning of the key terms that carry this discourse has also changed and shifted: whereas taking responsibility used to mean a moral commitment, sharing responsibility on the basis of a sense of shame for the crimes committed under National Socialism ("Mitverantwortung"), it has since changed to a different meaning, the need to have a say in important decisions ("Mitsprache"). In the latter case, *by assuming greater responsibility, Germany is seeking greater influence and status*, which is essentially synonymous with greater power (although German politicians generally deliberately avoid this term).

In addition to the *change in mentality*, the content and *essence of foreign policy* has also changed, with shifts in emphasis in European policy, transatlantic relations, security policy and bilateral relations, which is evidence of a more assertive German representation of interests. Germany is ready to confront and stand up to its allies if necessary, if its interests so require, to demand a more proportionate burden-sharing in the financing of the European

Union and to support US policy unconditionally. All this shows that Germany is ready to stand up for its own national interests, as other states do.

Regarding the second part of my hypothesis:

A normal German foreign policy, however, does not imply eccentricity, does not imply the abandonment of the role of "civilian power", multilateralism, European and Atlantic solidarity."

Since reunification, the predictions of a return to German great power politics or German nationalism, or even German militarism, have not come true. The examples presented also confirmed that German 'civilian power', pacifism and multilateralism remained the guiding principles of German foreign policy. Germany is merely seeking to adapt its international role to the new conditions of the international environment, its own European and international weight and the new challenges. Since reunification, the role of German 'civilian power' has been further strengthened in terms of civilian power objectives: Germany is more assertive and active than before in its claim to be a genuine '*shaping force*' in international relations, in order to support their civilisation. Germany does not contradict the role of „civilian power” in its foreign policy style and rhetoric, but its action has become more assertive and its conscious representation of national interests is reflected in a *new multilateralism*.

Normalisation is not the same as the German concept of "special path". The main fundamentals of German foreign policy have not changed: Euro-Atlantic integration and a commitment to European unification remain the top priority. Given its continental position, Germany remains interested in Europeanising its national interests, just as it needs Europe to survive in global competition. The 'global Germany' narrative emphasises Germany's ability to leverage its competitive advantages on a global scale. Achieving economic results outside the EU as a leading export power can be interpreted as a role for Europe.

Even if Germany has become more assertive in foreign and security policy in recent years, this does not mean a return to a national tradition with negative overtones. Rather, the increased German self-awareness can be seen *as a response to the changing international system* and the dynamics of globalisation (von Bredow [2011]).²⁵ Based on the results of my

²⁵ von Bredow, Wilfried [2011]: *Mühevoller Weltpolitik. Deutschland im System internationaler Beziehungen*. In: Jäger, Thomas / Höse, Alexander / Oppermann, Kai (Hg.): *Deutsche Außenpolitik*. 2. aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Springer Fachmedien, Wiesbaden GmbH 2011, pp. 720-734, p. 731

thesis, I definitely agree with Regina Karp's, in my opinion, key finding that *the normalization* of German foreign policy does not mean a return to German great power politics, but rather *links the country's civilian power identity with international political expectations*, making Germany's national identity compatible with its modern international responsibilities (Karp [2004]).²⁶

One more finding:

My investigation has also revealed that *achieving "full normality"*, in the sense of Germany becoming like other states, is *not possible*, because there are at least two fundamental obstacles: first, no country is as closely tied to the fate of Europe as Germany, and the survival and prosperity of Europe is a primary interest for which it remains willing to sacrifice and compromise, more than others. Germany cannot become completely like other European countries because *it has a special responsibility towards the European Union*. It cannot allow the European 'project' to fail, because if European integration collapses, *the German question will arise again*, which will provoke a backlash against Germany. Germany is still interested in remaining a 'central state' in Europe. It feels a particular responsibility to close Europe's ranks even more closely so that it does not break away permanently from the world's leading powers. He has a particular interest in keeping Europe together, whereby it can hide its own power, secure its markets (not forgetting the interests of the German multinationals in Germany, which are strengthening the German economy) and together have a better chance of maintaining its influence in the global competition and the emerging new world order.

The second factor limiting "full" normality is that Germany cannot be a country like the others by virtue of its strength, it cannot hide behind the smaller ones. As a leading European economic power, *the largest economy in the European Union* and the fourth largest in the world, *Germany cannot be 'one' of the others*, it must assume greater responsibility than the other states, it cannot shirk its role as European leader, which, despite its reservations, is also expected of its partners.

Nor does the narrative of 'global Germany' imply a juxtaposition of Berlin's European and global options, but can be interpreted as a role for Europe. The process of normalisation is forcing Germany to step out of its former comfortable position and assume greater responsibility for European leadership and global politics. In terms of its objectives, strategies

²⁶ Karp, Regina [2006]: *The New German Foreign Policy Consensus*. In: Washington Quarterly. Winter 2006, Vol. 29 Issue 1, p. 61-82

and instruments, a German foreign and European policy with a global horizon and a European and transatlantic partnership is currently taking shape, in which national and allied interests are consciously and constantly reconciled, with multilateralism and pacifism as its primary objectives. All this is taking place at a time when the world economic order is being reshuffled and the centre of gravity of world power decisions is shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific due to the advance of emerging countries, when the stakes for Europe are no less than whether it can be counted on as a third power centre in a multipolar world alongside the United States and China.

Summary:

- After the reunification of Germany, the material framework conditions of foreign policy changed significantly, as did the country's place in the international system, and neorealist expectations projected a change in German foreign policy, a revival of its former ambitions for power and a return to an old normality.
- *German foreign policy is particularly norm-oriented, and the basic norms that have guided the foreign policy of a reunified Germany in recent decades have remained unchanged.* The three components of the German foreign policy identity - '*civilian power*', '*European orientation*' and '*multilateralism*' - have remained fundamentally valid, thus justifying a high degree of continuity in German foreign policy. There has been no change of orientation.
- Yet foreign policy cannot be said to be unchanged: *continuity has changed.* German '*civilian power*' has in part been further strengthened, with one of its most important attributes, '*formative power*', and its participation in the civilisation of international relations becoming even more active, while its representation of national interests has also become visible.
- *German foreign policy has changed considerably since reunification, with a high degree of constancy and significant changes, not only in rhetoric but also in practice,* which have led to the emergence not of an old normality but of a '*new normality*'. It could also be said that the '*normal*' for a country like Germany (with all the lessons of its history) is to maintain its role as a '*civilian power*' and to act in the name and role of a *more assertive* and *self-conscious* '*civilian power*'. Germany is a '*modified civilian power*' which is determined and open in representing its own interests and is *able to take on and fulfil the*

tasks of 'international leadership', in which it is prepared to coordinate and compromise in order to achieve higher common goals. In doing so, it considers how, as a 'civilian power', it can reconcile common, long-term strategic group interests and objectives with its own short- and long-term interests and objectives.

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