

The New Foreign-Policy Pendulum: Geopolitical Codes of German Foreign Policy in the Post-bipolar World Order

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“Geopolitics is a problematic term, especially when it is used with respect to Germany”

(Lacoste 1990).

Abstract: *This article deals with the question of how German foreign policy can be characterized from a geopolitical perspective in an era in which the constellation of world politics is undergoing change, as evidenced by the conflict in Ukraine, shift in US foreign policy under President Trump and the on-going Brexit negotiations. In order to identify changes in the geopolitical orientation of German foreign policy and sketch a profile of German foreign policy, the article includes official German government documents. It can be concluded from the study that the geopolitical codes of German foreign policy are of a varying character, and can be characterized into three geopolitical spatial structures: the Atlantic, European and Eurasian regions. In terms of the geopolitical orientation of German foreign policy, the Federal Government develops German strategy in a multipolar world system, in which it aims to turn Europe into a world power. While the continued existence of NATO remains a goal of German foreign policy, the Federal Government, in unison with France, seeks a multipolar world order, in which Germany and France assume leading roles within the European spatial structure, and are liberated from US supremacy in the transatlantic spatial structure.*

Keywords: *Geopolitical Codes; German Foreign Policy; Foreign-Policy Pendulum*

Introduction

Following the end of the East-West conflict, a world political situation has arisen that has not yet found its structure and thus carries an indeterminate character. With regard to the spatial-political developments of the world order following the end of the East-West conflict, the global political situation changed, and numerous international conflicts arose that pose new challenges for the international community at large, and for Germany, in particular, due to its historical and geographical situation. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001, the intensification of the Syrian civil war, the escalation in the conflict in Ukraine, enduring chaos in the Middle East, the emergence of the Islamic State, the looming crisis in the EU following the Brexit vote, it is evident that the dynamics of the world order are beginning to change (ibid.). In large part due to events listed above, the geopolitical world order is in a state of transition. This geopolitical shift in the order of states that comprise the global system has an impact on German foreign policy and demands that German foreign policy (Hellmann 2004) appropriately adjust to face the new challenges (Hellmann 2015; Maull 2014a, and 2014b; Hacke 2012; Masala 2008). Accordingly, demanded a reassessment of the geopolitical codes and geopolitical orientations that have been central to German foreign policy is necessary (Oßenbrügge and Scholvin; 2013 Schwarz 2005; Brill 1994a; Maull 2011; Hellmann 2006). Following these shifts in geopolitical structures, German foreign policy should match its central position in the 'hot spots' of world politics (Stürmer 2006) – structurally between the Westphalian state system and the postmodern Statehood (Boesler 1997), geographically between the Euro-Eurasian landmass and the Euro-Transatlantic area (Meyer 2014), and temporally between the certainties of the bipolar world order and the uncertainties of an indefinite post-bipolar order. (Stürmer 2006). Germany is currently geographically in the midst of these geopolitical contradictions within the context of the European Union. However, 21st-century Germany, with its postmodern and liberal character within the EU, aspires to overcome power politics and lead the world into a new era of international order based on laws and institutions. Thus arises the question of what happens when Germany or the EU is challenged by major powers or by a traditional power such as Russia, which tends to practice the old power politics of the 19th and 20th centuries, as evidenced in the crisis in Ukraine and the Syrian civil war. Germany may be poorly prepared to respond to a conflict that it has to this point not expected. His postmodern and liberal foreign policy toolset is not designed to deal with more traditional geopolitical challenges.

Geopoliticians, political scientists, and German foreign policymakers often debate the direction that German foreign policy is to develop in to best face the new geopolitical situation and geopolitical structures of relations. Therefore, the present article deals with the following crucial question: how have geopolitical

codes been modeled in German foreign policy? The aim of this study is to show how geopolitical thinking, at once, relates to “*spatiality*”, namely, the influence of space on foreign policy but also to “*temporality*”, including the historical developments for German foreign policy that are systematically reflected. The article focuses specifically on German foreign policy from 2013 to 2018. Against this background, the present article presents a geopolitical survey of geopolitical codes in German foreign policy in relation to the Atlantic, European and Eurasian spaces a structural analysis perspective. The guiding thesis contends that the geopolitical codes in German foreign policy prior to reunification were shaped and predetermined in a specific spatial-political structure between East and West. After the end of the East-West conflict, however, they remain underdetermined in an open and indefinite post-bipolar world. Within the framework of the structural-geopolitical approach, the geopolitical codes of German foreign policy from 2013 until 2018 are discussed in relation to the three geopolitical spatial structures – the European, the Transatlantic and the Eurasian areas. This question is aimed at how geopolitics and politically, spatial thinking demand a strategic change of course or a new orientation for German foreign policy after reunification, and how German foreign policy can be characterized by space-related factors.

This article, following the introductory section, will deal with the theoretical foundations in its second section. First of all, the most important theories of International Relations, namely Realism and Liberalism, are explained in greater detail in order to specify these constants and to establish a connection to a structural geopolitics. The two approaches contain elements that, when combined, develop the argument for geopolitical code and an understanding of German foreign policy actions. Subsequently, the basic concept of “*geopolitical code*” is used as a basic pattern of German foreign policy to explain the development of German foreign policy. The influence of geography on German foreign policy after the reunification of Germany is described by geopoliticians as one of the most important factors to German foreign policy. Therefore, in the second section, studies and relevant approaches are presented, that in differing ways have dealt with the influence of space on the development of German foreign policy. In the next section, a short description of the development of German foreign policy from 2013 to 2018 will be provided and systematically explained. To answer the question of how the geopolitical visions of German foreign policy and its structures are modeled depends upon how they are geopolitically coded. Therefore, the ideas and concepts of geopolitical thinkers are classified. Subsequently, to answer the question of the article, behavioral profiles of the three geopolitical spatial structures will be created to show how the geopolitical orientation of German foreign policy has developed. In the final section, the article will explore the legitimacy of these spaces and what role they play in German foreign policy.

Theoretical Framework: Foreign Policy between Realism and Idealism Towards a Geopolitical Code as a Lens for Analysis

Realism is a systematic theory for foreign policy analysis and for understanding international geopolitics. Political realism focuses on a tradition of power politics analysis practiced by states (Morgenthau 1963: 77, and 1977). Realism emphasizes that international politics is based upon state egoism and anarchy, which focuses primarily on power and security. Rationality and state centrism are identified as the core elements of realism (Morgenthau 1977: 80). In order to renew notions of classical realism developed by Morgenthau, Kenneth N. Waltz (1979) coined the term “*structural realism*” presenting it as the most influential form of realism in International Relations. Waltz’s notion of structural realism contends that anarchy and the distribution of capabilities are crucial for the behavior of states in the international system. Unlike classical realism, Waltz’s theory focuses on the structure of the international system (Waltz 1979: 118). It is the structure of the international system that compels great powers to respect the balance of power. According to Waltz, the international system consists of a structure and cooperating units (Waltz 1979: 80). The international system is organized according to the principle of anarchy and consists of equal units in terms of its coordination. The units are distinguished not by their function, but by their capabilities (Waltz 1996: 54). The distribution of capabilities is not an attribute of the units, but of the system at large. Therefore, the structure of an international system changes with alterations of distribution capabilities (Waltz 1979: 195). Accordingly, the distribution of power determines the structure of the international system (ibid.: 96). In Waltz’s view, a state’s first concern is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system (Waltz 1996: 54). In this way, Waltz argues that states could restrict their quest for power to maximize their security (Waltz 1979: 16). Contrary to the theory of offensive realism supported by John J. Mearsheimer (2001, and 2005), Waltz has suggested in his theory of defensive realism that maximizing power is not the most rational strategy for a state to increase its security in an anarchic international system. The concept of defensive realism developed by Waltz indicates that, above all else, states pursue strategies to achieve security (ibid.).

In contrast to the theory of realism, theorists of liberalism advocate in line with the fundamental ideas of Immanuel Kant —particularly the concept of “*ewigen Friedens*”—that peaceful coexistence between the states in the international system is possible (Czempiel 1996). Democracy is a crucial core assumption in this theory and, moreover, the pursuit of permanent peacekeeping in the world is at its center. Theorists of liberalism believe that there are prevailing domestic values in democracies, including the rejection of the use of force as a means of political conflict. Therefore, democratic states try to resolve conflicts among themselves (Czempiel 1986: 113; Russett 1993: 35). Liberal theorists ar-

gue that the political culture of democracy should be transferred on and to the international level (Moravcsik 1997). From the liberals' perspective, democratic states can form a common image of confidence at the international level, so that democratic states cooperate in the resolution of international problems for the preservation of peace, and these states set up institutions for this purpose. Compared to neorealism, in which power is at the center of the analysis, the term "state preferences" is at the forefront of the analysis of liberalism (Moravcsik 2008). Moravcsik argues that states are likely to be united in making domestic policy choices for their foreign policy preferences, but are constrained in enforcing other's preferences in the international system. Moravcsik theorized that the structure of the international system does not determine the actions of states, but rather the key players are the individuals, organized groups and the social environment. The individuals and social groups are the main actors of international politics and the state is merely the representative of these groups in which their interests are exposed on an international level (Moravcsik 1997, and 2008).

In order to characterize the development tendencies of the geopolitical codes of German foreign policy following reunification, then, the concept of geopolitical codes developed by Peter J. Taylor and Colin Flint to analyze German foreign policy in their spatial relationship structures is used as the present paper's theoretical basis. The concept of geopolitical code was first introduced by John Lewis Gaddis (1982) in his analysis of United States security and policy. From a geopolitical perspective, he argues that geopolitical codes play a crucial role in formulating the foreign policy of a state. He defines geopolitical codes as follows: "[...] *I would suggest that there exist for certain "strategic" or "geopolitical" codes, assumptions about American interests in the world, potential threats to them, and feasible responses, that tend to thereafter*" (Gaddis 1982: ix).

Following Gaddis, Gertjan Dijkink describes geopolitical codes as a map with countries painted in different colours according to their degree of hostility/friendship (Dijkink 1998, 293). Using the concept of Gaddis geopolitical codes, Dijkink developed the term "Geopolitical Visions". From a discourse-theoretical perspective, Dijkink defines the geopolitical visions of a state as follows: "*any idea concerning the relation between one's own and other places, involving feelings of (in) security or (dis) advantage (and / or) invoking ideas about a collective mission or foreign policy strategy*" (Dijkink 1996: 12).

Similarly, Peter J. Tylor and Colin Flint use the concept of geopolitical codes as a starting point in their approach. For Taylor and Flint, geopolitical codes are "[...] *the set of strategic assumptions that a government makes about other states in forming its foreign policy [...] such operational codes involve evaluation of places beyond the state's boundaries in terms of their strategic importance and as potential threats. Geopolitical codes are not just state-centric; they also involve a particular single state's view of the world. They are by definition, therefore, highly biased pictures of the world*" (Taylor and Flint 2000: 91).

From this point of view, Flint describes geopolitical codes as follows: *“The manner in which a country orientates itself toward the world is called a geopolitical code”* (Flint 2011). In order to study states’ international strategies within the international system, they use a suitable analytical concept of geopolitical codes when addressing their geopolitical thinking, referring to the national interests of a country in reference to its geographically relational structures (Taylor and Flint 2000). From their perspective, geopolitical codes are spatial-political orientations of a country focused on foreign policy. Against this backdrop, the analysis of geopolitical codes is a method through which political actors can formulate their foreign policy strategies and interests in regional and global politics with a theoretical basis (Taylor 1993a). By turning to geopolitical codes, Taylor and Flint use a structure-oriented perspective in their analysis of international politics (Flint and Taylor 2007). They assume that the inevitable structure of international politics is generated by the interaction of actors, and that the actions of these actors in this structure are both embedded and restricted (Flint 2011; Taylor 1993a, and 1993b). On the basis of this political-geographical assumption, they address the geopolitical codes of a state on the basis of which its foreign policy paradigm is developed (Taylor and Flint 2000). Taylor and Flint start from a global geopolitical model in which the geopolitical codes of states are formed on three different levels, and their operationalization is characterized by *“a set of Political Geography assumptions”* (Taylor and Flint 2000: 91). Taylor and Flint point to a strong correlation between geopolitical codes and the geopolitical world order. They expressly support the thesis in their work *“Geopolitical World Orders”* that geopolitical codes are the building blocks of the geopolitical world order (Taylor and Flint 2000: 91ff.). Unlike the geopolitical approach developed by Gaddis, which contends that geopolitical codes are not a fixed concept and are changed by governments (Gaddis 1982), Taylor and Flint come up with the following basic thesis: though geopolitical codes tend to be modifiable and changeable, they do not change so quickly and, in principle, have a relatively constant character (Taylor and Flint 2000). With reference to the geopolitical world order, they assume that the change of a state’s geopolitical codes occurs gradually and within the limitations of a long historical period referred to as the geopolitical world order (Flint 2011).

Geopolitics and Search for a New German Foreign Policy

The German state is looking for its role as a sovereign state in the new geopolitical world order following reunification (Bruns 1991; Brill 1994a; Baring 1994). In the “New World Order”, German foreign policy is no longer under the influence of the West-East geopolitics, but develops under the geopolitical conditions of far-reaching globalization and transnationalization (Hellmann et al. 2007), which are closely related to a global geo-strategy, geo-economy, and globalized

conflicts (Brill 2002, and 2004). The political situation of the united Germany is, in many respects, very different in Europe and in the international system than it had been before reunification (Zimmer 1997). Germany as a sovereign state has returned to the world political stage (Schöllgen 1993; Schwarz 1994).

On the one hand, some geopoliticians and political scientists argue that the new geopolitical situation offers Germany many opportunities (Brill 1994b), and, on the other hand, some German politicians doubt how foreign policy can be pursued in Germany's new geopolitical position of centrality. From a historical point of view, from the foundation of the German Reich until the end of the Second World War, they had no successful foreign policy built upon this geopolitical position of centrality (Baring 1994). German foreign policy operates in a field of tension between the logic of continuity and a proclivity to change (Risse 2004; Roos 2010, and 2012; Hilz 2017). Above all else, the advocates of continuity in German foreign policy argue for adaptation to changing global political conditions as the needed foreign policy change (Katzenstein 1997; Hengehan 2000). The counter-position assumes that Germany has regained power in the international system after reunification. Critics of continuity in German foreign policy point to a strategic reformulation of German foreign policy. Therefore, the proponents of change in German foreign policy view the new geopolitical situation as a unique opportunity for German foreign policy (Brill 1994b; Zimmer 1997; Sandschneider 2012).

Another perspective emerges from the studies conducted by Randall Newnham, Jonathan Bach and Peters on the new central position and the new direction of German foreign policy. Newnham argues that Germany has transformed itself from a realistic-modern state into a post-modern state. It is characteristic of postmodern Germany that it freely surrenders its sovereignty rights to the supranational organizations, avoids the use of military force and instead relies on values like human rights and democracy instead of geo-strategic interests (Newnham 1999, and 2002). In his study, Newnham also refers to the previously mentioned historical postmodern identity of German foreign policy and poses the question of whether this identity is evolving in an era of changing world politics or is changing due to the new structural shifts in the world order (ibid.). In this context, Bach and Peters discuss that geopolitical thinking is again at the center of German foreign policy when it comes to the new *Mittellage*. In this new position of centrality, Germany is looking to the future and viewing global politics with as self confidence and maturity (Bach, Peters 2002). In doing so, they pick up an argument from David Harvey: *"Its [i.e. Germany] position in the future, however, is not primarily spatial, but reflects the space-time compression of globalization and its subsequent privileging of the temporal over the spatial. In this context, what matters for Germany's understanding of itself and of its ability to project power, is less its position between and among spheres of influence than one that seeks to negotiate flows of influence"* (Bach, Peters 2002: 10).

On the basis of this view—that German foreign policy distances itself from the old geopolitical narratives, which refer to influence politics primarily in the form of direct and indirect exercise of power and control of the territory, the population, and the resources—they advocate for a new discourse of the Mittellage in Germany's foreign policy: *"The new geopolitics intimates the arrival of flows of influences, where Germany is more concerned with seeking international influence through the shaping of norms and supporting its commercial activities than controlling adjacent territory"* (Bach, Peters 2002: 10). From their point of view, it is characteristic of Germany that it no longer sees itself in the new Mittellage, but that Europe takes the place of the middle position (ibid.). In this sense, Philip Gordon argues that the principle of normalization was the basis of German foreign policy in the period from 1945 to reunification. He points out that German foreign policy has become more multilateral, self-confident and more assertive on a global scale than in the past (Gordon 1994). Matthias Zimmer argues that the German position of centrality in the context of today's power constellation is different from earlier historical experiences, because the new German central position is incompatible with the power and security structure of the contemporary world's politics (Zimmer 1997). The new central position points to an increase in the distribution of power and capabilities and to the strengthening of Germany's position of power in the international system and highlights the reintegrated role of Germany as the central power in the middle of Europe. In this role, Germany is once again positioning itself in world politics, redeveloping its foreign policy and opening up new horizons and perspectives for itself (ibid.). Zimmer assumes that German foreign policy is no longer based upon revisionist territorial goals, but on the stabilization of the immediate international environment. As Germany has integrated itself into the Western community of states in a democratic context, it distances itself from the concept of the German's Sonderweg or *"Special Way"* (ibid.).

In his comprehensive study, Hyde-Price investigated the structure of the international system, arguing it changed in different dimensions after the end of the Cold War. In this context, he argues that the unipolar world order has transformed itself militarily, economically and security-politically into a new multilateral world order, and that the new geopolitical order has offered German foreign policy new potential possibilities for change (Hyde-Price 2000). Werner Link also refers to these shifts, and argues that the antagonistic order no longer exists in Europe and that the restrictions on German foreign policy have thus been lifted. In addition, Germany is no longer a frontline state, but a country circled by friendly neighboring countries, most of which are also members of the European Union (Link 2002a, 2002b, and 2002c). The new geopolitical order represents a potential change in German foreign policy (ibid.). Thus, the move from Bonn to Berlin is a symbolic step towards Germany's reestablished position in the middle of Europe (Hyde-Price 2000). Further, Werner Link and

Ralf Roloff observe the change in the structure of the international system, the orientation of globalization (especially in the economic sphere), which poses a challenge for nation-states. In this regard, they argue that German policy should be able to gain influence in the new world order through the regionalization of the economy in the European Union against the US and China (Roloff 2001). Similarly, Josef Janning and Claus Giering emphasize that Germany is a key state in Europe. Many analysts agree that Germany acts as the “*Engine of European Integration*” in the new Mittellage (Janning 2016; Janning and Giering 2002).

The Suppleness Maneuver Discourse of German Foreign Policy from 2013 to 2018

In the Bundestag election of 2013, the CDU / CSU narrowly missed establishing an absolute majority and was no longer able to continue the Federal Government with the previous coalition partner, the FDP. This was due to the fact that, for the first time since the founding of the Federal Republic, the FDP was no longer represented in the Bundestag. The CDU therefore led coalition negotiations with the SPD and on November 28th, 2013, the coalition agreement was completed and Chancellor Angela Merkel entered the Chancellor’s Office for the third time with a grand coalition. After four years of restrained and disappointing foreign policy during the legislature under the Black-Yellow Administration, the new federal government decided to pursue a more self-confident and reliable foreign policy (Maull 2015: 222), and advocated that Germany engage more actively in world politics and take on more responsibility in Europe and the world, so as to shape the global world order (Roos and Rungius 2016; Keller and Gleichmann 2016). In the foreign policy strategy set out in the Coalition Agreement, the new federal government sought to “*take a responsible and inclusive role in Europe*” as a basic EU member and trusted partner by improving relations with France. The new federal government tried to re-establish the “*questioned confidence*” in the transatlantic relationship and to develop the “*strategic partnership*” with Russia (Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU and SPD 2013). This active foreign policy began with a speech on January 31st, 2014 on “*Germany’s Role in the World*” (Gauck 2014), which the Federal President delivered at the Munich Security Conference. He pleaded for a course correction in German foreign policy in relation to globalization and permanent changes in the world, because “*Germany is [...] above average globalized*” [and] “*Changes in the world are becoming faster than they are predicted*” (ibid.). In his speech, he highlighted the consequences of globalization for German foreign and security policy and criticized restrained German foreign policy: “*man könne in Deutschland einfach weitermachen wie bisher das überzeugt mich nicht*” (ibid.). At the same time, he called for new directions in the Euro-Atlantic Alliance. He advocated that Germany, as a “*guarantor of*

international order and security”, be able to take more responsibility for international conflict management and, in addition, participate in military operations (ibid.). The Federal President’s position advocating a new and active German foreign policy was supported by the federal government at large, in particular by the Minister of Defense, Ursula von der Leyen, and Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Both ministers also emphasized that German foreign policy should take on more responsibility in global politics (Staack 2014: 2; Roos and Rungius 2016: 39).

In view of the increased responsibility, and with regard to a new and active German foreign policy, Germany now faced a great challenge. After some time, the crisis in Ukraine, gradually developed in late 2013. The Ukraine crisis dealt with Ukraine’s foreign policy orientation and was actively involved by large-scale geopolitical actors (USA, Russia and the European Union) (Staack 2014:8). The crisis unfolded with the annexation of the Crimea by Russia and on-going armed conflict broke out in Donetsk and Luhansk. The pro-Russian forces, who were supported by Russian troops, fought for the annexation of Donetsk and Luhansk from Ukraine against the Ukrainian military (Hedenskog 2014: 21f.). With the escalation in the Ukraine crisis, the cooperative security structures of Europe were endangered, and the interests of German foreign and security policy in the center of Europe were significantly threatened (Grabau 2018: 319ff.). The crisis in Ukraine has led to a new international conflict as a result of Russia’s aggressive foreign policy and territorial conquest. The conflict in Ukraine led to a change of course in German foreign policy and, as a result, sanctions were announced by Germany in tandem with Western partners against Russia, and diplomatic relations were restricted (Rinke 2014: 41f.), in order for the West to find a way out of the crisis through political dialogue between the conflict parties (Staack 2014: 18f.). In contrast to the perspective of the Chancellor and the Union parties, the Social Democrat Foreign Minister Steinmeier took the deviant view that Russia was part of the solution to the crisis (Rinke 2014: 35f.). He therefore pleaded for dialogue with Russia: *“in times of tension, we stick to the path of diplomacy, the way of dialogue [...] even if it is difficult – and we will have more dialogue with Russia and no less.”* (Steinmeier 2015a). In addition, the coalition agreement stipulated that security in Europe would only be achievable with Russia and not against Russia (Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU and SPD 2013: 170). Germany took the leading role alongside France in the Ukraine crisis in order to find a peaceful solution (Hellmann 2016:11). With the signing of the Minsk Agreement I on September 5th, 2014, a ceasefire with Ukraine, Russia and the separatists was reached (Grabau 2018: 328ff.). The ceasefire did not last long, and the escalation intensified, leading to a renewed Minsk II ceasefire agreement on February 12th, 2015 that halted bloodshed in Ukraine (Rinke 2015: 19f.). The conflict between Russia and the West intensified and the third stage of economic sanctions came into

force. At the moment, it seems that the conflicting parties in the Ukraine crisis are far from a peaceful solution.

With regard to German European politics, the German government emphasized European integration as the basis of its foreign policy under the second grand coalition (Mauß 2015: 232) and was committed to ensuring that the European Union establish itself as a global political player in the international system through coordinated foreign and security policy (Coalition Agreement between the CDU, CSU and SPD 2013: 156f.). The financial crisis started in 2015 in Greece. Once again, Greece was bankrupt due to a high level of public debt. The financial crisis in Greece was controversial within the European Union (Papagiannopoulos and Agridopoulos 2016: 1f.). As a basic member of the Eurozone, Greece was unable to obtain more financial market lending because of its budget deficits and its lack of effective bureaucracy. The financial crisis in Greece put Germany under pressure because there was no consensus in the federal government (Illing 2017: 185ff.). On the one hand, German Finance Minister Schäuble speaks of a “*Grexit*” from the European Union and, on the other hand, the German Chancellor tried to exclude the Greek exit, in between was the German Foreign Minister solidarity with Greece and called “*Grexit*” a “*devastating signal*” for the appearance of the European Union (Steinmeier 2015). Despite fierce disputes between critics and supporters, the EU states, the ECB and the IMF finally agreed on a solution to the financial crisis in Greece under tough conditions on August 11th, 2015, and subsequently approved a third aid program (Illing 2017: 164ff.). In return, Greece agreed to advance fundamental structural reforms for its financial and economic administration, to increase taxes and to carry out privatizations in the country (ibid.: 170ff.).

Another controversial aspect of German foreign policy under the second grand coalition was the Chancellor’s refugee policy, which polarized the political situation within the EU and deeply divided not just the domestic political situation in Germany, but the Union parties (Mück 2017: 245). The Chancellor tried to justify her refugee policy in her 2016 New Year’s speech, in which she stressed the following: “*We want and must learn from the mistakes of the past. Our values, our traditions, our understanding of law, our language, our laws, our rules – they carry our society*” (Merkel 2016). However, Merkel could not explain to Germans the correctness of their decision in refugee policy. The Chancellor’s decision was the beginning of a new era in German history in world politics (Mück 2017: 265). Although the German Chancellor’s refugee policy garnered much respect abroad (Kämper 2015), it sparked skepticism in society and distrust within her own party. Overall, the Chancellor’s refugee policy was contradictory (Mück 2017: 261ff.). On the one hand, she advocated for the adoption of a ‘welcome culture’ within Germany with her famous phrase “*Wir schaffen das*” (Merkel 2016a), but, on the other hand, she settled upon the refugee agreement with Turkey (Çopur 2018). She emphasized that “*a situation like late summer 2015 can*

not be repeated” in a speech at the CDU party congress in 2016 and, in another speech delivered to the Bundestag, the Chancellor said: “*Germany will remain Germany with everything, which we love*” (Merkel 2016b). Merkel thus doubted the correctness of her decision and regarded it as a mistake.

At such a difficult time, Britain decided to quit the European Union following the results of a referendum. This decision—known commonly as Brexit—shook the European Union deeply and put the future of Europe at stake (Welfens 2017: 1f.). In a referendum on June 23th, 2016, the United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union. The former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Theresa May, subsequently led the exit negotiation process from the EU under Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union on March 29th, 2017 to avoid the scenario of a disorderly separation without a contract. At an EU special summit on April 10th, 2019, the European Council approved and agreed to withdraw by October 31st, 2019. Whether all of the details can be comprehensively and mutually negotiated in this period is considered to be doubtful. A delayed Brexit is therefore not unlikely. The debate on the British exit referendum from the EU looks controversial for German foreign policy. The German government emphasized the principle of responsibility for preserving the integrity of the European unification process. The Federal Republic is provided a special role in preventing the European Union from falling apart (Wendler 2019). The Federal Government has denied any special or selective benefits to the United Kingdom and postulated a special responsibility for the stability of political relations in Europe, both in the form of the continuation of EU integration and in remembrance of the founding phase of European integration, maintaining close and friendly relations with the United Kingdom (ibid.). In addition, German foreign policymakers pleaded for the preservation of the internal market, but also for a pragmatic agreement with Great Britain.

In German-American relations, cooperation remained factual despite the wiretapping scandal and its consequences (Szabo 2015: 446f.). US espionage activities in Germany after the Iraq war and the inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States in 2017 led to the second stage of transatlantic alienation in German foreign policy, and the Federal Republic has tried to express its interests self-confidently towards the United States. The Federal Government has, however, continued to advocate joint security cooperation within NATO and, participated more actively in global political conflicts (Rizzo 2016: 22ff, Maull 2015). Despite the divergence of interest between the two countries in terms of their present values, there is a lot of interest between the two states.

Geopolitical Codes in German Foreign Policy between Values and Interests

Many scientists have dealt with German national interests. At the beginning of the 1990s, Hans W. Maull described the German foreign political identity before and after German reunification as a civil power or peace power (Maull 1992, 2006a, and 2006b). With regard to German foreign policy identity, Maull also sees Western orientation as one of the most important cornerstones of German foreign policy. The Western-focused orientation of the Federal Republic is about the alliance with the United States and European integration. In this sense, Germany pursues a multilateral foreign policy instead of national power politics, renounces its sovereignty rights to supranational organizations, renounces military means in its foreign policy and tends to seek diplomacy, peaceful solutions, and non-violent means (Maull 2007: 76). Maull further argues that German civilian power promotes active international interdependence. In regard to interdependence and multilateralism in German foreign policy, Maull considers Europeanization and transatlanticisation as essential components of the civil-German identity of German foreign policy (*ibid.*: 77). In light of Germany's interest in making itself an independent, a sovereign player in world politics, Hans W. Maull argued that the category of national interest in German foreign policy led to misunderstandings and had greatly overestimated its significance as a foreign policy-oriented action (Maull 2006a). As this term is historically burdened with Germany and refers to categories such as nation, power and balance, the national interest in German foreign policy should initially isolate itself against misunderstandings and reconcile them with the interests of other states (Maull 2006a, and 2014a). With reference to the orientation of German foreign policy's continuity, German politicians critically consider the emphasis on a power-conscious German foreign policy based solely on national interests in the classical sense of the term (Maull 2006b). They take up the argument that Germany should articulate its interests because of its changed global political framework. In this way, German foreign policy can create predictability (and thus reliability) *vis-à-vis* other states. However, from Maull's point of view, a fundamental paradox is that expectations and intentions are contradictory both at the domestic and international level (Maull 2006a, 2014a, and 2014b).

On the one hand, it is argued that Germany should assume greater international responsibility because of its increased power in world politics but, on the other hand, German supremacy in Europe is held up and Germany's pursuit of its interests is regarded as a power policy (Maull 2011). Accordingly, German politicians emphasized that, although the formulation of German interests is necessary for the geopolitical codes of German foreign policy, the interests should first be legitimized (Maull 2006b). In this context, they advocate

a value-oriented foreign policy with regard to the normative requirements of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (Das Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland). Starting from the view that the German interests are intertwined interests, they advocated a value-oriented foreign policy within the framework of the principle of multilateralism, in particular with regard to NATO and the EU. Therefore, German interests could be definable based on this value-led foreign policy (Mauß 2014a).

In contrast to the position just presented, a number of geopolitician and political scientists advocate a power-conscious, German interest-oriented foreign policy. It should be noted that they do not completely rule out values and norms in the formulation of geopolitical codes in German foreign policy, but they emphasize that German foreign policy should not be dominated exclusively by values and ethics. Accordingly, Hans-Peter Schwarz acknowledges how difficult it is for Germany to make its foreign policy power-conscious and to self-confidently pursue its interests (Schwarz 1994, and 1985). He opposes an exclusive value orientation for the Federal Republic (Schwarz 1985), which could cause German's role to become limited and the relations with its allies within the EU and NATO to be burdened. Schwarz argues that after the catastrophe of the Third Reich, Germany rejected the national categories and use of national interests in determining its foreign policy, and formulated its foreign policy goals in an idealistic and humanitarian way (Schwarz 2005). As long as the Federal Government pursues a foreign policy based on universal values and cannot confidently address its national interests with regard to its geopolitical central position, it embodies a disoriented and unstable position in world politics (ibid.). In this sense, Germany must operate according its national interests in the context of a power-conscious foreign policy as a result of the changed global political framework conditions (ibid.). Moreover, Schwarz did not exclude the values of German foreign policy, but emphasized that value-based German foreign policy could be successful if it were to be reformulated with consideration of international interests.

Like Schwarz, Gregor Schöllgen and Michael Stürmer state that German foreign policy must confidently define its national interests because of its new geopolitical position of centrality. They emphasize that German national interests must be defined in the context of power politics (Schöllgen 2004a, and 2004b). As German foreign policy made itself a prisoner (at least, in Schöllgen's opinion), he claimed that the German foreign policy must liberate from the load and feelings of guilt from the past and look to the future (Schöllgen 1997). The principle of the "*Culture of Restraint*", which established itself after the Second World War in the context of value structure as a feature of the geopolitical codes of German foreign policy, had led German foreign policy to passivity (Schöllgen 1993, and 1999). Nevertheless, in this sense, value-oriented foreign policy does not correspond to the framework conditions of German foreign policy and the

reality of world politics after reunification. Therefore, the geopolitical codes in German foreign policy should not be determined solely by the values (ibid).

In addition, the proponents of German interest-based foreign policy refer to the idea of Germany as a central power in Europe. The idea of the German “special way” between East and West was replaced by Western integration and Germany’s renunciation of the search for a territorial revision, which characterized the German foreign policy from the Treaty of Versailles to reunification and destabilizes the European security structure (Stürmer 1994, and 1995). The conditions point to a new *Mittellage* that differs from the discourse of the *Mittellage* before German reunification and that develops in a new form. With regard to the new central position, Michael Stürmer criticizes value-oriented German foreign policy, which is based upon a foreign policy of “Culture of Restraint” (Stürmer 1998). He demands that Germany should formulate a new foreign policy that matches both its new central position and the spirit of the times (Stürmer 2001, and 2004). Gregor Schöllgen argues in much the same way for a new strategic foreign policy based upon power and interests. He argues that Germany should leave the past behind and responsibly formulate power politics foreign policy (Schöllgen 1997, 1999, 2004a, and 2004b).

In this context, the proponents of the civil-power role of German foreign policy argue that German identity, or its values and interests, are not objective and predetermined, but are comprised of social constructs. With regard to the geopolitical shifts in global politics, the critics of the civil-power identity plead for a German foreign policy identity that is driven by interest. From their point of view, the interests, and values of German foreign policy are not subjective, but objective and predetermined, being derived from the circumstances of the geopolitical world order. German foreign political identity is thus divided between values and interests, and it is an ambivalent feature that moves unsteadily and inconsistently in different areas of tension and cannot decide in different situations with different notions of identity.

In light of this question of, whether German foreign policy seeks power and uses it to pursue its own interests, it can be summarized that there can be no talk of a direct power policy shift in German foreign policy. However, the goal of increasing one’s own power through efficiency optimization in competition with other states has gained more importance in the course of the investigation. Federal governments orient their action plans not only along with the analysis of international power distribution, that is, following the hypotheses of offensive realism, that maximizing power is the most rational strategy for a state to increase its security in an anarchic international system. The more power a state has in the international system, the higher it’s chance of long-term survival. Rather, federal governments were interested in the hypotheses of defensive realism in relative power gains by increasing efficiency in competition with other major states. The first concern of states is not to maximize power,

but to maintain their positions in the system. Although the German civilian power strove for more responsibility in the regulation of international relations, this does not mean renouncing classical power politics, but instead aims at increasing national power in comparison and competition with other states, adapting traditional means to the modern one's conditions. After unification, the concepts of responsibility lost their relevance due to their own history or responsibility as a self-evident selfless contribution obligation (Roos 2012). They have been replaced by concepts of responsibility as a claim to participation based upon their own contributions, as well as the concept of reputation acquisition through the assumption of responsibility (*ibid.*). In place of a fundamental commitment to the civilization of world politics, one of the considerations of efficiency was a fixation on one's own advantage and one's own relative position of power. German foreign policy, which had been de-idealized in this way, prepared itself for the ever-increasing concentration of interests of the major powers in a multipolar world system, instead of continuing to believe in the possibility of mutual cooperation among members of the world community. In summary, it can be stated that German politics is divided between a value-oriented paradigm and an interest-based paradigm when it comes to foreign policy and German foreign policy is viewed as problematic in terms of both values and interests. From the point of view of the new Mittellage, values and interests did not oppose each other, but rather are two sides of the same coin, which are interconnected and should be considered as action-guiding factors for German foreign policy.

Geopolitical Codes of German Foreign Policy in its Spatial Relationship Structures

From a spatial perspective, three geopolitical structures of space in German foreign policy after reunification can be traced. The first geopolitical orientation in German foreign policy refers to the transatlantic space, in which the geopolitical code shows a fluctuating strategy between alignment and emancipation. A second alternative involves the European space. This option and the European orientation in German foreign policy can either expand the Euro-transatlantic region as a strategic power formation or create a counter-power to the United States as an independent Europe. The third foreign policy orientation goes far beyond Euro-Transatlantic space towards the Eurasian. Germany sees Eurasia, particularly Russia, as a potential means through which to establish its role as a global leader. The German geopolitical code moves in relation to the Eurasian space between approximation and demarcation.

Geopolitical Codes of German Foreign Policy in the Transatlantic Spatial Structure

The times when we could totally rely on others are a bit over. [...] And that's why I can only say that we Europeans really have to take our fate into our own hands. [...] Of course in friendship with the United States of America. We must fight for our own future, as Europeans, for our destiny (Merkel 2017).

Leaning or Emancipation? Ambivalences of German foreign policy to the United States

Merkel has expressed these words in view of the lack of reliability in German-transatlantic relations. Is this the end of an era?, Does it point to a change in the orientation of Germany's foreign policy?. If one examines the structure of German-transatlantic relations after German reunification, one encounters a vacillating attitude between leaning and emancipation, whereby one does not replace the other (Bredow 2008). With regard to the transatlantic spatial structure, it can be stated that the geopolitical codes of German foreign policy in this area vary between leaning and emancipation. Against this background, questions can be asked as to what influence the transatlantic area has on German foreign policy after German reunification and what geopolitical interests characterize German-transatlantic relations.

For security-political reasons, German-transatlantic relations played (during the Cold War era) and still play an essential role in the geopolitical orientation of German foreign policy after German reunification (Schwarz 2007). Moreover, the presence of the United States in Europe and its importance for German foreign policy not merely in military-political terms, but also from a cultural-economic perspective is considered as a power factor for the establishment of a stable world order and the maintenance of European security (Stürmer 2006). Thus, after the Second World War, German foreign policy integrated itself into the transatlantic community and as a result, established the transatlantic region as a basic geopolitical orientation in German foreign policy (Schwarz 2007). This suggests that Germany should continue to lean on the hegemonic power of the United States (Baring 2006). After the recent the geopolitical shifts in European and in global politics, the US is the only superpower that can act as a proper and peace-making power in the new unpredictable and unclear geopolitical situation on both global and European levels (Hacke 2002). From this perspective, German foreign policy is assigned with the task of orienting itself in relation to the United States. This will safeguard the balance of power and peace in Europe and the world, in order to prevent power-political rivalry among European states (Schwarz 1994). Stability and security are two central interests of German foreign policy in Central and Eastern Europe and can only

be achieved in solidarity with the United States (Berninger and Jäger 2017). In addition to security interests, the economic factors also form the framework and direction for German foreign policy within the transatlantic relationship (Schwarz 2007). For Germany, the transatlantic community plays a crucial role in term of economic integration with the European Union (Falke 2007). Despite the growing markets in the Asia-Pacific region, the economic and financial relations between the USA and Germany remain closely intertwined (Steingart 2006). Due to the German exports to the USA, the continuously increasing bilateral trade between the USA and Germany and the mutual direct investments, the two countries remain economically dependent on each other and are each others' most important trading partner. Against this background, it is argued that preserving the hegemonic power of the United States is of vital importance to German foreign policy (Berninger and Jäger 2017).

With the end of the Cold War and reunification, the intimacy of German-American relations began to lessen. Although there have been disagreements over the years with Russian relaxation, burden-sharing, and trade policy, security issues have prevented these differences from jeopardizing relations as a whole (Schöllgen 2004a). After the end of the Cold War, the United States turned its back on the euro-transatlantic to the Asia-Pacific region and alienated itself from German and Euro-transatlantic relations. The criticism of American politics comes not only from countries that are severely damaged and affected by United States security policies but also from close allies. Against this backdrop, the European side argues that the transatlantic structures are to be reformed and expanded in relation to the European role. While both sides criticize NATO and recommend its disbandment, there are also advocates who point to NATO's importance for stability and security in Europe and the world (Moravcsik 2005). At the same time, they are in favor of reforming the federal structure vis a vis the role of Europe. They note that NATO should transform its identity from a defense community into a community of values (Hamilton 2005). In this sense, they speak of commonly shared values and mutual economic and security dependency, which would provide the Euro-transatlantic region new strategic importance in the age of globalization (Hacke 2004). For this reason, Germany should reject any alternative counter-power formation on the part of the French or the United Kingdom that weakens the power of the United States in view of its geopolitical position. Since German-transatlantic relations are, in terms of security policy, essentially in the interests of German foreign policy, European integration and cooperation should supplement the transatlantic alliance (Stürmer 1995, and 2006). Accordingly, Germany should work together with the United States to deepen its strategic cooperation and help shape the European Union through its leadership role (Baring 2006, and 1994). The tension points in German-transatlantic relations arise from their distribution of capabilities or power resources and differing perceptions of world politics

(Algieri 2012). Although military policy plays an important role in American foreign policy in how conflicts and problems in world politics (with regard to traditional power politics) are dealt with, German foreign policy is in favor of approaches to peace and diplomacy in terms of a multilateral and networked world. Starting from a value-guided foreign policy in contrast to the American strategy, German foreign policy does not see the use of military force as the correct solution to increasingly complex conflicts in world politics (Szabo 2007). This is why Germany critically examines the course of American foreign policy course, and also pleads for crisis prevention and the consolidation of peace processes (Kempin 2012).

German-transatlantic relations have to some extent lost their constructive powers, and their primary function after German reunification is viewed in different ways by German governments (Zimmer 2009). The US security guarantee no longer plays a crucial role for Germany, as Germany does not see any immediate threat from Russia. Therefore, Germany does not have to be controlled by a guardianship of the US when it comes to divergences of interest. For this reason, Germany is expected to seek independence in terms of security and defense policy (Bierling and Steiler 2011). As Germany is no longer dependent on American support differences of opinion over questions of global importance gain importance. The Iraq war in 2003, the Libyan crisis in 2011 and the NSA wiretap scandal in 2013 have made German-American relations particularly difficult in recent years. Although problems in the fields of politics, economics, and security arose in German-American relations, the German-transatlantic partnership remains essential (Sloan and Borchert 2005). The geopolitical codes of German foreign policy after reunification in the transatlantic spatial structure confirms this thesis that, in this space, Germany is trying to operate according to the as-well-as policy (Ross 2012). The German strategy aims at adopting a mediating position between the EU and the US. The Federal Government is convinced that the EU must both pursue autonomous security policy and expand the influence of the EU within NATO. The goal of German foreign policy is emancipation from the US but not emancipation from NATO (ibid.). This seesaw strategy, which confirms Hans-Peter Schwarz's thesis, has been identified as a kind of back and forth, a permanent backlash between NATO cooperation and the quest for a new autonomous European defense force (ibid.). This fluctuating strategy can also be interpreted as German foreign policy trying to increase its influence over NATO, depending on the situation and its interests, while at the same time expanding its scope for action through the European security and defence policy (Fröhlich 2012, and 2017).

German-American relations were factually conducted. Despite espionage activities by the USA in Germany, Germany tried to confidently express its interests to the US (Staack 2014). Although the Federal government continued to advocate for joint security cooperation within NATO, it participated more

actively in global political conflicts and generally assumed more responsibility (Rachel 2016). Since the change of power in the White House – when Donald Trump won the presidential election against Hillary Clinton in November 2016 – German-transatlantic relations have bottomed out. Against this backdrop, the federal government calls for a common and strong foreign and security policy in the European Union continues to pursue its economic and geostrategic interests in the European Union and seeks to rebuild the strategic partnership with Russia in the Eurasian spatial structure. In addition, the federal government has been developing closer relationships with China and Japan.

Geopolitical Codes of German Foreign Policy in the European Spatial Structure

For Germany, the European space is a strong point of attraction, both as relates to the United States of America and to France as an independent actor (Janning 2016). The post-war reconciliation with France has been fundamental since 1950. German politicians worked closely with France to plan and create the European Coal and Steel Community, the Common Market, the European Community, the European Union and the introduction of the Euro. For the enlargement of the EU, France and Germany were together the driving force behind the unity of Europe (Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet 2012). However, in recent years, the partnership with France has proved increasingly inadequate. Although France, unlike Germany, has nuclear weapons and a seat as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, in a much enlarged Europe, it relies Germany for its global role within the EU. For Germany, however, this new position of power was a double-edged sword (Algieri 2012). When it comes to economic, political and security issues, Germany remains hesitant. As there is no political component to the EU, a common foreign and security policy remains a long way off. It should be noted that without a European army supporting security and deterrence, Europe will lack the effectiveness and impact of the international system when it comes to enforcing its geopolitical weight. European integration still plays an important role for German foreign policy, even though the European Union's ability to act as an important geopolitical actor is limited due to the divergent national foreign policies of the EU Member States. Germany is in a complex and aggravated situation within the EU and is far from reaching consensus on common foreign and security policy (Hellmann 2015). This new mixed situation offers Germany the basis for asymmetric action and influences its foreign policy. In this way, Germany is trying to structurally promote a political program for strengthening international organizations in the multilateral context. German foreign policy demands sustainable value standards within the European Union and assumes that environmental protection and ecological values should be taken into account in the international system. From this

perspective, the German government demands a certain restriction on freedom of action, justice between poor and rich countries and concern for the livelihoods of future generations (Wagner 2007).

German foreign policy accepts the institutional limitation of power by integrating Germany into the EU in order to peacefully improve its position without entering into conflict with neighboring states and major powers. However, the EU is a supranational organization at the regional level, which is why German foreign policy also has bilateral relations both worldwide and within the EU (Bredow 2008). Although German foreign policy towards the EU and supranational organizations is characterized by multilateral structures, an ambivalent attitude in German foreign policy toward these organizations is apparent (Link 2007a). Due to the lack of integrity of other member states and the pursuit of national interests, instrumental multilateralism is also evident, which is oriented to and pursued in line with the interests of the respective countries. Due to the divergence of interest, Germany's role as a mediator is limited and leadership is made difficult. The discrepancy between the claim to leadership as a central power in Europe and the lack of power to act as one despite greater resources when it comes to the implementation of its foreign policy goals has led to a fluctuation in German foreign policy (Algieri 2012). The global role for Germany as a leading force in the relatively advanced and prosperous context of the EU may have been an alternative, but is not possible because of the weakness of the institutions and the lack of political union in the EU, as well as the reluctance of Germany itself and a deep-seated aversion to the use of military force. Germany, therefore, remains committed to the European Union and the need for a sustained but troubled relationship with the United States. From the German point of view, a close partnership with France in a united Europe and a strong transatlantic alliance in terms of security and economic cooperation are seen as cornerstones of German foreign policy (Roos und Rungius 2016). The development of geopolitical codes of German foreign policy in the European space following reunification makes it clear, that the image of a multipolar world prevails in German foreign policy (Roos 2012). Germany understands that after the end of the East-West conflict, the EU and the US are two separate value communities with different identities that share many beliefs and principles. Therefore, the EU must become a leading world power and an independent pole in the new multipolar world system (ibid.). The EU must be seen as an independent monolith and independent pole. This strategy should be predominantly shaped by German ideas and correspond to German interests.

Geopolitical Codes of German Foreign Policy in the Eurasian Heartland

While Germany is oriented in the transatlantic space, as a junior partner of the United States (the global power), and, in the EU, as a junior partner of France (which enforces its interests according to the concept of counter-power formation), proponents of a self-confident German foreign policy plead for a new strategic orientation in the Eurasian Heartland (Rühl 1997; Stürmer 1995). Turning to Germany's hegemonic role in world politics shows that Germany emancipates itself from the Euro-transatlantic area, but is forced to build its global role in a narrow East-oriented Eurasian spatial structure. Beyond the idea of a Eurasian space formation with regard to Russia as an alternative to the Atlantic or European approaches, there is the concept of an ambitious global role (Voigt 2005). In order to preserve the current geopolitical status quo and to prevent possible counter-power formation or alliances that could emerge from a possible coalition between Europe and Eurasia, the Euro-transatlantic spatial structure plays and will continue to play a decisive role in US foreign policy, considered to be a vital interest of the United States for the stability of the world order (Zänker 1995). Although Germany is seen as a potential threat to averting Euro-transatlantic relations, its foreign policy and any attempt at German foreign policy towards the East is criticized by supporters of the transatlantic community (Bastian 2006). Since Germany has, since the turn of the century, been back in its old middle position, which historically led to a seesaw policy between East and West, German-Russian foreign policy and German-Russian rapprochement are both problematic and the rejection of the West has been evaluated (Spanger 2011). The French side is seriously questioning a Euro-transatlantic orientation in Europe and advocating for the establishment of a Euro-Gaullist spatial structure in a multipolar world order, as France strives for a European pole in a new multipolar world order, so that France and Germany can join forces to assume the leadership role in Europe, and free itself from the supremacy of the United States (Voigt 2005).

With regard to the geopolitical orientation of German foreign policy in the Eurasian Heartland, geopoliticians and scientists have different views. In the eyes of the critics of Eurasian space formation as an option for German foreign policy, Russia is seen as an expansive power that wishes to exert its influence on the European continent and, further, to expand its spheres of influence. Unlike critics of Russian power of influence on the European continent, many advocates see the future of Germany and the European Union in Eurasia. The advocates are thus in favor of a policy approach and strategic partnership with Russia (*ibid.*). From this perspective, Russia is seen as a key player in German foreign policy in the Eurasian Heartland (Zänker 1995: 9). From the point of

view of some geopoliticians, it is assessed that the future of German foreign policy and the European Union can be secured through a strategic partnership with Russia (Kraus, and Schulak 2003: 116). In order to preserve the future of Germany or Europe and to multilateralize the world order, Russia is in the foreground of German foreign policy in the Eurasian region (Bastian 2006: 186). The questions about what interests German foreign policy has in common with Eurasia and Russia, what kind of foreign policy Germany should pursue towards Russia (Straub 2003), and how German foreign policy could europeanize Russia are answered by the statement that peace and stabilization in Europe are dependent on close German cooperation with Russia (Kraus, and Schulak 2003). From this perspective, Russia is considered historically as a strategic choice for German geopolitics (Spanger 2011: 668). For critics of these strategic considerations, any rapprochement between Russia and Germany is regarded as a threat and considered by advocates of a Euro-transatlantic community and by Central and Eastern European states (Bastian 2006: 95). It is assumed that this geopolitical possibility could lead to Germany's turning away from Europe. In addition, it is pointed out that close German-Russian cooperation could restrict the interests and room for maneuver for the Central and Eastern European states (Rotfeld 1997).

Proponents of a Eurasian spatial structure in German foreign policy point to the fragile situation of Germany in the center of Europe due to its geographical conditions. They see the future of Germany or Europe as in danger (Béhar 1994: 27). Accordingly, they plead for the determination of new perspectives in German-Russian relations. In this way, they represent the view that Germany could have a future in a new constellation of the great powers and, moreover, contend that peace and prosperity could be secured within Europe (Straub 2003: 8), if Germany and the rest of Europe come to Russia in the European Union (Rahr 2009).

With regard to the Eurasian area, some German geopoliticians agree that German foreign policy should free itself from the influence of the US and establish a multipolar world order with Russia within the whole of Europe (Zänker 1992: 9). Germany would thus be able to push through its interests with Europe as a decisive pole (Dettefs 1998: 220). They point out that, if Germany intends to establish itself as a pole in the world order, Germany would be able to assert its interests in a multipolar world only within the European Union in close strategic cooperation with Russia or the Eurasian region (Link 2006: 62). In this way, Russia, with its focus on the multipolar world order and the power-political possibility of German foreign policy, is of crucial importance (Bahr 2003). This geopolitical orientation of German foreign policy became clearer in part due to the Iraq war in 2003, when France, Germany, and Russia together rejected the United States policy strategy towards Iraq (Schöllgen 2004b: 11). This strategic reorientation in German foreign policy was promoted by the red-

-green government under the leadership of Schröder, who targeted the future of Germany in multipolar world order (Spanger 2011: 648).

The leitmotiv of shifting German foreign policy towards the Eurasian area is the economic value of this region. For example, Russia plays an important role in German foreign policy because of its energy resources and nuclear power. When it comes to Germany's orientation to Eurasia, geopoliticians refer to Russian deposits of raw materials, their population size, and their territorial size (Stent 2007: 452). They state that the Eurasian space is a very dynamic one and could become a pole of power in the world economy if Germany becomes economically and industrially involved there. This region could secure Germany and Europe's energy supply and strengthen the competitiveness of the German economy (Rahr 2008). It is clear that Germany has a vital interest in this region because of its geopolitical position in Europe (Béhar 1994). Against this background, German foreign policy has the task of orienting itself in this area, building up the infrastructure in the Eurasian area through its investments and industry, and developing economic as well as – political relations (Rahr 2002: 317). From this perspective, Germany and the EU's strategic partnership with energy and in economic and security areas with Russia has crucial importance. This advocates for a close German-Russian partnership in the Eurasian region (Hoffmann 2012: 320).

Due to its territorial size, its population and its historical role on both a European and a global level, Russia is a major power. Further, its military potential and its mineral and natural resources are significant (Béhar 1994: 219). From a geographical and historical-political point of view, Russia belongs to Europe and is an indispensable player for German foreign policy in Europe (Hoffmann 2012: 271). The German-Russian relationship is historically characterized by ambivalence. On the one hand, German economic interests in terms of the power-economic constellation speak for an interconnectedness or a strategic alliance with Russia. On the other hand, a German foreign policy closer to Russian interests would endanger democratic values (Kalinin 2016: 1). For this reason, Russia did not prove to be an opponent nor an ally of Germany after the Cold War. Against this background, the German-Russian partnership experienced a discontinuity (Stent 2007: 436). After the end of the Cold War, however, in part due to the Soviet approval of German reunification, the German-Russian partnership intensified. Accordingly, the German-Russian partnership became built upon concrete economic cooperation. German foreign policy aims to integrate Russia into Europe through economic and political development processes because Russia belongs to Europe for historical and geographical reasons, and Germany feels responsible for Russia after the peaceful reunification process (Rahr 2008). However, German foreign policy lacks an overall strategy, so German-Russian relations could influence the Russian reform process. While Germany assumed greater global political responsibility and plays an active role

on the world's political stage, Russia is in an identity crisis after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and is endeavoring to strengthen its position and role in the world (Kalinin 2016: 138).

The German Russia Policy: Break line between Values and Interests

German-Russian relations have improved since 1990 with the Treaties on German Unity, but these relations have been and continue to be problematic due to the memories of the Second World War, Germany's Western orientation, and the expansion of Central Eastern European transatlantic relations (Buck 1996). German-Russian relations are closely linked after reunification in the fields of economic and energy policy, but have not been further developed on the political level due to the different perceptions of world politics and conflict-laden relations. In addition, German foreign policy towards Russia fluctuates due to partisan foreign policy and the ambivalent attitude of German governments. For this reason, German foreign policy lacks a long-term foreign policy position on Russia; rather, relations have developed only on an economic level (Bastian 2006).

Different interests and values form the conflict of German foreign policy in the case of Russia. The question of how German foreign policy is perceived by Russia is answered by two different foreign policy factions in German politics (Kalinin 2016). On the one hand, the majority of SPD politicians and part of the CDU politicians advocate for a pragmatist perspective in terms of the economization of German-Russian relations. From an interest-guided perspective, they see Russia as an important supplier of energy and raw materials and as a growing sales market for the German economy (Spanger 2011: 658). In the foreground of their Russia policy, commonly held values are not emphasized. The CDU deputies, FDP and the Greens are of a differing opinion. They assume a value-led foreign policy towards Russia. The advocates of a common basis of values in Russia's policy advocated for the political and socio-cultural democratization of Russia and highlighted the need for a common foundation of values in order to integrate Russia into the whole of Europe (Kalinin 2016: 146). Russia is perceived in the foreign policy of the Federal Government from these two different positions (Spanger 2011). This is why the Federal Government is pursuing an approximation policy with Russia, and Russia thus proves neither an opponent nor an ally of Germany (Kalinin 2016). However, from a German point of view, the inclusion of Russia is necessary and crucial for peace and stability in the whole of Europe in multipolar world order.

Conclusion

In light of the global political developments in the international system and the structural change at the European level, geopoliticians are calling for a strategic reassessment of German geopolitical codes in relation to three spatial structures: the transatlantic, the European region and the Eurasian region. Against this backdrop, geopoliticians argue for both power-oriented and interest-driven geopolitical codes in German foreign policy. At the same time, geopolitical patterns of power and counter-power formation in these three geopolitical spatial structures can be seen at the center of German foreign policy. Although the meaning and importance of the transatlantic space are, on the one hand, emphasized in terms of defense and security policy, but, on the other hand, the transatlantic supremacy is not only beneficial by proponents of a multipolar world order, but also considered to pose a threat to the future of the world order. Therefore, it is necessary that the German foreign policy in Europe be oriented to establishing its geopolitical codes according to the geopolitical pattern of countervailing power in a European spatial structure but also aimed at becoming a global political actor that faces the transatlantic area. However, Euro-transatlantic proponents point out that this shift in power from the transatlantic structure to a European space should not be confrontational but cooperative. Therefore, the regulatory power of the United States should not be called into question. In this context, Germany focuses its interests on a European spatial structure in cooperation with the transatlantic region in order to rebuild its influence and consolidate its position vis-à-vis other major powers in a multipolar world order within Europe. If Germany wants to build up its position of power and free itself from the shadow of the past, this option can be realized in a multipolar world order in which Germany counterbalances the influence of the major powers, particularly the United States, via counter-power formation. To do so, German foreign policy needs a strategic orientation in the Eurasian Heartland, act in close cooperation with France and become more deeply involved with Russia, in order to act as an independent actor on an international level. For the United States of America, regardless of its peaceful or antagonistic orientation, this constellation is viewed as a threat. In this context, no specific strategies or geopolitical codes in German foreign policy vis-à-vis the transatlantic or Eurasian spatial structure are discernible. For this reason, geopolitical codes of German foreign policy is fluctuating in this situation, as it moves between three different geopolitical structures of relations that resulted from the historical basis of German foreign policy and the existing world order. Thus, it can be concluded that the geopolitical codes of German foreign policy have been of a varying character since reunification. This new geopolitical code in German foreign policy can be understood as situational and action-based, which has not been shaped by predetermined interests and values, but by an

open political process. In this reading, geopolitical codes in German foreign policy are constituted by a multitude of different patterns of cultural meaning, which are combined in a different foreign policy of action to form divergent strategies. For this reason, German foreign policy varies considerably according to the situations of these three geopolitical spatial structures. This fluctuating and situation-based feature of geopolitical codes in German foreign policy can be characterized in the three geopolitical spatial structures and will continue to shape German foreign policy in the future.

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