

The Transformation of German European Policy: Realism, Constructivism, and Realist Constructivism*

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Since the end of the Cold War, there have been plenty of debates on the characteristic and transformation of German European policy. The primary debates have occurred between realism and constructivism. Realism interprets German European policy as an exercise of self-interested behavior. To realists, it is natural for the Berlin Republic to adopt a more interest-oriented approach. In contrast, constructivism, paying attention to normative factors, contends that German European policy is conditioned by the collective norms which are socially constructed by negotiated understandings of past historical events such as the Holocaust. To constructivists, the Berlin Republic is reluctant to deviate from the Bonn Republic's pro-European policy. It is no doubt that realist and constructivist approach has made a contribution to our understanding of nature and transformation of German European policy. Yet, this study posits that German European policy is much more complex than mainstream IR theories explain. It is because mainstream IR approaches take into consideration only one side of co-constitution—either national interests or collective norms. This study argues that, by incorporating the insights of *realist constructivism*, we can overcome the problem whereby the contemporary IR sub-field has failed to explain the complex of German European policy.

German European policy, transformation of foreign policy, realism, constructivism, realist constructivism

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*This paper, being originally presented at the International Studies Association, Toronto, Canada, March 27-30, 2019 and European Union Studies Association Japan, Asia University, Nov. 7-8, 2020, was revised.

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1. Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, there have been plenty of debates on the characteristic and transformation of Germany's European policy: What is the characteristic of Germany's European policy, to what the extent does the Berlin Republic's European policy deviate from the Bonn Republic's policy, and do the Berlin Republic's policy-makers maintain, increase, or diminish the Bonn Republic's pro-European policy? The primary debates have occurred between realism and constructivism¹⁾. Realism, regarding the feature "that states will always seek to maximize their interests" as "universal laws in international politics"²⁾, interprets Germany's European policy as an exercise and outcome of self-interested behavior. To realists³⁾, it is quite natural for the Berlin Republic to adopt a more national interest-oriented approach in its European policy and to lose some of its idealism for the European cause. In contrast, constructivists⁴⁾, paying attention to normative factors in shaping Germany's European policy, contends that Germany's European policy is conditioned by the collective norms which are socially constructed by negotiated understandings of past historical events such as the Nazi dictatorship, the Holocaust, and the Second World War. To constructivism, focusing on the 'path dependency' of German historical memory and the institutionally and societally embedded German 'culture of restraint' that sanction the pursuit of German national interests, the Berlin Republic is still likely reluctant to blatantly deviate from the Bonn Republic's pro-European policy.

It is no doubt that realist and constructivist approach respectively has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of origin, process, and transformation of Germany's European policy. Yet, this study posits that Germany's European policy is much more complex than mainstream IR theories explain and none of the mainstream camps have an accurate account of the characteristic and transformation of Germany's European policy. It is in part because mainstream IR approaches take into consideration only one side of co-constitution—either national interests or collective norms—and thereby overlook the interplay between the two sides. This study suggests that, by incorporating the insights of realism and constructivism into a theory of co-constitution, so-called *realist constructivism*, we can overcome the problem whereby the contemporary IR sub-field has largely failed to explain the complex of Germany's European policy.

The paper is composed of three sections. In the second, I examine the realist-constructivist discussions on Germany's European policy. I then offer the realist constructivism combining the insights of realism and constructivism to make sense of the complex of Germany's European policy. In the third, I present two case studies as verification of how the realist-constructivist explains the characteristic and transformation of Germany's European policy. In the conclusion, I assess the case studies and discuss ramifications of this research for Germany's European policy, while arguing that Germany's European policy is a consequence not only of collective norms but also of a national element or the pursuit of national interests and thereby an outcome of interplay of between interests and norms.

2. Realist-Constructivism: Bridging the Realist/Constructivist Divide

Scholars of IR have engaged in sterile debates about whether national interests or collective norms matter more. Questions of interests and norms also are at the center of the study of Germany's European policy. In particular, the realist model that focuses on national interests has never died out in the inquiries about Germany's European policy. The successes of the Bonn Republic's willing transfer of sovereignty to a new transnational political community and its cooperation with its neighbors, in particular France, challenged the core of realist assumptions on international relations. Nonetheless, Hoffmann⁵⁾, believing that the nation-state was still alive, argued that Germany was self-interested entity, holding stubbornly on to the sovereignty, and therefore Germany's European policy remained closely in line with its national interests. Hoffmann's realist thesis exerted influence on liberal intergovernmentalism developed and refined in the 1990s by Moravcsik⁶⁾ who attempted most comprehensively to resurrect the significance of the national interests in Germany's European policy. In addition, discussions about Germany's European policy based on realist proposition in the past ten years have been in flux. Bulmer and Paterson⁷⁾, Paterson⁸⁾, Oppermann⁹⁾, and Miskimmon¹⁰⁾, and Platte and Leuffen¹¹⁾ called attention to Germany's European policy choices which were more driven by national interests and domestic politics and made use of institutional power to be of advantage to Germany's goals. Moreover, Kundnani¹²⁾ gave an assurance of the *bona fides* of realism, saying that "Germany's commitment to multilateralism had never been an altruistic one," but rather it was a "way for a constrained power to gradually achieve its own foreign-policy ambitions and objectives."

Yet, in the past three decades, there have also been the growing studies on Germany's European policy paying attention to the role such normative factors as norms, ideas, identity, and culture play. This reflects that national interests alone are deficient in explaining why the Bonn Republic had behaved differently, known more for its self-constrained European policy than for power politics, despite its economic power. The initial academic work was done by Maull¹³⁾ who perceived Germany to be guided by normative motives, characterizing them as "civilian powers." The most distinguished achievement was Berger's exploration of the role of norms: the "strong antimilitarist sentiments that emerged in Germany in the wake of their catastrophic defeat in World War II" have deliberately constrained the Bonn Republic's European policy¹⁴⁾. Meanwhile, a good deal of constructivists also discerned the transformation of Germany's European policy initiated deliberately by 'normalizing' ambitions of the Berlin Republic. Nonetheless, Banchoff¹⁵⁾, Harnish and Maull¹⁶⁾, Sloam¹⁷⁾, Hyde-Price¹⁸⁾, Siddi¹⁹⁾, Allers²⁰⁾, and Crawford and Olsen²¹⁾ have stressed the embeddedness and legitimacy of Germany's normative forces taking account of its distinct political culture of a political constraint on remilitarization, its 'unflagging support' for deeper integration in Europe, its continuous recognition of the value of common European norms and interests.

However, 'like the blind men' realists and constructivists have examined 'one of the parts of the Elephant' or one side of co-constitution—either national interests or collective norms. Moreover, realism and constructivism are "often understood, and taught, as being in opposition to each other"²²⁾. For instance, because realism glosses over Germany's European policy driven by normative and moral commitments which are not captured very well by the simple logic of cost-benefit calculation, it cannot make clear how

Germany's normative commitments tend to place limits on how far German elites could stray from its professed norms and on how far German elites could maximize its desired national interests. In contrast, constructivism, privileging the roles of cultural norms in constraining Germany's European policy, overlooks national interests which are exerting influence on Germany's European policy. It cannot also make intelligible why Germany deviates from its professed norms, and how national interest often facilitates casual deviations from Germany's professed pro-European norms.

The inability of most contemporary IR theories to explain the complex of Germany's European policy is primarily rooted in the binary logic of the debate about norms and interests, according to which theorists either conceive of the outcomes of Germany's European policy as autonomous from the normative environment or treat the decision making of Germany's European policy as autonomous from rational choice. In addition, the poverty of a common terminology and a common *modus operandi* among different standpoints is predisposed to resulting in irreconcilable paradigm-based soliloquies. To solve the puzzle of Germany's complex European policy, we must abandon such binary logic and explore the practical implications of co-constitution, according to which national interests and collective norms mutually shape each other and can never be fully autonomous from each other.

As a matter of fact, there has been sophisticated theorizing of the interplay of the ideas, norms, interests, consequences, and so on. Finnemore²³⁾, Katzenstein and Okawara²⁴⁾, Buzan²⁵⁾, Izumikawa²⁶⁾, and Meyer and Strickmann²⁷⁾ challenged the false dichotomy between realism and constructivism which had long impeded serious inquiry into the sources and evolution of state interests, the power of norms, and collective identity. In particular, in explicit dialogue with realism and constructivism, Barkin²⁸⁾, Jackson and Nexon²⁹⁾, Sterling-Folker³⁰⁾ and others demonstrated the broader relevance of the notion that realism and constructivism may be combined. Samuel Barkin³¹⁾ in his major work, *Realist Constructivism: Rethinking International Relations Theory*, has presented most crucial attempt on how the two theories relate to each other or might be merged. To move effectively beyond the division between realism and constructivism, Barkin—assuming that actions are caused by the interplay between interests and norms—turns to a theory of co-constitution or the *realist constructivism* that challenges such dualisms. One side of co-constitution—the interest-centered side—involves the ways that states shape cultural discourses, identities and norms so as to facilitate their pursuit of national interest. The other side of co-constitution—the norm-centered side—involves the ways that cultural identities and norms simultaneously shape states' discourses in such a way as to constrain or encourage their pursuit of national interest. According to Barkin³²⁾, a realist-constructivist approach calls upon us to look at the way in which national interests affect patterns of normative change in international relations and, conversely, the way in which a particular set of norms affect national interests. In essence, the realist-constructivist approach is one that unifies realist assumptions—which can provide the underpinnings for constructivism based upon norm-weighted social influence—with constructivist assumptions—which can offer the foundations for realism based upon interest-weighted decision-making.

This paper proposes the following assumptions that could prove the conceptual combinations of realism and constructivism to be workable and at the same time could help the description of the

characteristic and transformation of Germany's European policy to be more accurate. First, actors' external behavior is regarded to be a consequence of not only collective norms but also a national element or the pursuit of national interests. Actors are more willing to comply with their avowed norms when their committed norms match their national interest and when they perceive that common interests match their interests. The rational choice to achieve national goals and interests also helps actors to be more willing to comply with their professed norms. Second, actors deviate from their professed norms when a strictly normative approach impedes their ability to achieve key immediate national interests and goals, their committed norms do not match their national interest, and common interests do not match their national interests. Third, actors' frequent deference to national interest enables their interests to shape cultural norms in such a way as to facilitate its pursuit of power abroad and to largely obfuscate how it deviates from its professed principles.

3. The Bonn Republic's European Policy

3.1 The Norm-Centered Side

What the Bonn Republic had created for its European policy were fundamentally new collective norms which were characterized by reflexive multilateralism and Franco-German partnership—while being different from nationalistic, aggressive, and self-obsessed norms established by the pre-war Germany. The central components of the Bonn Republic's new norms for European policy were its stated commitments to holding back purely national response to problems, to promoting deeper European integration by supranational methods, and not to exercising any open leadership in Europe unless it was in tandem with France³³). It is well-known that these norms were influenced greatly by the Bonn Republic's genuine historical learning process and its continuous public deliberation about the past sin³⁴). The norms had become to a large extent yardstick of how the Bonn Republic should behave in Europe. Most Bonn Republic's Chancellors, with the reserved and modest attitudes, were willing to contribute a great part of the European institution building and to be a follower in action with France, coupled with its recognition of the special historical obligation to keep the norms. The norms were solidified as the part of the Bonn Republic's political culture in that norms of reflexive multilateralism and Franco-German partnership were *raison d'être* for Germany's European policy³⁵). All this amounted to a state that was characterized as an almost pro-Europeanist.

The pro-European norms had placed limits on how far German elites could maximize its desired national interests. Put simply, for decades the Bonn Republic's elites had to a large extent attempted to implement those norms, while those norms which guided largely the Bonn Republic's European policy conditioned and constrained national interests with a limited margin of political maneuverability. How the pro-European norms had affected the way to calculate the benefit/cost and how those norms had placed limits on Germany's desired national interests were clear in the case of Germany's net contributor to the EC budget. The Bonn Republic, abiding by reflexive multilateralism and Franco-German partnership and gaining the reputation of being the 'paymaster' of Europe, considered the financial cost and the burden of

its substantial contribution to the EU budget as a political mechanism allowing European integration to continue to move forward which eventually contributed to prosperity and security of Bonn Republic. Therefore, neither politicians nor the West German people by and large minded being the key net contributor to the EC budget as long as the European integration contributed toward realizing its ultimate goals to ensure prosperity and security. The European project benefited from German budgetary and, at the same time, the Bonn Republic benefited from the European integration. The pro-European norms fashioned the Bonn Republic to regard the European integration to be mutually beneficial to itself and Europe³⁶⁾.

The normative forces also helped the Bonn Republic's elites to be willing to merge West German national interest and European general interest (*europäischen Gemeinwohl*)³⁷⁾. The Bonn Republic's elites recognized that the European interests preventing war and preserving peace within a multilateral framework were also important parts of German interests and, more importantly, the European interests complemented German interests regaining the trust of its European neighbors and recovering economically within the European institutions. Thus, the European integration was the way to compromise between European interests and German interests. Put simply, European and German interests converged toward European integration³⁸⁾. The pro-European norms allowed to avoid an identification with the discredited German nationalism and, by implication, to render the German question irrelevant. Those allowed the Bonn Republic to claim that Germans had surpassed the traditional national interests based on the narrowness of the nation-state and had progressed onto cosmopolitan terrain.

3.2 The Interest-Centered Side

It is not to say that the Bonn Republic's European policy was purely driven by the norms which placed limits on how far German elites could maximize their desired national interests and how they could calculate the benefit/cost of their European policy. Far from it, the Bonn Republic had become a pro-Europeanist not only because of its normative system evolving from the scale of the destruction it had suffered in the war, but also because of its pragmatic assessment to focus on the gigantic task of rebuilding of the Bonn Republic and to ensure its national security as national interests. In other words, the Bonn Republic's elites, in particular Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, were not only idealist but also political realist having a clear sense of power and pursuing strategies for maximizing German security, prosperity and influence³⁹⁾. Put simply, the Bonn Republic's European policy was deemed to be a by-product of not only collective norms but also a national rudiment or the striving toward national interests. It means that the Bonn Republic's elites recognized the advantage of membership in the European Community and coalition with France, which served as vehicle for the articulation of German national interest, over the pursuit of German unification. Hanrieder⁴⁰⁾ argued that given that Germany was "faced with a hostile Eastern bloc and restrained by political and contractual commitments to the Western alliance," to Chancellor Adenauer to achieve "its [German] goal of political recovery even with the curtailing of Germany's freedom of action" was a "genuine choice" within a historical milieu that was contributing to German national interests. Indeed, the rational choice to arrive at its national goals within the European dimension allowed

the Bonn Republic's economic and political recovery and contributed significantly to the upward economic development of the Bonn Republic.

Moreover, the realistic assessment to attain German national goal and interest for recovering Germany's devastated economy and regaining its sovereignty helped the Bonn Republic to be more willing to comply with its professed norms than other members. It means that the Bonn Republic's elites were more willing to abide by the norms of reflexive multilateralism and Franco-German partnership, because they recognized the advantage of membership in the European Community and coalition with France, which served as vehicle for the articulation of German national interest, over the pursuit of German unification. The Bonn Republic was more willing to comply with its professed norms than other members because its national interests matched assuredly its committed norms. Indeed, the norms that involved transferring national sovereignty to supranational organization and reconciling with France were in return for greater economic and political benefits. Therefore, the rational choice for recovering Germany's devastated economy and regaining its sovereignty within the European integration provided the justification and legitimacy for complying with the pro-European norms.

4. The Berlin Republic's European Policy

4.1 The Norm-Centered Side

During the cold war, the Bonn Republic was comfortable abiding by its pro-European policy for prosperity and security, while matching its national interests to European interests. Even in the years following the end of the cold war and the collapse of Berlin Wall, there was no clear deviations from the Bonn Republic's pro-European policy. As Chancellor Helmut Kohl, himself symbolizing German unification, emphasized that united Germany would simply maintain a European vision of the Bonn Republic, there was only the thrust towards the Germany's continuous role as the good European. Therefore, it was expected that the Berlin Republic could continue to behave in ways that the Bonn Republic used to conform to pro-European norms, to match its committed norms with national interest, and to align its national interests with European interests. Nonetheless, the Berlin Republic has altered its trajectory and a "de-Europeanization" in policy has been observed⁴¹⁾. Facing significant processes of geopolitical, political, cultural, and economical change such as German unification, Eastern enlargements, regional conflicts such as the genocide in the Balkans, generational change, diverging experiences with migration, and the rise of Eurosceptical party using the European Parliament, the Berlin Republic must deal with the more challenging tasks of reconciling its pro-European policy with the real world. Those challenges have caused further tension of norms and interests (co-constitution) and thereby have contributed to the Berlin Republic's deviation from its professed pro-European policy.

The Berlin Republic's deviation from the Bonn Republic's professed pro-European norms emerged when Chancellor Gerhard Schröder took office in 1998. Schröder, born in 1944, stood for a new generation of political leaders who had no living memory of the Second World War and who approached the European project in a much less constrained attitude towards pro-European norms. As Ash⁴²⁾ had already suggested,

to this new generation in the Berlin Republic the pro-European norms would not be “as widespread or deep as that of the immediate postwar generation.” Together with more confident expressions of German national identity, Schröder, adopting a more critical tone in his stance on Europe, showed less willingness to abide by reflexive multilateralism and less reluctance to defend Germany’s national interest. In addition, Schröder kept distance from French president, Jacques Chirac, in favor of a personal friendship with Vladimir Putin⁴³). It means that Schröder was facilitating deviations from a Bonn Republic’s professed pro-European norms, that is, a change of normative value with regard to how Germany should engage with Europe. Moreover, Schröder set the stage so that Chancellor Angela Merkel could further deviate from the pro-European norms.

Merkel never took over from an innate appreciation for the European integration, and at the same time did not develop at all the spirited bond with France⁴⁴). Rather than associating the rationale for the European project mainly with the theme of war and peace, she had related the European project with the division of Europe and the freedom⁴⁵). Furthermore, her GDR background, her Eastern Protestant upbringing, her Prussian sense of duty, her Protestant work ethic, and her fascination with Catherine the Great of Russia helped Merkel to pay more attention to the new democracies, human rights, frugality, and reconciliation with Poland, Israel, and Russia, while driving her to pay less attention to the reflexive multilateralism and Franco-German partnership.

The German response to the Eurozone crisis was breath-taking evidence of the Berlin Republic’s deviation from its professed norms. Indeed, the path the Berlin Republic had taken in the crisis had disclosed that its European policy was at odds with the pro-European norms which might be helpful in resolving the Eurozone crisis⁴⁶). Rather than engaging in reflexive multilateralism, Merkel had acted in accordance with exclusive and coercive EU rules and norms—so-called the politics of austerity—in favor of the creditor countries such as Austria, Finland, the Netherlands and against the debtor countries in Latin Europe that wanted a full-bail-out, a comprehensive growth program at the Eurozone level, and the mutualization of the liabilities of the Eurozone. In addition, in spite of the historical experiences that resolving the crisis and furthering the integration process always needed the effective function of the norm of Franco-German partnership, Germany had failed to find a common line on key issues such as Euro bond with France⁴⁷). To Merkel, the norm of the Franco-German partnership was no longer as important as her predecessors.

The deviation from Germany’s normative commitments to European integration has allowed German elites to take the different way to calculate the benefit/cost of its European policy and to maximize their desired national interests, leading to emphasize the national interests over European interests. In other words, as the Berlin Republic’s European policy has been less guided by the pro-European norms, the attitude to calculate the costs and benefits of European integration for Germany has been getting more conspicuous and converging mechanism of national and European interests has been weakening.

For instance, Schröder and Merkel have clearly transformed the way Germany calculates the benefit/cost of European integration, giving rise to distinguish between the German and the European interests. At the beginning of his chancellorship in 1998, Schröder in the Bundestag in 1998 announced an

end to the tradition of using the German chequebook to finance further integration, complaining that net contributor to the budget was an intolerable burden on the budget at Germany: “We cannot and will not solve the problems of Europe with a German checkbook”⁴⁸⁾. It means that the Berlin Republic started to differentiate the German interests from the European interests. The German response to the Eurozone crisis was another breath-taking evidence of the transformation of the method to determine the benefit/cost of its European policy by telling apart the German and the European interests. In contrast to her predecessors who had tended to merge German and European interests, during the crisis, Merkel, to whom pro-European norms did matter less, has been more inclined to fight for her national interests than European interests⁴⁹⁾. Merkel put Germany’s national interest over European interest first when she initially showed reluctance to join the other major European powers with a new stimulus package to fight the Eurozone crisis. Therefore, she regarded the Eurozone crisis as not the overall European integration problem but a just Greek problem and then Merkel, refusing to act as ‘paymaster’ for Greece or southern and pooling only limited financial resources in the beginning of the crisis. In addition, she did not have a political willingness to take domestic political risks for European interests.

4.2 The Interest-Centered Side

Like the Bonn Republic’s European policy, the Berlin Republic’s European policy is driven not only by its normative system, but also because of its pragmatic assessment to the newly emerged domestic challenges. Relatively straightforward and benign structural logic to the Bonn Republic was replaced by the new domestic structure such as the enormous costs of reunification, the expenses of generous and expanding social welfare, the unfavorable demographic profile (low birth rate and an ageing population), the influx of foreigners, the negative mood towards the European project, and the rise of a right-wing nationalist party, Alternative for Germany. The structural change has prompted Germany to be preoccupied with its own problems and, in consequence, had an unfavorable effect on Germany’s preference and national choice to European integration. For instance, increasing economic problems in the aftermath of German unification (total unification costs for the first twenty years ran upwards of €2 trillion) resulted in the dominance of the domestic agenda in Germany, a growing reluctance to fund European compromises, and rising resentment against an excess of bureaucracy and regulation from Brussels. Given that the Berlin Republic was faced with its own underestimated domestic economic and social problems, coupled with irritation over the loss of the D-mark, fears of the impact of eastern enlargement, and new forces of economic globalization, to the Berlin Republic’s elites to tackle the many unforeseen domestic problems—rather than to contribute to the deepening of European integration that transcends the borders of the nation-state—was their ultimate goal and rational choice.

The rational choice of the Berlin Republic’s elites to achieve cultural and economic recovery from the enormous costs of German reunification without sacrificing a part of its national interests for the rest of Europe has made the difference between their approach to Europe and that of their predecessors very explicit. In contrast to the approach of the previous generation, Schröder⁵⁰⁾ suggested that the European integration was “not the price for German history, a decision of war or peace.” In Schröder’s rational

assessment, Germany did not want the European integration to overcome its past but as an option for the future. Accordingly, Schröder considered the European integration for his generation to be a matter of choice rather than duty. Merkel also illustrated that a more realistic assessment of Germany's European policy was at the heart of her approach. Moreover, Merkel's training as a physicist has driven her to deploy more realistic and data-driven approach to Germany's European policy, producing extraordinary paradigm shifts. For instance, at the EU summit in December 2008, Merkel showed that "she was not afraid to pursue Germany's national interest even if that meant that Germany would become—at least in the short term— isolated in the EU"⁵¹). In view of the difficult domestic economic circumstances, she prioritized the protection of jobs in Germany over its other members' concern to job security.

More important, during the Eurozone crisis, Merkel's frequent deference to a more realistic assessment and national interest enabled Germany's preferences to shape national-oriented norms—such as *ordo-liberalism*. In other words, Merkel's realistic assessment to attain German national goals—i.e. the protection of German economy and the stabilization of the eurozone—guided her to be more willing to comply with its *ordo-liberal* principles—and at the same time to be less willing to abide by the norms of reflexive multilateralism and Franco-German partnership. The norm of *ordo-liberalism* drove her to refuse to loosen its fiscal reins on the struggling Eurozone and to force national governments in Eurozone to accept responsibility for their domestic economies. The *ordo-liberalism* steered Merkel to export coercively her economic preference—i.e. an austerity policy—to the debtor nations in the Eurozone through German unprecedented power and tough conditionality. Her basic reason to take *ordo-liberal* principles, based on a coercive method or a notably maximalist position, was because of Merkel's frequent deference to her more realistic assessment and national interest that *ordo-liberal* principles could provide a more valuable strategic resource for achieving Merkel's goals, while satisfying the requirements of domestic politics⁵²). Merkel's more realistic assessment to arrive at her national goals allowed the Berlin Republic to conform to *ordo-liberal* principles and to defend the *ordo-liberal* design of the Eurozone in such a way as to deviate from its professed pro-European norms. At last, the Eurozone crisis in 2015 has ended and resulted in steps of more supranational integration that had been rejected by the Eurozone governments in the past. Merkel also opted for the institutional integration: the formation of the ESM and banking union, and the transformation of the ECB into a lender of last resort. However, the crisis ended when she recognized finally that the European interests or the institutional integration were in her country's interests to do so.

5. Conclusion

It may be appropriate to conclude this paper with a few over-all considerations bearing on Germany's European policy. Let me set forth some of the salient points suggested in this paper:

Germany's European policy is a result not only of collective norms but also of the pursuit of national interests and thereby a product of interaction of between interests and norms. In particular, German elites in the Bonn Republic had been more willing to comply with their avowed norms—such as reflexive multilateralism and Franco-German partnership—when they perceived that their committed norms matched

their national interest and then European interests complemented their interests. The realistic assessment to achieve German national goals and interests had also helped the Bonn Republic's elites to be more willing to comply with their professed norms. However, there has been the Berlin Republic's deviation from the Bonn Republic's professed pro-European policy. It is not only because the elites in the Berlin Republic have not committed themselves on the norms of reflexive multilateralism and Franco-German partnership, in contrast to their predecessors, but also because they perceived that to copy with the many abrupt domestic difficulties rather than to focus the European integration was their national interests. The deviation from Germany's normative commitments to European integration allowed the Berlin Republic's elites to take the different way to calculate the benefit/cost of its European policy. Moreover, their frequent deference to a more realistic assessment and national interest empowered them to shape and implement national-oriented norms during the Eurozone crisis.

In the process of making decision about European policy, the Bonn Republic's elites did not face the dilemma and tension between the constraints of pro-European norms and the desire to pursuit of the national interest. Rather, the Bonn Republic's European policy was highly successful, as demonstrated by the fact that over the course of the Cold War it had brought the Bonn Republic great security and prosperity through the way of compromising harmoniously norms and interests. Yet, the Berlin Republic's European policy suggests that whereas the realist and constructivist approaches could be theoretically complementary rather than competitive, there are, to a considerable extent, conflicts and tensions between interests and norms in real life. For instance, as the immigration crisis and the Covid-19 crisis demonstrate, Merkel has stayed committed to multilateralism, solidarity, human rights protection and promotion, and international organizations. However, it is in part because those norms provide legitimacy for her to pursue and prioritize quite conventional and self-regarding state interests in her foreign policy around integration, migration, aging population, stability, market access. It means that Merkel's European policy is more inconsistent in when and where she promotes integration, multilateralism, and cooperation than her predecessors' one.

An inconsistency and self-contradiction of the Berlin Republic's European policy is highly likely to lead to paradox of Germany's international identity. When the Berlin Republics clung to the pure anti-militarist norm opposing any military engagements, Germany was often accused of being too cautious or uncooperative in addressing numerous challenges plagued in the continent. Meanwhile, when Germany, inducing an unusually coercive manner, exercised an assertive leadership role, it was blamed for being too domineering or selfish in the face of the Eurozone crisis. Thus, some scholars labeled the nature of German international identity as a 'paradox of German power'⁵³⁾ or a 'reluctant hegemon'⁵⁴⁾.

In sum, constructivist-inspired scholars have contributed a lot to examining processes of ideational change or foreign policy change—for instance, different forms of learning processes, persuasion, socialization, norm diffusion and policy isomorphism—whereas realist-inspired scholars pinpoint generational change and a transformed geopolitical reality as drivers of foreign policy change. Unfortunately, these causes are not further elaborated by two approaches. Meanwhile, realist constructivism does not postulate that the interplay between interests and norms in Germany's European policy will manifest themselves in precisely the same ways across time and space. In other words, in order

to understand more comprehensively the transformation of Germany's European policy—that is, the Berlin Republic's deviation from the Bonn Republic's professed norms—realist constructivism suggests that we must also look to the co-constitution of agents and structures. As a matter of fact, the key components of realist constructivism are co-constitutions, not only the idea that interests and norms are simultaneously constitutive of each other, but also the idea that actors and structures are also constitutive of each other. Thus, Barkin⁵⁵⁾ links actors' purposive activity at the micro level to structure at the macro level, thereby showing that action is always a complex social and interactive phenomenon within structure. In this context, the further explanations about these causes and processes of Germany's European policy transformation that has been clearly under way in the Berlin Republic could be my next research project by employing the co-constitution of agents and structures.

- 1) There are so much variations in realism—classical realism, neorealism, neo-classical realism, psychological realism, etc.—and constructivism—mainstream constructivism, social constructivism, critical constructivism, etc.—which have engaged in the debates. This paper is mainly relying on the key assumptions of classical realism and mainstream constructivism, while focusing on the debates between them.
- 2) Hans Morgenthau, *The Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1948/1973), pp. 4-5.
- 3) Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013); Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011); John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).
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