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Germany's changing Baltic Policy

Competing norms in German foreign policy in light of the Ukraine crisis

MA thesis

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Tartu 2017

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Abstract

Since the reunification of Germany and the end of the Cold War the scholarly debate about continuity and change in German foreign policy is controversial. This study follows the assumption of continuity in German foreign policy and chooses a constructivist approach to analyze the influence of domestic foreign policy norms on Germany's approach toward the three Baltic states. It is argued that regarding the Baltic states Germany's continuity of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* lead to different types of policy. With the EU and NATO membership of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 2004, the German approach toward the Baltic states is since then characterized by two competing foreign policy norms. In light of the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 by Russia, this study argues that the competing norms in German Baltic policy devise different responses to the increasing security concerns of the Baltic states. In a cross-temporal case comparison this study shows how different aspects of German Baltic policy are carried out before and after 2014. Drawing on constructivist scholarship these changes are explained by a changing domestic norm prioritization that is captured by analyzing parliamentary debates of the German *Bundestag*. By linking the aspects of German Baltic policy to the normative expectations of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* based on parliamentary debates, it is suggested that prior to March 2014 the German Baltic policy was more likely driven by the norm of *Ostpolitik* whereas after March 2014 the norm of *Westbindung* was prioritized.

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Introduction

After the end of the Cold War and the restoration of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian independence in 1991, Germany was one of the first states to renew the diplomatic relations with the three states. Besides the renewed relations Germany's foreign policy towards the three Baltic states was during the Cold War in a difficult position which continued after 1991. Whereas from Baltic states perspective Germany was always of essential importance and a key partner in Europe up today, the German position towards the Baltic states was often restrained. The changes of geopolitical circumstances after the Cold War certainly played a significant role. It is here, however, to show that the German foreign policy is also guided by the delicate balance of different, at times competing, norms that arose from the German foreign policy principles of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung*.¹ While this does not mean, and should not be read to imply, that geopolitical factors did not matter or are neglected, It is here with the constructivist scholarship on foreign policy and their basic claim to show that norms and ideas matter. In the present context, this means that the material conditions, the geopolitical changes put in place by the end of the Cold War become meaningful only in the way they are mediated through prevailing normative structures by which actors ascribe them with particular meaning. Already in the Cold War era the approach of the German Federal Government to deal with Baltic states was influenced on one hand by the juridical non-recognition of the annexation of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union in 1944, but on the other hand was in light of the systemic conflict and the division of Germany and whole Europe de facto treated as part of the USSR.² The approach taken after 1991 towards the Baltic states from geopolitical perspective should have shown clear position but the academic discussion about Germany's continuity and change in foreign policy

¹*Ostpolitik* means Germany's foreign policy towards Eastern European countries including Russia. *Westbindung* refers to Germany's western integration and policy within the western value community. Further description follows on pages 16-24. See also: On Germanys Ostpolitik see: Helmut Wegner, The West German Ostpolitik, in The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI Journal), vol 135, Iss. 1, 1990, pp. 36-38; Klaus Mehnert, Ostpolitik: Germany's Political Evergreen, in The Washington Quarterly, vol 4, Iss. 1, 1981, pp. 179-183.

² Boris Meissner, Die baltischen Staaten im weltpolitischen und völkerrechtlichen Wandel, Beiträge 1954-1994, Hamburg 1995, p. 113; Henning von Wistinghausen, Im Freien Estland, Erinnerungen des ersten deutschen Botschafters 1991-1995, Köln 2004, p. 119.

can be regarded as an indicator that after the Cold War rational or geopolitical factors alone do not explain the German approach towards the Baltic states.³

The generally accepted academic view in foreign policy analysis is that Germany after the reunification continued with the general foreign policy of former Western Germany.⁴ This continuity refers to the policy of western integration (*Westbindung*) and to the so-called *Ostpolitik*. The continuity of these foreign policy principles forces Germany to compromise and, in context of its potential, to set priorities for the policy towards the Baltic states which often might not meet with the foreign policy interests of the Baltic states.⁵ The accusations that the German Baltic policy is consequently without profile cannot be entirely disproved. However, researchers such as Dauchert and Markiewicz explain the German Baltic policy within the development of multilateralization of Germany's foreign policy and point out that the contradictory approach in relation to the Baltic states is more likely a consequence of the intention to follow simultaneously the ambitious foreign policy norms of western integration and *Ostpolitik* rather than an intended disregard.⁶

To accommodate demands arising from both *Westbindung* and *Ostpolitik*, even when the two norms might be in tension also after 2004 when Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined the EU and NATO, German Baltic policy faces the same challenge of the competing norms in order to follow the continuity of *Ostpolitik* and the commitments related to *Westbindung*. The Crisis in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014 points out this tension in normative foundations of German foreign and Baltic policy in a striking way. On one hand, Germany seeks to maintain its good relations with Russia through constant dialogue. On the other hand the annexation of Crimea, the deterioration of EU-Russian relations including the economic sanctions towards Russia and the increasing security concerns of Eastern European countries and

³ For an overview of Germany's foreign policy since the end of the cold War, see: Sebastian Harnisch, Change and continuity in post-unification German foreign policy, *German Politics*, 10:1, 2001, pp. 35-60; Franz-Josef Meiers, A Change of Course? German Foreign and Security Policy After Unification, *German Politics*, vol. 11, issue 3, 2002, pp. 195-216.

⁴ Helge Dauchert, Deutschlands Baltikumpolitik, Zwischen europäischer Integration und Annäherung an Russland, in *NORDEUROPA forum, Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur*, vol. 18, 2/2008, pp. 53-73; Harnisch (2001).

⁵ Dauchert (2/2008).

⁶ Dauchert (2/2008).

Baltic states also meant, that Germany was under pressure to fulfill its commitments as a NATO ally. In the context of the events around the annexation of Crimea and the competing normative foundations of German foreign policy this research provides an understanding of the decisive characteristics of German-Baltic relations since 2004 and what are the likely guiding norms to influence the German Baltic policy. It is to capture how the competing norms from the continuity of *Ostpolitik* and the commitment and responsibility within western structures and NATO according to *Westbindung* are balanced in German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea. Accordingly the main research question is:

What changes we see in German Baltic policy after the annexation of Crimea in 2014? And what guiding norm is prioritized for the German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea?

The aim is focusing on changes in the norms guiding German foreign policy. Foreign policy norms therefore, are considered as the independent variable. Accordingly, this research chooses the constructivist approach in foreign policy analysis⁷ because constructivists recognize the independent influence of identities and norms; and therefore allow explaining foreign policy changes beyond rational constraints. Indeed, this question can be also approached from rational and / or geopolitical perspectives and by following literature reviews on German foreign policy after reunification gives some examples, but the focus of this study is on the influence of norms in shaping foreign policy and more specifically on German foreign policy change in relation to the Baltic States. This study argues that the German foreign policies of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* are in continuation and refer to domestic norms which experience a change in prioritization in light of the Ukraine Crisis and in consequence led to a change in German foreign policy towards the Baltic States.

In order to do so this study will examine the German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea and outline in a cross-temporal case comparison the essential features of German-Baltic relations since 2004. In reference to the constructivist models

⁷ For example see: Henning Boekle, et. al., Normen und Außenpolitik, Konstruktivistische Außenpolitiktheorie, in: *Tübinger Arbeitspapiere zur Internationalen Politik und Friedensforschung*, Nr. 34., 1999.

of the ‘logic of appropriateness’, the expected changes are further explained by parliamentary debates of the German Bundestag. The constructivist model is suggested to be the most suiting because as different theories of foreign policy analysis indeed have conceptualized potential sources of change in foreign policy but do not sufficiently clarify the most likely sources of change.⁸ For example realist theories expect German foreign policy changes in light of changing power relations or as Forsberg summarizes in light of Russian threat Germany is expected to have a more accommodating position towards Russia, which as will be shown is not the case and Germany criticize Russian aggression.⁹ This would further suggest that Germany has geopolitical interests for example to underpin the NATO “spheres of influence”. The validity of such geopolitical consideration is not questioned but they do not explain why Germany engages in the Baltic states. Thus, the focus is more to understand the explanatory factors for German foreign policy actions towards the Baltic states which are seen in the foreign policy norms. Constructivist models do not displace rationalist attentions to interests but emphasize the social or intersubjective dimension of world politics.¹⁰

While existing literature and previous studies in international relations and foreign policy analysis reveal a controversial and extensive discussion of continuation and change in Germany’s foreign policy after reunification, most of them do not provide explanations in light of competing norms. In general, we can outline three main strands of literature about German foreign policy after 1990. The *first* strand is the debate focusing mostly on the continuity and changes in the reunified German foreign policy in light of the changed international system after the Cold War. Sebastian Harnisch examined the early claims that continuity would have dominated changes in Germany’s foreign policy since 1990.¹¹ He summarizes the controversy that came up in the

⁸Tuomas Fosberg, From Ostpolitik to ‚frostpolitik‘?, Merkel, Putin and German foreign policy towards Russia, in *International Affairs* 92: 1, 2016, pp. 21-42, p. 38.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Thomas Banchoff, Germany’s European Policy: A Constructivist Perspective, Program for the Study of Germany and Europe, Working Paper, Series #8.1, Harvard University, 1997-98, p.3-4

¹¹ See: John S. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken: Political Culture, International Institutions and German Security Policy After Unification*, Stanford University Press, 1999; Thomas Banchoff (1999), *The German Problem Transformed. Institutions, Politics and Foreign Policy, 1945–1995*, in Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1999; Volker Rittberger (1999), ‘Deutschlands Außenpolitik nach der Vereinigung, Zur Anwendbarkeit theoretischer Modelle der Außenpolitik: Machtstaat, Handelsstaat oder Zivilstaat?’, in Wolfgang Berger, Volker Ronge, Georg Weißenö (ed.), *Friedenspolitik in und für Europa*, Opladen, 1999,

distinctive perception “whether Germany followed the foreign policy course of the ‘Bonn Republic’ or if it was normalizing its external behavior along the lines of other major power players (...).”¹² Accordingly, the outcomes are very diverse and dependent on the individual research focuses which are often narrowed on either the continuity or change of *Ostpolitik* or *Westbindung*. Some scientists such as Steve Marsh conclude that the post-Cold War German foreign and security policy was by no mean in a crisis but the “burden of history encouraged German governments to defer key decisions about the future, *whatever* path they might have preferred to take within the normalization debate.”¹³ Others such as Patricia Davis and Peter Dombrowski are more precise and see a change where “Germany will pursue foreign policies ‘normal’ for a state of its size and strength”¹⁴ or Susanne Peters who do not see changes especially in German security policy but continuation within NATO structures¹⁵ as well as Randall Newsham who argues for the continuation of the successful *Ostpolitik*.¹⁶

A *second* strand of German foreign policy analysis focuses on the actual debate of the ‘normalization’ of German foreign policy. Mary N. Hampton emphasizes the concept of normalcy and concludes that in light of competing interpretations of Germany’s past, present and expectations for the future in the different studies the German ‘normalcy’ remains a “perhaps”.¹⁷ Ann L. Phillips analyzed the impact of Germany’s continued commitment to reconciliation with its neighbors in central-east Europe on traditional power relations in the region and argues that the politics of reconciliation scramble conventional power calculations in substantive ways to elevate central-east European

pp.83–107; Simon Bulmer, et. al., 1999, *Germany’s European Diplomacy, Shaping the Regional Milieu*, Manchester University Press, 2000.

¹² Harnisch, (2001), p. 36; Gunter Hellmann, ‘Jenseits von “Normalisierung” und “Militarisierung”’: Zur Standortdebatte über die neue deutsche Außenpolitik’, in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 1–2, 1997a, pp.24–33; A. James McAdams, ‘Germany After Unification, Normal At Last?’, *World Politics*, 49, 1997, pp.282–308.

¹³ Steve Marsh, *The dangers of German history: Lessons from a decade of post-cold war German foreign and security policy*, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 3:3, 2002, pp. 389-424, p.414.

¹⁴ Patricia Davis/ Peter Dombrowski, *Appetite of the wolf: German foreign assistance for central and eastern Europe*, *German Politics*, 6:1, 1997, pp. 1-22, p. 18.

¹⁵ Susanne Peters, *Germany’s security policy after unification, Taking the wrong models’*, *European Security*, 6:1, pp. 18-47, 1997, p. 18.

¹⁶ Randall Newsham, *Economic Linkage and Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik, The Case of the Warsaw Treaty*, *German Politics*, 16:2, 2007, pp. 247-263, p. 247.

¹⁷ Mary N. Hampton, ‘The past, present, and the perhaps’ is Germany a “normal” power?, *Security Studies*, 10:2, 2000, pp. 179-202, p. 202.

authorities in their relation to Germany.¹⁸ For the German foreign policy towards Baltic states this means that instead of focusing on material constraints and power relations Germany has a profound need to shape its relations with the Baltic states in accordance with its historical responsibility.

The *third* strand is the theoretical debate, which will be looked closer at below about how German foreign policy is approached. A key element for understanding Germany's foreign policy is the connection of material or so called power politics and domestic values and norms of appropriate action that are based on the devastating experience of Germany's foreign policy in the early 20th Century. The previous studies considered this issue mostly within the foreign policy principles of either *Ostpolitik* and the commitment to reconciliation towards the European countries or the *Westbindung* where German foreign policy is determined by its western integration. Accordingly, it is here argued that both *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* are to be considered. This makes it necessary to choose an approach to foreign policy analysis that prioritizes norms and ideas over material factors without neglecting them and places emphasis on domestic determinants of foreign policy rather than locating the source of German foreign policy in the international realms. The constructivist approach as described inter alia by Boekle (et.al.) provide with the concept of 'logic of appropriateness' a framework that allows to capture material constraints but embeds the material interests in a domestic 'cognitive process' where foreign policy is constructed by domestic understandings and 'meaning structures' of appropriate behavior and thus, norms.¹⁹

The validity of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* in German policy towards Baltic states is recognized already by earlier studies such as by Helge Daucherts dissertation which is for sure the most comprehensive research about German Baltic policy since 1991 until 2004. He explains Germany's early position to the Baltic states with a dilemma within the continued *Ostpolitik* and argues that good relations with Russia and the simultaneous promotion of Baltic states western integration were in contradiction to

¹⁸ Ann L. Phillips, The politics of reconciliation: Germany in central-east Europe, in German Politics, vol. 7. Iss. 2, 1998, pp. 64-85.

¹⁹ Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Constructivism and Foreign Policy", in Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (ed.), *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 73; Maysam Behraves, The Relevance of Constructivism to Foreign Policy Analysis, in E-International Relations, 17.7.2011.

each other. That is why Germany never developed a clear and comprehensive policy framework for German-Baltic relations. He also focuses on *Ostpolitik* since his study does not include the time after the Baltic states joined the EU and NATO in 2004. The essential interests of western integration and consolidation of sovereignty and security of the Baltic states were for Dauchert achieved and by that the dilemma would have been dissolved. The German-Baltic relations after 2004 are since then mostly analyzed in the broader context of European integration,²⁰ regional cooperation like the Baltic Sea region (BSR)²¹ and security policy (NATO) as shown above. The co-existence of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* seemed in case of German Baltic policy unproblematic since 2004 because there were no contradictions seen. This, however, has changed with the Ukraine Crisis, that made the initial tension between the two foreign policy norms manifest. The first studies about the German foreign policy in light of the Ukraine Crisis are provided for example by Marco Siddi who analyzed the German foreign Policy towards Russia in the aftermath of Ukraine Crisis and asks if there are signs for a new *Ostpolitik*²² and Tuomas Fosberg who emphasizes the impact of the Ukraine Crisis on German-Russian relations.²³ An initial examination about the influence of recent shifts in the discourse of German foreign and security policy in light of the Ukraine crisis on policy outcomes was made by Adrian G. V. Hyde-Price.²⁴ He argues that Germany, since the end of the Cold War lacks a strategic culture and informed public debate especially on security policy.²⁵ The increased need in light of international crisis like Iraq, Libya and now Ukraine, Hyde-Price says that despite constructive response to the Ukraine crisis, “the discussion of the role of coercive military power in the mix of instruments that effective security policy and statecraft requires”²⁶ remain the significant weakness of Germany and it would be now time “to think long and hard

²⁰ Sven Arnsward, EU Enlargement and the Baltic states, The Incremental Making of New Members, Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP, vol. 7. Kauhava/Finland, 2000; Esko Anttola/ Milla Lehtimäki, Small States in the EU, Problems and Prospects of the Future, Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence University of Turku, Working Papers No. 10, 2001.

²¹ Zaneta Ozolina, Baltic Sea Region after the Enlargement of the European Union, Future Prospects, Zinatne, 2006.

²² Marco Siddi, German Foreign Policy towards Russia in the Aftermath of the Ukraine Crisis, A New Ostpolitik?, Europe-Asia Studies, 68:4, 20116, pp. 665-677.

²³ Fosberg, (2016).

²⁴ Adrian G.V. Hyde-Price, The “sleep-walking giant” awakes: resetting German foreign and security policy, European Security, 24:4, 2015, pp. 600-616.

²⁵ *ibid.* p. 612.

²⁶ Hyde-Price, (2015), p. 613.

about European security and strategy (...).”²⁷ However, a study in light of the increasing security concerns of Central-East European countries and the Baltic states is so far missing and gives this study its motivation for the first attempt to grasp this issue. In reference to continuity of German foreign policy principles the annexation of Crimea by Russia caused a rebalancing of competing norms in German foreign policy which results in a change of German Baltic policy actions before and after the annexation of Crimea.

In the following chapter the constructivist model in foreign policy and the ‘logic of appropriateness’ is captured and is followed by the theoretical explanation for a prioritization of norms in foreign policy. The theoretical understanding of competing foreign policy norms is contextualized in the case of German Baltic policy where the competing norms by *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* are defined. The following methodology part explains the approach in the investigation of different features in German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea and outlines the cross-temporal changes. Further, the observable indicators for foreign policy norms which are seen in parliamentary debates of the German Bundestag are defined in reference to constructivist theory because in constructivist understanding parliamentary debates are seen as a reflection of socially shared expectations in foreign policy actions. Finally, the captured cross-temporal changes in German Baltic policy are analyzed in context of parliamentary debates in the German *Bundestag* where statements and argumentation are attributed to the competing foreign policy norms of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung*. The study will then close with the conclusion where the research question is answered and the expectations of the change in the prioritization of German foreign policy norms are reflected in mentioned literature and also captures the limitations of this work including an outlook on aspects that need further considerations in future studies.

²⁷ Hyde-Price, (2015), p. 613.

1. Constructivism in foreign policy analysis

In order to approach the above-made research question, this study adopts a constructivist framework of foreign policy analysis. This means that for the formulation of political interests the socio-constructivist concept sees the inter-subjective beliefs of the actors included in the political apparatus and the society.²⁸ The essential actors are seen in the Government but in opposite to rationalist approaches constructivism suggests that a reconnection of interests into domestic decision-making process promote democratic legitimacy and therefore, the foreign policy “interest loses its character of overtime objectivity and becomes the product of a political decision-making process.”²⁹ Accordingly, constructivism understands the function of national interests as a reference category or *compass* in the decision-making process and although rationality of state actions is not neglected it is important to understand the “complementary relationship”³⁰ between interests and values in order to ensure the moral legitimization of foreign policy actions.³¹ This compass is here understood to be embodied in *norms*. In other words foreign policy norms are the foundation on which foreign policy interests are formulated.

Constructivism understands foreign policy practices of states as a “product of discursive factors and socio-cultural constructions”³² It means that the aim of constructivism as a theory in foreign policy studies is to examine *various cognitive processes* which have impact on foreign policy constructions like identities, collective *meaning structures* of values and norms including their influence on foreign policy practices.³³ While there are various strands of constructivism, they all have the similar premises that identities are the basis of interests which distinguishes them from rational theories who argue that interests are the driving variable. The constructivist starting point is the critique of this rationalist concept of the utility maximizing *homo oeconomicus* where the purpose of identities, values and norms are rather seen as an instrument for implementing foreign

²⁸ Sven Bernhard Gareis, *Deutschlands Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik*, Opladen, 2006, pp. 79 – 96, p. 81.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 83.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 83-84.

³² Behraves, (2011).

³³ Checkel, (2008), p. 73.

policy interests.³⁴ Thus, constructivists see the independent influence of identities and norms as a variable which according to Hasenclever and Rittberger and other constructivists, is not compatible with the *homo oeconomicus*.³⁵ Instead, they suggest another concept for an actor which is called the *homo sociologicus* or *role player* where decision making is based on the ‘Logic of appropriateness’ which refers to social shared and value-based expectations of reasonable action in foreign policy.³⁶

Besides the distinction to rational theories the foreign policy studies divides constructivism into two major strands. Whereas the core premises of constructivism is opposed to rationalist theories the constructivist theory is further and in fact deeply divided with regard to methodological and epistemological terms.³⁷ In epistemological sense constructivism can be divided into further two main strands: The so-called North American variant also known as ‘conventional’ or ‘standard’ constructivism, represented inter alia by Alexander Wendt, Emmanuel Adler, Peter Katzenstein and Martha Finnmore, is an epistemologically positivist approach where *social norms* and *identities* have an essential role in the construction of international politics and the outcomes of foreign policies.³⁸ The positivist perspective therefore, has a more deductive approach to outline a causal relationship of actors, norms and identities and interests on foreign policy outcomes where the influence of national interests and material objectives are by no mean neglected but are not the foundation of foreign policy actions. Instead, “states’ constructed identities, shared understandings and socio-political situation in the broader international system which to a large extent determines their interests and the foreign policy practices to secure them.”³⁹

The second strand or ‘European variant’ of constructivism represented inter alia by Friedrich Kratochwil, Ted Hopf⁴⁰ is a more post-constructivist (interpretivism) approach where the causal connection of identities and norms and foreign policy action

³⁴ Boekle, (1999), p. 4.

³⁵ Boekle, (1999), p. 4.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ Maysam Behraves, (2011).

³⁸ *ibid*; Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), p. 69.

³⁹ Behraves, (2011).

⁴⁰ Chernoff, (2008), p. 69.

is less of interest rather than the role of *language* and *linguistic construction* on social constructions and reality as such and by that focuses more on the development of identities and norms. In other words, this more inductive research approach explores the conditions of possibility for changes in identities and norms in the first place without asking further their influence on foreign policy actions.⁴¹

The basis of competing norms is here seen in the domestic debate of foreign policies and thus, refers to the positivist approach which will come clear further below in the distinction of socialization processes. While alternative constructivist perspective are further categorized in different forms the so-called unit-level constructivist theory particularly represented by Katzenstein focuses on domestic political level and by that on the, in words of Reus-Smit “relationship between domestic social and legal norms and the identities and interests of states”⁴² Based on this the competing foreign policy norms in German Baltic policy are seen in the German domestic debate and legal foundations of socially shared value based expectations of reasonable action. This brings us to the mentioned concept of ‘logic of appropriateness’ that explains the connection of foreign policy actions and domestic norms.

1.1 ‘Logic of appropriateness’

As above mentioned the constructivist model in foreign policy analysis sees the link between the independent variable of norms and the legitimated foreign policy behavior of states in the *logic of appropriateness*.⁴³ An essential part of empirical constructivist studies is to outline the connection between social constructions and concrete behavior or options of action. This connection is described in the logic of appropriateness which states that: “*behaviors (beliefs as well as actions) are intentional but not willful. They involve fulfilling the obligations of a role in a situation, and so of trying to determine the imperatives of holding a position. [...] Within a logic of appropriateness, a sane person is one who is ‘in touch with identity’ in the sense of maintaining consistency*

⁴¹ Checkel, (2008), p. 73; Behravesch (2011).

⁴² Christian Reus-Smit (2005), “Constructivism”, in *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd edition, Scot Burchill, et. al., Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005, p. 199.

⁴³ Boekle, (1999), p. 8.

between behavior and a conception of self in a social role''⁴⁴ It means that the action or behavior of an actor is not driven by individual beliefs but on the intersubjectively shared expectation of appropriate behavior; means *norms*. Therefore, norms influence the definitions of such obligations of an actor in a situation which are derived from domestic values and identities. Expectations of appropriate behavior within a social system can become self-evident and as such are not necessarily reflected by actors. Therefore, the claim of constructivism is to grasp the actors conscious as well as the culturally handed self-evident norms. The logic of appropriateness takes both levels into account.

According to the logic of appropriateness, the constructivist understanding is that *social norms* function as independent variables for the explanation of foreign policy behavior.⁴⁵ This is in contrast to rational models where actors choose between different options of action in the aim of personal or material utility maximization. Instead, constructivism argues that values and identities precede interests and the choice of action is based on the resulting norms. The influence of norms on foreign policy behavior therefore, cannot be reduced on rational *constraints* and *incentives* where it just increases or reduces the costs of certain action and by that have a merely *regulative effect* on foreign policy behavior.⁴⁶ More likely, as Klotz says: “norms legitimize goals and thus, define actors’ interests“.⁴⁷ By legitimizing certain foreign policy goals a *constitutive effect* is attributed to norms as ‘motives’.⁴⁸ It means that the effect of norms as a motive is that states define their foreign policy interests according to the legitimated goals.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, norms as explaining variables face the challenge of an often difficult empirical applicability and this is indeed accused of being the weak point of the constructivist approach. To increase the empirical applicability of norms and improve their explanatory power ex-ante the definition of norms and the observable implications

⁴⁴ James G. March/ Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions, The Organizational Basis of Politics*, New York: Free Press, 1998, p. 160; Boekle, (1999), p. 4.

⁴⁵ Boekle, (1999), p. 5.

⁴⁶ Audie Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid*, Ithaca/London, Cornell University Press, 1995, p. 26.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* p. 26.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Boekle, (1999), p. 9.

have to be precise. Based on several constructivist studies Boekle define three features of a norm that justify its explanatory power for foreign policy studies. The features are seen in the (1) *intersubjectivity*, (2) *immediate behavioral orientation* and (3) *counterfactual validity*. Norms are therefore, defined as “intersubjective shared and value-based expectations of reasonable behavior”⁵⁰

The feature of *intersubjectivity* distinguishes norms from individual convictions or in terms of Goldstein and Keohane “beliefs held by individuals”.⁵¹ Although a social origin of individual beliefs and values indeed is not denied and several studies inter alia Thomas Banchoffs research on Germany’s Europe policy after 1990 argue that the further European integration policy by the German Government was based on “Helmut Kohl’s historical idea”⁵² other researchers such as Audie Klotz respond that “examining decision-making processes through individual motivation and cognition alone ignores the commonality of shared underlying dominant ideas or knowledge.”⁵³ According to Klotz, it was not the ‘belief system’ of Helmut Kohl as such but the domestic social consensus on which it was based. Further the approach to explain foreign policy behavior by individual belief systems inevitably raises the question of the social roots of individual convictions without offering an answer.⁵⁴

To increase the distinction of norms from individual beliefs and further to understand the explanatory power of a norm it is important to outline the *commonality* of a norm. Commonality indicates how widely a norm is shared in a social system and therefore, explains how strong a norm is anchored in a social system (society, political elites).⁵⁵ With a plurality of different norms in a social system, the question arises why expectations of one group of actors in a certain system are more decisive than the expectations from other groups. With this question however, the norm itself becomes the dependent variable. Only in the case where it can be assumed that one group is stronger than the competing group *because* of their shared expectations, a norm can be

⁵⁰ Norms as “intersubjektiv geteilte, wertegestützte Erwartungen angemessenen Verhaltens“, Boekle, (1999), p.5.

⁵¹ Judith Goldstein/ Robert O. Keohane, Ideas and Foreign Policy, An Analytical Framework, in Judith Goldstein/ Robert O. Keohane (ed.), Ideas and Foreign Policy. Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 3-30, p.3; Boekle, (1999), p. 5.

⁵² Banchoff, (1997), p. 66.

⁵³ Klotz, (1995), p. 32; Boekle, (1999), p.5.

⁵⁴ Boekle, (1999) p. 5.

⁵⁵ *ibid.* p.7.

defined as an independent variable with the required explanatory power.⁵⁶ At what point a norm is seen as accepted and how many actors in a social system are necessary for that is not to be considered here further. Decisive is to capture *when* a norm becomes likely to guide foreign policy actions. Therefore, the main interest here is in the accounting for foreign policy change and if this is caused by a change in the constellation of norms. Why this norm-change occurs is a different question which is here left to others to explore. For this study a helpful idea comes from Simon Koschut who sees in external shocks a potential *norm challenger* where established norms might be questioned.⁵⁷ Here it is merely suggested that external shocks such as the Ukraine crisis can lead to a change in norm prioritization rather than the questioning of norms as such. In short, it is important to show *that* there is a change in the constellation of norms, not *why*.

In the second feature it is to consider that the intersubjective character of norms with the implicated expectations for reasonable behavior are not always equally precise because norms in contrast to principles do not explicitly assess behavior (even though it implicitly does) but only name an expected reasonable action for the actor to do or an unreasonable action to abstain from.⁵⁸ For example to say ‘stealing is bad’ is a value based principle whereas ‘you shall not steal’ is a concrete, social shared and value based expectation of appropriate behavior and thus, a norm.⁵⁹ In the case of German foreign policy, this means for example that whereas the principle of *Westbindung* refers to Germany’s engagement for western values the implicated norm of solidarity is a concrete value based expectation to support the partners within the value community. Constructivists inter alia Raymond and Franck argue that the influence of a norm is not only determined by the commonality but also how *precise* this norm is in its explication between reasonable and unreasonable action. Therefore, it is important for implying a norm as an independent variable that it distinguishes clearly between these two things.

⁵⁶ Goldstein/ Keohane, (1993), p. 11.

⁵⁷ Simon Koschut (2016), Normative Change and Security Community Disintegration, Undoing Peace, Palgrave macmillan, 2016, p. 243.

⁵⁸ Boekle, (1999), p.6.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

As a third feature of norms as independent variable Boekle describes the so-called *counterfactual validity*. Even though norms do not explicitly refer to a principle or value, the expected action is based on a principle as the example of stealing shows. Because of this reference to a principle or value, norms have according to Hurrell a, from interests independent, “compliance pull”⁶⁰ This means that the existence of a norm is not questioned even though actors might occasionally behave against it.⁶¹ Obviously, this kind of unassailable position of norms cannot be overstretched since not every ethic-moral request, which has been at some point raised and in fact was ignored can be defined as a norm.⁶² In combination with the previous features, counterfactual validity can, however, underline the importance and consequently the prioritization of a norm in a social system and its influence on foreign policy action which meets precisely the interest of this study.

To conclude a norm as an independent variable can explain foreign policy actions when it is intersubjectively shared at domestic level, when there is a clear distinction between appropriate and inappropriate action, and the validity of the norm stands beyond interests and occasional circumstances which might cause the temporal ignorance or secondary importance of the norm. The question what foreign policy goals are seen as legitimated depends on the *socialization process* of foreign policy actors. Without emphasizing the socialization processes⁶³ which are emphasized particularly by Weiß and Schimmelfennig too much as such, it is here important to point out that with regard to foreign policy actors there are two simultaneous socialization processes which are analytically distinguished. On one hand foreign policy actors are in an international social system where foreign policy decision makers, thus, the Government and ‘states’ appropriate international norms between states (*transnational socialization*) and on the other hand in the domestic social system where foreign policy actors appropriate

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, see also Adrew Hurrell, *International Society and the Study of Regimes*, in, Volker Rittberger (ed.), *Regime Theory and International Relations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, pp. 49-72.

⁶¹ Andreas Hasenclever, et. al., *Theories of International Regimes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.164.

⁶² Boekle, (1999), p.6.

⁶³ More about socialization porcesses see: Wolfgang W. Weiß, *Sozialisation*, in Bernhard Schäfers (ed.), *Grundbegriffe der Soziologie*, 2. edition, Opladen, 1986, pp. 269-271; Frank Schimmelfennig, *Internationale Sozialisation neuer Staaten*, Heuristische Überlegungen zu einem Forschungsdesiderat, in *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 1:2, 1994, pp. 335-355.

national norms or socially shared norms (*societal socialization*).⁶⁴ Accordingly, states are in an interface of two social and normative systems. International and national norms are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Since the different social systems cannot be seen as completely independent from each other and international norms might be implemented in domestic norms and vice versa it is here suggested that because of different socialization processes actors, as already mentioned can have a plurality of norms. The plurality again means that norms can be in a competing relations because both international and national norms need domestic resonance. The international and national social understanding can differ without being exclusive to each other. How these socialization processes look in detail and how norms develop shall be considered in a different context. The point is that different domestic norms exist and the conflict relation occurs in the decision which norm is to be followed and prioritized. Thus, the different domestic norms merge in the foreign policy actor and the decision-making process. The action results in this understanding from the constant balancing and prioritization of the competing foreign policy norms.

1.2 Competition and prioritization of competing foreign policy norms

For the constructivist models the origin of a norm is not in focus but the interaction of international and societal norms. As above shown the widespread view is that the norms of German foreign policy remained constant after 1990.⁶⁵ The assumption that norms are strongly embedded in international and national institutions supports the hypothesis that the influence of norms persists and (rapid) changes in norms are unlikely.

The problem here is that constructivism assumes that with rapid external changes also the norm prioritization might experience changes which indeed are difficult to predict. In a case of competing foreign policy norms, we cannot predict that the pursuit of one norm inevitably invalidates the other norm. Instead, it is suggested that the validity of domestic foreign policy norms remain also in light of external changes but in a case of competing norms a re-weighting occurs and the prioritization of norms change without rejecting one or another norm. This seems permitted since constructivism allow a

⁶⁴ Boekle, (1999), p. 9.

⁶⁵ Boekle, (1999), p. 32.

general prediction if a foreign policy can be characterized conform to norms (or standardized) in sudden upheavals or shock-like context changes.

Germany's competing norms of foreign policy suggest different paths in the approach towards the Baltic states. A norm-guided foreign policy behavior means that in a case of competing norms each of them as such should show a different path in foreign policy actions. Germany's foreign policy principles of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* form such different foreign policy paths and norm constellation. The following description of German Baltic policy in the last decades since the end of the Cold War and re-establishment of diplomatic relations in 1991 shows what behavior we should expect from the German Federal Government towards the Baltic states in light of the principles of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung*. We will see that the German Baltic policy is characterized by the balance of competing norms and the importance of domestic norms of appropriate foreign policy actions.

2. Competing foreign policy norms in German Baltic policy

Germany's policy towards the Baltic states is generally described in *one* "Baltic policy" (Baltikumpolitik).⁶⁶ This results from the general academic and Germany's political understanding of the Baltic states as one geopolitical region.⁶⁷ Even though Germany was one of the first countries to re-establish diplomatic relations with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania after the restoration of their independence in 1991, the circumstances in Eastern Europe after the dissolution of the USSR changed and the role of these three states in German foreign policy was not very clear.⁶⁸ The German Federal Government found it difficult to formulate a coherent position towards this region and despite separate declarations of bilateral diplomatic relations further specific policy papers or concepts for the bilateral relations are missing up today.⁶⁹ Despite the existence of individual bilateral relations the German approach towards Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania is very similar and therefore, can be summarized in one policy framework in German foreign policy. The uniform German perception of the Baltic states can be, among others tracked back by the actual implementation of the foreign policy. When looking at the actions of German foreign policy in relation to the Baltic states we can outline three facets of foreign policy which are here described as *economic cooperation*, *diplomacy* and *security cooperation*.

Economic cooperation describes the relations between Germany and the Baltic states in material and financial matters. One key element is the common EU finance policy which found particular emphasis during the financial crisis in the EU in 2008-2009. As will be shown below the Baltic states were often mentioned as an example in the German domestic debate about the consequences of the financial crisis and how to deal with them. Therefore, the cooperation and consultation on the level of regional cooperation formats are an important platform for Germany's Baltic policy. It underlines both Germany's and Baltic states understanding to see the economic

⁶⁶ Gesine Herrmann, et. al., Die deutsche Baltikumpolitik 1988-1991, Zwischen Ablehnung, Unterstützung und Zurückhaltung, Hamburg, 2012, p. 46.

⁶⁷ Herrmann, (2012), p. 37.

⁶⁸ Thomas Schmidt, Die Außenpolitik der baltischen Staaten, Im Spannungsfeld zwischen Ost und West, Wiesbaden, 2003, p.200.

⁶⁹ Helge Dauchert, "Anwalt der Balten" oder Anwalt in eigener Sache?, Die deutsche Baltikumpolitik 1991-2004, Berlin, 2008, p. 46-47.

cooperation in the whole EU context. For example, the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes that “[t]he major objective of Estonia’s EU policy is to do the utmost to strengthen the euro area further. This must be done in conjunction with further deepening of the Single Market and the strengthening of the financial system and the Single Market in financial services.”⁷⁰ However, the economic cooperation is for the Baltic states of much more significant importance than for Germany who in turn puts special emphasis on the energy cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Especially the case of the Nord Stream pipeline shows the general mindset in German foreign and security policy with regard to the Baltic states. Therefore, the key issue here is, in reference to the challenging norms of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung*, to capture the connection of economic and security policy and how it affects the approach towards the Baltic states.

The second facet of *diplomacy* refers to the public and symbolic communication in bilateral relations. By definition diplomacy in its basics is about communication between states, or in words of Bjola and Kornsporst the “institutionalized communication among internationally recognized representatives of internationally recognized entities through which these representatives produce, manage and distribute public goods.”⁷¹ Bjola and Kornsporst outline that “there are a plethora of rules and norms that diplomats become socialized [!] into and these rules and norms govern the communication among diplomats”⁷² It means that German foreign policy actors have self-imposed rules and pattern how to communicate with the Baltic states representatives. This underlines once more the relevance of constructivist understanding of norms as guiding factor in foreign policy. Indeed, German politicians, in order to emphasize or kind of legitimize the relations to the Baltic states for itself and for the public, refer to the long shared history which goes back to the Nordic crusades by the end of the twelfth century and was followed by seven-hundred-years of dominion of the Baltic-Germans as upper class in the region of Baltic states. They decisively influenced the cultural, social and economic development of the Baltic states until the 19-20th

⁷⁰ Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Homepage (ed.), Estonia in the European Union: <http://www.vm.ee/en/estonia-european-union>, [19.10.2016].

⁷¹ Cornelius Bjola, et. al., *Understanding International Diplomacy, Theory, Practice and Ethics*, Routledge 2013, p. 4.

⁷² Bjola, (2013), p. 4.

Century.⁷³ The Baltic-German dominion ended with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939 and Germany's consciousness for its responsibility for the consequences for the Baltic states explains German pronounced need for reparations and support for the Baltic states and in fact for all Eastern European countries foremost Poland and Russia. The resulting norms, rules and principles are suggested to be reflected in the diplomatic outcome and thus, show references to the the challenging norms in German foreign policy and what normative interpretation is prioritized in regard to the Baltic states.

The German historic consciousness also affects the third facet of *security cooperation* in the Baltic policy. After the Cold War nowhere the contradiction between the support for western integration of the Eastern European countries on one hand and the consideration of Russian interests and their inclusion into cooperative structures on the other hand was more evident than in the Baltic states.⁷⁴ The quick integration into EU and NATO pursued by the Baltic states in demarcation to Russia and Germany's principle of a European security system with the inclusion of Russia contained a 'dilemma' as described by Dauchert.⁷⁵ He in particular captured the early debate on the membership of the Baltic states into the NATO and shows how the German Federal Government hesitated to find a clear position towards the Baltic states.⁷⁶ During the early 1990s the, at that time, Minister of Defense Volker Rühle rejected a NATO membership of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on the ground that such enlargement could "endanger the internal cohesion of the alliance"⁷⁷ and Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl even rejected a principle Eastern Enlargement of NATO because it would put pressure on the good German-Russian relations and potentially even lead to a "re-division of Europe".⁷⁸ Only Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel recognized the security needs of the Baltic states and argued that in principle the Baltic states interests are compatible with German foreign

⁷³ More information about the Baltic-German history and heritage see: Gerd von Pistolkors, *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas, Baltische Länder*, Berlin, 1994; Andres Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic states*, Hampshire/England, 2010.

⁷⁴ Schmidt, (2003), p. 200.

⁷⁵ Dauchert, (2/2008).

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Gerd Föhrenbach (2002), "Germany's Policy towards the Baltic states", in Helmut Hubel et. al. (ed.), *EU enlargement and Beyond, The Baltic states and Russia*, Berlin, 2002, pp. 209-222, p. 214.

⁷⁸ "Eine erneute Teilung Europas", Dauchert, 2/2008; see also: Gerd Föhrenbach: *Die Westbindung der baltischen Staaten*, Baden-Baden 2000, p. 143.

policy interests. Especially, if the NATO enlargement is limited to few countries, such as Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary, so Kinkel, it could reduce the security status of the Baltic states.⁷⁹ The internal debate was eventually stopped by Kohl in 1995 and the interests of security policies within the Germany Federal Government were defined in favor to Russia and largely ignored the interests of the Baltic states. With this Germany established the norm of *Ostpolitik* as the prioritized approach towards Baltic states in which Russian interests were considered firstly or at least the dialog with Russia was pursued foremost.

Nevertheless, the EU and NATO membership of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania was realized in 2004 and while Germany under the Chancellorship of Kohl approached the European security according to *Ostpolitik*, the fundamental 'dilemma' in German Baltic policy turned into practically competing norms. Germany's post-Cold War commitment towards the Baltic states was to (1) support their western integration and (2) accommodate Russian interests. With the continuation of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung*, the new situation after 2004, however, has not brought about any clarity in the German Baltic policy. The German Federal Government deals since then with practical competing norms which are in constant balancing because the norm of *Ostpolitik* has a general more broader approach, as will be shown, where Baltic states interests are implicitly considered and diverted to the multilateral level where Russia is involved. On the other hand Germany's *Westbindung* requires considering Baltic states interests more directly and within the EU and NATO Community where Russian is not a decisive factor.

In summary the German Baltic policy since 2004 is characterized by the competing norms of *Ostpolitik* to follow the long-term stable development of a European security system where Russia is included and the norm of *Westbindung* where a value community within EU and NATO where, especially in the event of perceived threat Russian interests are not decisive. While this competing relation of foreign policy norms seems to be incompatible it is here suggested that these norms are in constant balancing where one of these norms is prioritized. This results from the theoretical understanding of norms as explaining variables in foreign policy where the socially shared expectation

⁷⁹ Föhrenbach, (2000), p. 139.

of reasonable behavior has an influence on foreign policy decision making. As above mentioned, in case of a plurality of norms from different principles means also that the norms show a different path in foreign policy actions.

In relation to the Baltic states the German foreign policy is characterized by such an plurality of norms which consist of two competing norms based on the foreign policy principles of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung*.. The following description show the different paths Germany's Baltic policy takes in light of these two principles.

2.1 Norm of *Ostpolitik* –‘Change through rapprochement’

The above-mentioned continuity of German *Ostpolitik* remained one of the core foreign policy frameworks towards Eastern European countries after the Cold War. Thus, the reunified Germany continued with the foreign policy of former West Germany and with that refers to the continuity of *Ostpolitik* as an integral part of Germany's foreign policy.⁸⁰ The ‘*Ostpolitik*’ which was established by the Federal government of Willy Brandt in 1969 describes a new policy framework in order to renew the relations primarily between West and East Germany and further a policy towards the communist block and particularly towards Soviet Russia.⁸¹ Concrete it means that German Governments searched cooperative economic cooperation towards the USSR which would lead to positive changes.⁸² This approach is known as ‘*change through rapprochement*’⁸³ which was continued towards the post-Soviet Russia with particular emphasis on economic interlocking.⁸⁴ After the end of the Cold War, the foreign policy norms of reunified Germany support comprehensive plans to promote a peaceful and integrated Europe. Thus, the norms of post-Cold War *Ostpolitik* includes (1) the support for European integration of EEC countries and the Baltic states and at the same time (2)

⁸⁰ Fosberg, (2016), p. 22.

⁸¹ For an comprehensive overview of Germanys and EU *Ostpolitik* see: Werner Weidenfeld (ed.), *Neue Ostpolitik – Strategie für eine gesamteuropäische Entwicklung*, Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh, 1997.

⁸² Siddi (2016), p. 665.

⁸³ The initiator of the “new” *Ostpolitik*, Brandt's political secretary Egon Bahr understood the change through *rapprochement* as the willingness of West Germany to have increasing economic collaboration and particularly energy diplomacy with the Soviet Union, see: Fosberg (2016), p. 21; Frank Bösch, ‘Energy diplomacy: West Germany, the Soviet Union and the oil crises of the 1970s’, *Historical Social Research* 39: 4, 2014, pp. 165–85.

⁸⁴ Siddi, (2016), p. 665.

the promotion of a security system in Europe with the inclusion of Russia into western structures. By that the importance of having good cooperative relations with Russia remained the determining principle of Germany's *Ostpolitik* during the End of the Cold War, the dissolution of Soviet Union, the reunification of Germany and was since then in general adopted by all German Governments up today.⁸⁵

Within the norm of 'change through rapprochement' according to *Ostpolitik*, the economic cooperation and security policies one reinforces the other. A case study by Newnham underlines this connection of economic and security policy within Germany's *Ostpolitik* by arguing that "Germany has been particularly successful in using economic incentives (positive linkage) to improve ties with its neighbors."⁸⁶ His conclusion is that Chancellor Brandt's strategy to increase economic ties with the East eventually in the long run might have had a decisive role to change the Cold War dynamics in Europe and suggests further that "positive economic linkage might help to resolve other disputes in our present-day world"⁸⁷ Thus, the comprehensive plan with the norm of 'change through rapprochement' seeks for the economic linkages within Eastern European Countries (including Russia) and Western Europe with the aim to not only protect and maximize the good German-Russian relations but also, according to Kleuters to protect the continuity of the outcome process where 'peace', 'reconciliation', or 'Europeaness' can be achieved.⁸⁸

In case of the Baltic states it means that even though the support for European integration of EEC countries and the Baltic states after 1991 is out of question and also emphasized in bilateral meetings and diplomacy the simultaneous promotion of a security system in Europe with inclusion of Russia limits the efforts in political and especially security cooperation insofar as in security cooperation Germany avoid all kind of actions that could possibly provoke Russia. All security related issues in the Baltic states are dealt in light of Russian interests and Germany refuses to participate in NATO troop exercises which are criticized by Russia and perceived as a provocation.

⁸⁵ Fosberg, (2016), p. 22.

⁸⁶ Randall Newnham, Economic Linkage and Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*: The Case of the Warsaw Treaty, *German Politics*, 16:2, 2007, pp. 247-263, p. 247.

⁸⁷ *ibid.* p. 259; Thomas Bernauer et. al., *The Politics of Positive Incentives in Arms Control*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1999.

⁸⁸ Joost Kleuters, *Between Continuity and Change: Ostpolitik and the Constructivist Approach Revisited*, *German Politics*, 18:4, 2009, pp. 519-535, p. 519.

Moreover, the energy security is of high priority for Germany and the emphasis on multilateral cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region aims to secure the energy supply in Europe.

2.2 Norm of *Westbindung* –Western solidarity

Since the end of WWII Germany's *Westbindung* was a "fundamental goal of the state."⁸⁹ The first German Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's policy of *Westbindung* was the answer to the considered danger of Germany's neutral position in face of communist expansion.⁹⁰ Further, the *Westbindung* was to avoid a renewed strengthening of German nationalism and unilateral foreign policy making. During the Cold War, the transatlantic relation including NATO and the relations in Europe especially with France was of essential importance to integrate Germany into western structures. Inter alia Mary N. Hampton argues that "NATO has had a powerful effect in creating positive security identification between the United States and Germany"⁹¹ She tested in the context of German-American relations in the NATO the existence of transnational positive identity formation and focused on the understanding of German security identity and its perception of others.⁹² In her study on the role of historical memory as it pertains to German-American relations she argues that the purpose of joint NATO mission "was to forge a positive identity among member states by helping to create a shared sense of history and destiny."⁹³ This clearly refers to the above mentioned transnational socialization of Germany in international organizations where the foreign policy norm is based on the shared values and identity within a community, here the NATO. Accordingly the Baltic states since 2004 also belong to this security community and Germany should share with them the same security identification. Further Hampton discusses, in reference to Wendt the impact of the reconstruction of shared history in creating a sense of solidarity, community, loyalty to the trans-Atlantic

⁸⁹ Andrew Denison, German foreign policy and transatlantic relations since unification, *German Politics*, 10:1, 2001, pp. 155-176, p. 173.

⁹⁰ Kleuters, (2009), p. 582.

⁹¹ Mary N. Hampton, NATO, Germany, and the United States: Creating positive identity in Trans-Atlantia, *Security Studies*, 8:2-3, 1998, pp. 235-269, p. 267.

⁹² *ibid.* p. 237.

⁹³ *ibid.*

allies and Germany's role in the NATO.⁹⁴ Notable is her conclusion that "while Germans have been resilient in their continued security identification with the United States through NATO, the lack of positive identity in the vital arena of national economic identity has led to a bifurcation of the trans-Atlantic relationship."⁹⁵ The relationship between Germany and the US is in Hampton's view characterized by tensions, "where balancing and egoistic behavior could potentially dominate in the economic relationship, while a positive identity has arisen in the security relationship."⁹⁶ In short it means that Germany's *Westbindung* and strong relations with the USA and western allies relies in particular on the shared positive security identity built up during the Cold War era where security matters dominated, the early post-Cold War period, in turn, brought up increasingly economic issues in foreign policies which might lead to a decrease in the shared sense of solidarity and loyalty. While Hampton made the case primarily for the relation between Germany and USA this applies in principle to all allies and since the NATO enlargement also to the Baltic states. In the understanding of *Westbindung* economic and security issues are therefore, seen separated from each other.

While the continuation of *Ostpolitik*, as seen above in the reunification German foreign policy is seen as given the question is what does it mean for the *Westbindung*? For Denison the "integrationist impulse and multilateralism as the most vital interest"⁹⁷ Germany would have put this goal on all reservations about the use of military force. For the German foreign policy it means that the European balance of power is to be replaced by integration and co-determination but up today Germany's commitment to peace in Europe did not consider the practical necessity of force. In Denison's view "Germany's challenge has been to reconcile deep-seated principles with the changing international reality"⁹⁸ Other such as Susanne Peters, in turn, argue that in "short- and mid-term perspective Germany is not particularly interested in strengthening the European component of its security policy, but rather in emphasizing its traditional transatlantic security policy in the context of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

⁹⁴ *ibid.* p. 238.

⁹⁵ *ibid.* p. 269.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Denison, (2001), p. 173.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

(NATO).”⁹⁹ Germany’s foreign policy according to *Westbindung* therefore, indeed should distinguish between economic, political and security policies and relocates these policy areas into the respective multilateral structures, which are mostly not connected in the decision making and implementation.

For our case of German Baltic policy since 2004, it means that in opposite to the continued *Ostpolitik* Germany’s foreign policy norm by its *Westbindung* differentiates between economic, political and security matters. Thus, the answer to Baltic states security concerns shall be answered within the NATO alliance whereas economic and political cooperation is within EU structures. By that the German government separated the economic and political cooperation from security matters and the strong shared values and identity with the Baltic states within EU and NATO. Accordingly, the German Baltic policy makes strong reference to shared historical and cultural experience and values where material aspects are important and carried out in EU structures but do not have decisive influence for the security cooperation within the NATO. Germany accordingly should be committed to the unrestricted solidarity with the Baltic states as NATO partners who do not see the primary bound by material factors but on the common value based community.

To summarize the features of German Baltic policy in light of the competing norms ‘change through rapprochement’ from *Ostpolitik* and the unrestricted solidarity and loyalty from *Westbindung* show a different path how the German Baltic policy should be carried out. A following graph illustrates the different type of Germany’s Baltic policy according to the competing norms. In the following chapters, the German Baltic policy is captured in a cross-temporal case comparison, which will be explained in following, where the focus is on the time period before and after the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014. It is to show how the observable German-Baltic relations refer to the competing norms in German foreign policy.

⁹⁹ Susanne Peters, Germany's security policy after unification: Taking the wrong models’, in *European Security*, 6:1, 1997, pp. 18-47, p. 18.

Type of Germany's Baltic policy according to the guiding norm:

	Economic cooperation	Diplomacy	Security cooperation
Change through rapprochement <i>(Ostpolitik)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority on economic interlocking - Baltic states considered in multilateral formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promotion of cooperative formats with Russia and Russian minorities - visits divided into different levels of representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive role, minimization of participation in NATO missions and focus on dialogue with Russia - focus on energy security
Unrestricted Solidarity <i>(Westbindung)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on economic cooperation within EU structures - integration of Baltic states in the energy market - innovative cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasis on shared history, culture and values - specified bilateral relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active role, material and personal support and participation in NATO exercises - security more important than material costs.

3. Methodology

To empirically show a change and further a prioritization of a competing norm in German Baltic policy it is to show in a cross-temporal case comparison how the German Baltic policy was carried out before the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014 and the following time up today.¹⁰⁰ The choice for a cross-temporal case comparison approach results from the advantage it provides. One important advantage of a case study method is the high levels of conceptual validity.¹⁰¹ It means that especially social scientists face the challenge how to measure qualitative variables like *democracy*, *power* or *political culture*, which in their understanding and definition might differ significantly.¹⁰² The advantage of case studies therefore, lies especially for constructivists, in the contextualization of qualitative variables in one specific case that allow capture changes in a specific case.¹⁰³

For this study it means that the German Baltic policy as a case can be captured and explained by outlining features that show changes over a time period. A cross-temporal case study allow showing a causal mechanism with the advantage of modeling and assessing more complex causal mechanisms where it is possible to take into account also a larger number of intervening variables.¹⁰⁴ Since the explaining variables for German foreign policy indeed can be identified in different ways as the previous literature suggest, the cross-temporal case comparison allow the focus on norms as independent variable and not neglect also other possible factors. Since the research interest is to explain a change in German Baltic policy during the Ukraine Crisis by a change in prioritization of foreign policy norms the cross-temporal case comparison as a concept allows to make such causal relation. Thus, this study uses the cross-temporal case comparison first on the implementation of the three above mentioned aspects of economic cooperation, diplomacy and security cooperation and compares how these features were carried out the before and after the annexation of Crimea and show what

¹⁰⁰ About case studies and methods see: Alexander L. George, et. al., *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2005; Rober Gomm, etl al. (ed.), *Case Study Methods, Key Issues, Key Texts*, SAGE Publications, London, 2000.

¹⁰¹ George, (2005), p. 19.

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ *ibid.* p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* p. 21-22.

the German Baltic policy focused each period and what have changed over time. Accordingly, it is to define the three features in more detail:

The *economic cooperation* is here measured by the level of export trade between Germany and Baltic states. Although export rates as such are only a rough indicator and do not reflect the entire range of economic cooperation (such as direct investments or development of new markets) it nevertheless shows the overall development and relevance of material and economic factors and the general character of German-Baltic relations. With a comparison on German-Russian trade development it is further to see how the economic cooperation is interlocked. If such interlocking is noticeable in a significant way, this indicates a more *Ostpolitik*-informed foreign policy. If again such interlocking is not noticed it indicates that a *Westbindung*-informed policy is prioritized. In combination with the other features of diplomacy and security cooperation, the export rates give the first reference how important economic and material factors are in German foreign policy.

With the *diplomacy*, it is here to capture the thematic focus in German-Baltic relations. In this regard the institutional foundation of German foreign policy is important. Because the focus in foreign policies is determined mostly by the political actors; in this case the German Federal Chancellor and the Foreign Minister and thus, the Chancellery respectively Foreign Ministry. Accordingly the German Chancellery and Foreign Ministry have a different weighting in foreign policy where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is assumed to look more for the direct bilateral cooperation with the Baltic states and takes their interests more into account, whereas the position of the Federal Chancellery is considered in a broader context and links the approach towards the Baltic states in a broader regional approach including Russia.¹⁰⁵ This difference can be used consciously to convey a certain message and symbolism, which represents the general view of the German Federal Government towards the Baltic states. Based on the balance between visits of the Federal Chancellor and the Foreign Minister and also Federal state representatives and Members of Parliaments diplomacy indicates the contextualization of German Baltic policy. If the norm of change through rapprochement and *Ostpolitik*

¹⁰⁵ For more information about the institutional foundation and actors in German foreign policy see: Dauchert (2008), p. 99ff; Stephan Bierling, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Normen, Akteure, Entscheidungen*, 2. Vol., München, 2005, pp. 21-37.

dominate, it would suggest a more indirect diplomacy where German Baltic policy is primarily treated within broader context such as regional cooperation and dialogue with Russia and German Federal Chancellor Merkel is more visible in German Baltic policy. If again the Foreign Minister Steinmeier is visible and the Baltic states' interests are considered directly, it indicates the prioritization of solidarity and *Westbindung*. To underline the context it is further to capture the thematic focus, according to official Governments statements, visit reports and Press statements by the Federal Government representatives. It gives an idea if more economic and material factors are emphasized or more the value based factors with historical and cultural reference which in the second part of the cross-temporal case comparison, as will be shown, could be then attributed to the competing norms.

As *Security cooperation* is here understood the actual military cooperation of Armed Forces. Accordingly, this feature focuses primarily on operations by NATO and Germany participation. Here it is important to take into account the legal aspects of Germany's law which determine the use of military force and is highly restricted. Besides general arming restrictions, the German government can use the Army (despite for self-defense or in a case of alliance solidarity) only by international arrangement and multinational compositions and means that either a UN or NATO mandate is required.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, this feature of security cooperation will be captured by the visible German activity in NATO exercises and operations in and with the three Baltic states. The more Germany hesitate to do defence related cooperation with, or within the Baltic states the more it could indicate that Russia's concerns about NATO troops and activity in the Baltic states is taken into account and thus, refer to the prioritization of *Ostpolitik*. Accordingly the more Germany show active participation and willingness to cooperate with the Baltic states in defence issues, the more likely it indicate a prioritization of western solidarity.

In the second part of the cross-temporal case comparison it is then to explain the implemented German Baltic policy and the changes before and after 2014 by the balance of two competing norms, change through rapprochement and alliance solidarity, as can be seen from parliamentary debates of the German Bundestag. One of the most

¹⁰⁶ Dauchert, (2008), p. 130.

important functions of the German Bundestag in German foreign policy is to create a public sphere through debates.¹⁰⁷ In the understanding of the above described conventional constructivist model or more precise in the unit-level constructivist theory by Katzenstein the domestic political debates and the relation and interaction of domestic social and legal norms are here understood as a reflection or “megaphone”¹⁰⁸ of German domestic shared norms in foreign policy. It means that the analysis of parliamentary debates indicate how the competing norms of *change through rapprochement* and the *western solidarity* are represented in the domestic German society and political debate. Another important role of the Bundestag is related particularly to security policy. The German law namely requires that any armed military operation outside the own legal territory requires an approval by the German Bundestag.¹⁰⁹ With the already mentioned exception of self-defence and operation within NATO territory where a mandate is not legally required the parliamentary debate, however, play a significant role in the legitimization of any kind of military operation of German armed forces. Not least because of that the parliamentary debates and thus, the Bundestag are an important reference to show the prioritization of domestic norms as a foundation for German foreign, and in this case, Baltic policy.

To do so Parliamentary protocols provided by the official records of the Bundestag are in reference to the constructivist model considered as sources for social opinion and normative foundation for foreign policy. For Searching relevant documents for the time period 2010-2016 the results for following terms are : *Baltikum* (35 protocols), *Baltische Staaten* (35), *Estland* (65), *Lettland* (71), *Litauen* (72), *Ostsee* (108) and *Ostseerat* (3), *Ostpolitik* (42), *Westbindung* (3).¹¹⁰ To reduce the high results and at the same time increase the relevance of the documents for this study these first results were filtered with keywords referring to the aspects of economic cooperation, diplomacy and security cooperation and thus, could provide information about the foreign policy

¹⁰⁷ Joachim Krause, Die Rolle des Bundestags in der Außenpolitik, in: Eberwein, Wolf-Dieter/Kaiser, Karl (ed.), Institutionen und Ressourcen (Deutschlands neue Außenpolitik 4), München: Oldenbourg, 1998, pp. 137-150, p. 138.

¹⁰⁸ From the original „Sprahrohr“, in: Boekle, (1999), p. 50.

¹⁰⁹ Deutscher Bundestag (BT), 25.3.2011, Das Parlamentsbeteiligungsgesetz: <https://www.bundestag.de/ausschuesse18/a12/auslandseinsaetze/parlamentsbeteiligungsgesetz/247428>, [3.1.2017].

¹¹⁰ Baltikum=summarizing term in German language for the three Baltic states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; Ostsee=Baltic Sea; Ostseerat= Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

principles of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung*. It was thus, to search for example *Baltikum* connected with terms as *Ostpolitik*, *Westbindung*, *Russia*, *energy and energy security*, *dialogue*, *interlocking*, *solidarity*, *security concerns*, *alliance* and *NATO*. The goal was to get sources that allow to see how the norms of change through rapprochement by *Ostpolitik* and solidarity by *Westbindung* are emphasized in relation to the Baltic states in the time period of 2010 until 2014 and from 2014 (more precise after the annexation of Crimea) until today. The focus on this time period is made in the consideration that the protocols from 2010 to 2014 are representative for the period since 2004. Accordingly this study refers for the period 1/2010 to 12/2016 in total to 23 *Bundestag* debate protocols of which 14 protocols are from 2010 to 2013 and 7 from 2014 to 2016. two protocols are dated before 2010 but are considered relevant because they refer to the Energy project of Nord Stream pipeline which continued to be issued also after 2010. Further 14 documents from Federal Government including 7 official releases by the Foreign Ministry, 5 by the Chancellery and one by the Defence Ministry. Since this study aims to capture the general way of thinking and argumentation on German domestic level, it is important to have a time balance in the cross temporal comparison. By that it follows in the understanding of constructivist foreign policy models the goal to outline the intersubjective shared and precise expectations in the Bundestag on German foreign policy action and thus, the prioritization of a competing norm in German Baltic policy.

After the dominant norm before and after the Annexation of Crimea is outlined it is to look if there is a change in the prioritization of the norm over time. If, as expected a change of norm prioritization is seen. It is then to compare how the norm-prioritization is able to explain the previously captured changes in German Baltic policy. In a summary, it is to explain what are the driving factors and arguments that caused a prioritization of a norm. Based on the theoretical approach of constructivism it is suggested that the higher the intersubjectivity and the preciseness of appropriate action in parliamentary debates is towards one of the competing norms of change through rapprochement or western solidarity the more likely the Government action reflect the prioritization of the norm in its foreign policy actions towards the Baltic states before and after the annexation of Crimea.

4. German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea

In the following cross temporal case comparison before and after 2014 the developments of economic cooperation, diplomacy and security cooperation between Germany and the Baltic states will be outlined. The cross-temporal case comparison provides the first general overview how Germany carries out its foreign policy towards the Baltic states in the balance of the competing norms of change through rapprochement (*Ostpolitik*) and western Solidarity (*Westbindung*) since 2004 when Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined the EU and NATO. The captured actions are underlined and supported by statements of the Federal Government representatives and give the first insight how Germany's approach towards the Baltic states reflect the foreign policy principles of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung*.

4.1 German Baltic policy 2010-2014

Since 2004 when Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined the EU and NATO the bilateral relations and cooperation with Germany widened in many different policy fields and the partnership on multilateral level is characteristic for the German approach towards the three Baltic states.

4.1.1 Economic cooperation – In light of increasing trade

According to the United Nations Comtrade Database which collects official trade statistics from all around the world, the export rates between Baltic states and Germany increased steadily since 2004 when Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined the EU and the European Single market. The database reveals that the total exports from the Baltic states to Germany (Graph 1)¹¹¹ increased from around 2 Billion USD in 2004 to around 3, 4 Billion USD in 2015. This development was shortly interrupted in 2008-2009 with a total export of 2, 7 Billion USD in a result of the financial crisis but the decline was moderate and in 2010 the pre-crisis level was already passed with around 3,4 Billion USD. After a short increase again in 2011, the exports remained steady until 2014. Most

¹¹¹ See all graphs in appendices.

significant increases are in the exports from Lithuania which doubled from around 1 Billion USD in 2004 to around 2 Billion USD in 2015. Notable is the remarkable export rate of 2,5 Billion USD in 2011 just after the financial Crisis. The effects of the financial crisis indeed are overall very moderate and the exports of Estonia and Latvia remained more stable with a slight increase to 1 Billion USD from Latvia and around 700 Mill USD from Estonia in 2011.

Similarly, the overall German export to the Baltic states (graph 2) show an increase but with more fluctuation compared to the exports of the Baltic states. The German exports to the Baltic states increased from around 3,8 Billion USD in 2004 to around 6,5 Billion USD in 2015. The main goods Germany exports to the Baltic states are all kind of machinery and equipment, transportation vehicles and chemical products.¹¹² The Financial crisis in 2008-2009 had a significant impact on the exports but recovered quickly and in 2014 the pre-crisis level was achieved again with around 7,6 billion USD. The region is of comparatively small significance for Germany's economy but Germany, in turn, became one of the most important trade partners for the Baltic states and for example was ranked as Estonia's fourth most important trading partner in 2014.¹¹³

Beside the increasing exports the stable finance policy of the Baltic states during the economic crisis since 2008 finds high respect in Germany. The German Minister of Finance Schäuble outlined that in light of the finance and debt crisis in Greece the Baltic states are a great example for all EU member states how structural reforms can be successful.¹¹⁴ Also Federal Chancellor Merkel expressed her appreciation of the low public debts of Estonia and the consistent reform course.¹¹⁵ The consistent and stable economic development of the Baltic states goes from Germany's point of view hand in hand with the positive development in bilateral and regional cooperation and supports

¹¹² Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EMFA), 6.11.2015, Germany:
<http://www.vm.ee/en/countries/germany?display=relations#economy>, [28.10.2016].

¹¹³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Donata Riedel, et. al., Handelsblatt 5.6. 2012 (ed.), Schäuble fordert „richtige Fiskalunion“:
<http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/handelsblatt-interview-schaeuble-fordert-richtige-fiskalunion/6710748.html>, [3.1.2017].

¹¹⁵ Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (BPA), Die Bundesregierung Homepage (BR) 17.4.2013, Deutschland/Estland, Lob für Estlands Reformkurs:
<https://archiv.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Artikel/2013/04/2013-04-17-bkin-estland.html>, [3.1.2017].

the idea of increasing economic cooperation. Further the positive development is for Germany also due to the importance of the dialog with Russia, especially in energy cooperation. Despite the importance of the Baltic states in the common EU decision-making process during the financial crisis Merkel put particular focus on the better integration of the Baltic states in the European Energy market and the increasing economic cooperation with Russia.¹¹⁶ The importance of the development of a common Energy market for Germany is seen in Merkel's previous visit in 2008 in Estonia and Lithuania. This visit was held under the circumstances of the Georgian crisis and despite her announced concerns of the Russian Parliaments behavior and claims to President Medvedev, she pointed out that the dialog with Russia remains important and for example the energy project of the North Stream pipeline will continue normally despite increasing Problems with Russia because it is an "important European strategic project."¹¹⁷ This underlines how Germany sees the development of German-Baltic economic relations not only within the whole BSR but also with the cooperation with Russia.

4.1.2 Diplomacy – a common European mission

Besides the economic cooperation, the bilateral relations between Germany and the three Baltic states have for both high symbolic meaning with references to a long shared history and cultural exchange which is also indicated by frequent visits. Since 2004 Germany and the Baltic states have strong and widespread cooperation within EU and regional cooperation policy frameworks like the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and especially on fields of technology, agriculture and environment protection just to mention few policy fields.¹¹⁸ Accordingly, not only Federal Government representatives were frequently visiting Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania but

¹¹⁶ BPA, (7.9.2010), Die Bundeskanzlerin (BK), Die europäische Energiezusammenarbeit intensivieren: <https://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Artikel/2010/09/2010-09-07-riga.html>, [2.1.2017].

¹¹⁷ "ein wichtiges europäisches strategisches Projekt", BPA, BK, (25.8.2008), Deutschland und Schweden fordern territoriale Integrität Georgiens: <https://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Reiseberichte/se-merkel-schweden.html>, [4.11.2016].

¹¹⁸ EMFA, (6.11.2015), agreements: <http://www.vm.ee/en/countries/germany?display=relations#agreements>, [4.11.2016].

also Ministers of Federal State Governments (Bundesländer) and representatives of the Bundestag such as the President of the Bundestag Norbert Lammert in 2011 and earlier in 2008.¹¹⁹ The strong connection and cooperation to the Federal states characterizes the bilateral cooperation in economy and other policy fields especially in regional cooperation of the Baltic Sea Region. For example, the Minister-Presidents of the state Schleswig-Holstein T. Albig and Saxony S. Tilich visited Estonia in 2013.¹²⁰ The numerous and different visits indicate that Germany perceived their relation to the Baltic states within European structures and multilateral formats. This was underlined also by Merkel when she visited Lithuania and Latvia in 2010. She emphasized the importance of the Baltic states in the EU policy and Eastern Neighborhood. Further, the Foreign Ministers of Germany and the Baltic states have since 1994 an annual B3+1 consultation where they discuss bilateral, European and international issues.¹²¹

The EU internal cooperation means, in particular, the increasing cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. The Council of the Baltic Sea States CBSS provides a strong and widespread network for transnational cooperation not only for politicians but especially for professional from the economy, energy, environment as well as education and culture. Germany took the chairmanship of the CBSS in July 2011.¹²² One main focus during the chairmanship was the modernization initiatives for the southeast part of the BSR. Here especially the partnerships with Russia played an important role and in particular within energy cooperation like the Nord Stream pipeline. For Merkel, the BSR would “exert its economic dynamism by placing ‘common ground in the spotlight’ and thus, freeing up ‘competitiveness and economic growth’.”¹²³ Germany sees therefore, the economic cooperation as an integral part of improving the regional development and common understandings and values. The Baltic states as a partner of

¹¹⁹ EMFA, (6.11.2015), visits of importance:

<http://www.vm.ee/en/countries/germany?display=relations#visits>, [4.11.2016].

¹²⁰ EMFA, (6.11.2015), agreements.

¹²¹ Auswärtiges Amt (AA), 13.9.2016, B3+1-Treffen: Außenminister Steinmeier in Riga:

http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid_E8B1C0CD37FE719555A27035237D3448/DE/AAmt/BM-Reisen/2016/160913_LTV/160912_Riga.html?nn=385818, [5.11.2016].

¹²² BPA, BR, 31.5.2012, Ostseerat, Zusammenarbeit der Ostsee-Anreiner verbessern:

<https://archiv.bundesregierung.de/ContentArchiv/DE/Archiv17/Artikel/2012/05/2012-05-30-ostseerat.html>, [3.1.2017].

¹²³ “strahle seine wirtschaftliche Dynamik dadurch aus, dass er "Gemeinsamkeiten in den Mittelpunkt" stelle und damit "Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und Wirtschaftswachstumskräfte" freisetze.“, *ibid.*

the BSR are seen in the broader context and the long historical connection between Germany and the Baltic states are today reflected in the effort to promote the good partnership within the whole BSR. The diplomatic dimension of German Baltic policy for the time period of 2010-2014 therefore, can be seen as the promotion of regional development and the economic and political interlocking on regional level.

4.1.3 *Security cooperation – In signs of restraint*

As mentioned the German security cooperation and use of military forces is highly restricted and is carried out only in multilateral formations. As shown the security cooperation with the Baltic states is here understood within NATO structures. Since Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined the NATO, the Alliance provides necessary aircraft and assets to support the air policing in the Baltic states. Even though the three Baltic states started already in 1994 to coordinate the surveillance activity of the radars on their territories with the established *Baltic Air Surveillance Network (BALTNET)*, the Baltic states Air Forces have no own armed aircraft to protect their own air space.¹²⁴ Therefore, the NATO launched the *Baltic Air Policing* which is designed as a peacetime mission and is implemented through a collective task sharing with the responsibility for the protection of the airspace in rotating periods of four months between the Alliance partner countries. The Mission was at the beginning mainly carried out from the Šiauliai Air Base in Lithuania and was extended in 2014 to the Ämari Air Base in Estonia which since then is also used for air policing assets.¹²⁵

Germany is involved in the Mission from the very beginning and since 2005 has taken rotating responsibility for the Mission several times until 2012. The first contingent was sent in July to September 2005.¹²⁶ Since then Germany was frequently involved and last time in January 2012.¹²⁷ Together with Poland and USA, Germany is seen as one of the

¹²⁴ Estonian Defence Forces (EDF), BALTNET: <http://www.mil.ee/en/defence-forces/international-co-operation/baltnet>, [3.11.2016].

¹²⁵ NATO Homepage 29.6.2016, Air policing: security NATO airspace: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132685.htm?selectedLocale=en, [12.10.2016].

¹²⁶ The Baltic Times (ed.), 29.6.2005, Germans takes over Baltic NATO mission: <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/12956/>, [12.10.2016].

¹²⁷ Luftwaffe.de, 27.12.2011, deutsche Luftwaffe sichert baltischen Luftraum: (link in bibliography).

most important providers of troops and material for the Baltic Air Policing mission.¹²⁸ The multilateral NATO operation of Air Policing is the only noticed security cooperation between Germany and Baltic states. As will be shown in the parliamentary debates the common European security cooperation is nevertheless an issue. In relation to the Baltic states however, Germany did not show clear activity outside the Air policing mission. Thus, the Federal Ministry of Defence for example gives in relation to the Baltic states only information about Germany's involvement in the Air policing mission. Also, the archives of the Bundestag do not reveal information about any other military cooperation or even actual operations in the period of 2010 to 20015 which would require a parliamentary approval. Accordingly, Air Policing Baltic was the only security cooperation since 2004 between Germany and the Baltic states that found attention and where Baltic states were mentioned in Germany's foreign and security policy.

4.1.4 Conclusion

To summarize the overall approach of Germany towards the Baltic states shows only partially a direct bilateral cooperation but more the consideration of multilateral cooperation like in the EU policy framework for the BSR. The increasing cooperation within the BSR and EU policy frameworks indicate the importance to include Russia in the process of economic and further political and social development. The visits of Merkel in 2010 and the annual B3+1 Consultations of the four Foreign Ministers indicate that the economic cooperation and stable finance policy are of main importance. The EU strategy for the BSR and the CBSS are important instruments for the cooperation with the Baltic states and the inclusion of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the European Energy market. Especially the Nord Stream pipeline show that Germany promoted strongly the development of shared markets to create a political stability and good relations to Russia. The minimized military cooperation to the peacetime mission of Air Policing without any other notable security cooperation indicate further how the priority setting in the German Baltic policy is more towards energy and economic security and the connection of the two features. The necessity of

¹²⁸ Luftwaffe.de, 21.7.2016: Die Luftwaffe übernimmt erneut Verantwortung in Estland: (link in bibliography).

the Air policing is for Germany out of question but it avoids referring to potential threats from Russia and sees it as an overall peacetime airspace securitization.

German Baltic policy before the annexation of Crimea

	Economic cooperation	Diplomacy	Security cooperation
German Baltic policy in Pre-Crimean time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing exports - Nord Stream pipeline - Focus on stable finance policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on regional cooperative formats with Russia - Focus on stable finance policy and the dialogue on BSR and EU level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular participation in rotation mission of Air Policing since 2005. - Reserved position in NATO and emphasis on the dialogue with Russia.

4.2 German Baltic policy since 2014

During the end of the year 2013 and the beginning of 2014 Germany realized that the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea will have an impact on its overall relations and approach towards the Baltic states and the circumstances the relations have to be considered in becoming more decisive in the understanding of German Baltic policy.

4.2.1 Economic cooperation –Declining trade in the crisis

After the EU imposed the first financial sanctions towards Russia in July 2014 and expanded them in September of the same year the German exports to Russia (graph 3) have declined rapidly from 71 Billion USD in 2013 to around 40 Billion USD (2015) and by that has reached the lowest export rate since 2004.¹²⁹ These imposed sanctions

¹²⁹ Europa.eu, Europäische Union Newsroom (ed.), EU sanctions against Russia over Ukraine crisis: https://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu_sanctions_de, [28.10.2016].

are insofar interesting as Germany willingly agreed on them and tolerate a decrease in economic relations with Russia which contradicts with the principles of *Ostpolitik*. Notable here is now that also German exports to the Baltic states decreased from 7,6 Billion USD (2014) to 6,5 Billion USD (2015). Also, the exports from the Baltic states to Germany decreased from around 4 Billion USD (2014) to 3,4 Billion USD. This indicates that the trade with Baltic states was connected to the, for Germany much more important Russian market. For example, the transport of EU goods between the Baltic ports and Russia was highly affected by the EU sanctions towards Russia. This, however, did not affect the overall economic growth in the Baltic states itself.¹³⁰

While the positive development of economic cooperation in the last 15 years was seen in increasing trades the consequences of the Ukraine crisis caused a significant decline in German-Baltic trade. Since this decreasing economic cooperation, partly self-inflicted by Germany when it agreed on economic sanctions towards Russia, indicates that Germany consciously distanced itself from the norm of change through rapprochement and economic interlocking which further would suggest that in the Baltic policy Germany should be in favour of showing solidarity with the Baltic states and adopt a more costly foreign policy to respond to the security concerns of the Baltic states and strengthen the bilateral relations. In the following sections, we see that the decreased trade volume did indeed not mean that the cooperation on other fields declined as well. Notable is that since 2014 the regional cooperation formats such as the CBSS are not in the focus of German Baltic policy on Federal Government level anymore. This suggests that economy is not a driving factor and the cooperation on other fields actually show an increase which cannot be tracked back on rational, or more precise on material considerations because it would suggest that with declining trade the cooperation overall should decline. The diplomatic and especially security cooperation between Germany and the Baltic states after since 2014 suggest, as will be shown a shift towards the norm of western solidarity.

¹³⁰ Rudolf Hermann, Neue Züricher Zeitung 26.8.2015 (ed.): Wachstum trotz schwächerem Russland-Handel: <http://www.nzz.ch/wirtschaft/wachstum-trotz-schwaecherem-russland-handel-1.18601831>, [28.10.2016].

4.2.2 *Diplomacy -Solidarity with the Baltic states*

Since the Annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014, the German Federal Government stresses the understanding for Baltic states security concerns and confirms its support and strong connection towards the Baltic states. With the concerning developments in Ukraine and the deterioration of EU-Russian relations, the security concerns of the Baltic states increased. The German Federal Government responded to this development and confirmed its support and solidarity as an EU and NATO partner with the Baltic states. Especially Merkel pointed out the partnership within the NATO during her visits on 18.8.2014 in Riga and 25.8.2016 in Tallinn and underlined the recognition of increasing security concerns in the region. Taking into account the timing of Merkel's previous visits in the Baltic states in 2008 in light of the Georgian crisis and 2010 after the financial crisis her visits in 2014 and 2016 show similar symbolic meaning. However, this time Merkel not only welcomed the EU partnership and Baltic states' successful and stable economic development which allowed at that time also Latvian membership in the Eurozone, she in particular confirmed Germany's support to guarantee that the infrastructure in the Baltic states shall provide a quick reaction towards threats.¹³¹ A high symbolic meaning had her visit in 2016 in Tallinn just at the time when the diplomatic relations between Germany and the Baltic states had their 25th anniversary day. For now 25 years, Merkel said "we belong already to the same European and trans-Atlantic family"¹³² In Tallinn Merkel further met with representatives of the digital economy and discussed also cyber security cooperation within the NATO. In reference to the NATO summit in Warsaw, she pointed out that Germany takes the threats for the IT-systems very seriously. That makes clear, so Merkel "that we stand together in any danger."¹³³ For Merkel this conclusion of the

¹³¹ BPA, BK, 18.8.2014, Solidarität mit dem baltischen Partner:

<https://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Reiseberichte/2014-08-18-merkel-in-lettland.html>, [3.11.2016].

¹³² "Nun gehören wir längst gemeinsam der europäischen und transatlantischen Familie an.", BPA, BK, 25.8.2016, Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel beim Treffen mit Vertretern der Digitalwirtschaft am 25. August 2016: <https://www.bundestkanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Rede/2016/08/2016-08-25-rede-merkel-tallinn.html>, [6.11.2016].

¹³³ "Das macht auch noch einmal deutlich, dass wir in jeder Gefahrenlage eng zusammenstehen.", *ibid.*

NATO summit underlines the confession to solidarity as anchored in Article 5 of the NATO agreement.¹³⁴

The German Foreign Minister Steinmeier became the most frequent visitor and within 2014-2016 traveled to the Baltic states six times. Besides the annual B3+1 Consultation Steinmeier made a strong commitment to respond to the security concerns of the Baltic states by making additional explicit visits. Already on 11.3.2014 few days before the Referendum in Crimea he traveled to all three Baltic State and stated that the Russian aggression in Crimea is “a mutual problem of the EU and NATO”.¹³⁵ This means that Germany clearly refer to the western solidarity and the partnership within a value community. In light of the critical developments he appealed, however, to wait for the result of the Referendum in Crimea but pointed out already that “the Russian activity in regard to the Ukraine crisis makes consideration about further sanctions ‘unfortunately necessary’.”¹³⁶ After the annexation of Crimea Steinmeier stated that it is very important to have a strong dialog and cooperation with the Eastern EU-partners.¹³⁷

In response to the present developments Steinmeier suggested a new action plan together with his Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Office colleagues in order to meets the central challenges in the Baltic states. In February 2015 Steinmeier explained that the action plan aims for “promoting a ‘self-confident European public society’ in the Baltic states”¹³⁸ and to strengthen the information policy with media offers for the Russian minorities in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.¹³⁹ In the following visits in 2015 and 2016 the implementation of the action plan was in particular focus and the four Foreign Ministers signed each individual joint statement where the strengthening of

¹³⁴ *ibid.*

¹³⁵ “Das ist ein gemeinsames Problem der EU und der Nato.“, Deutsche Welle (ed.), 11.3.2014, Steinmeier sagt baltischen Staaten Solidarität zu: <http://www.dw.com/de/steinmeier-sagt-baltischen-staaten-solidarit%C3%A4t-zu/a-17486866>, [6.11.2016].

¹³⁶ “das Vorgehen der russischen Seite in der Ukraine-Krise mache die Überlegung weiterer Sanktionen "leider notwendig", *ibid.*

¹³⁷ AA, 5.2.2015, Ukraine Krise: Außenminister Steinmeier besucht Riga und Warschau: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid_8F0C5901F7FA9C9A595FBA8808C672E1/DE/AAmt/BM-Reisen/2015/01-Lettland-Polen/20150205_Riga_Warschau.html?nn=385818, [7.11.2016].

¹³⁸ “eine ‚selbstbewusste europäische Öffentlichkeit‘ in den baltischen Staaten zu befördern.“, AA, 17.4.2015, Enge Kooperation und Solidarität mit baltischen Partnern: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid_8F0C5901F7FA9C9A595FBA8808C672E1/DE/AAmt/BM-Reisen/2015/04-Baltikum+Finnland/150417-BM-Baltikum-Finnland.html?nn=385818, [7.11.2016].*

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

bilateral relations and the cooperation in fields of media, culture, education, vocational education and personal connections was decided but also in security as will be shown below.¹⁴⁰ Notable at this point is that the joint declarations are very similar in content and even in the wordings. Therefore, Germany remains in its overall unified approach in its Baltic policy.

Besides the continuation of EU policy-oriented cooperation which also means the frequent meeting with other politicians and representatives from Federal states for example the second visit of Minister-President of Schleswig-Holstein Torsten Albig in Estonia in 2014 the notable increase of visits especially by Foreign Minister Steinmeier and the particular emphasis on the NATO and EU partnership shows that the German Federal Governments shared concerns for security issues. Even though the further dialog with Russia is still on agenda, the stronger emphasis on bilateral cooperation in education, culture, and cyber securities support the idea that Russia is not a decisive factor in German-Baltic relations and the individual character of the relations is put forward rather than seen in the Russian context. Further the focus on strengthening domestic media and communication and to reach the Russian minorities shows that the stability and positive development of the Baltic states are not primarily promoted by increasing economic cooperation but in institutional and structural stability. Especially the cooperation in security policies is noticeable as the military cooperation since 2014 indicate. Accordingly, the visit by German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen in all three Baltic states in April 2015 marks a new stage of military cooperation.

4.2.3 Security cooperation –In sign of a strong Alliance

In reaction to the increased tension in Eastern Europe followed by the Annexation of Crimea by Russia the NATO saw the necessity to increase its presence in the Baltic

¹⁴⁰ See joint declarations by Foreign Ministers: in AA, 17.4.2015, Gemeinsame Erklärung des lettischen und des deutschen Außenministers: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2015/150417-Gemeinsame_Erklaerung_Lettland.html?nn=385818; AA, 17.4.2015, Gemeinsame Erklärung der estnischen Außenministerin und des deutschen Außenministers: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2015/150417-Gemeinsame_Erklaerung_Estland.html?nn=385818; AA, 16.4.2015, Gemeinsame Erklärung des litauischen und des deutschen Außenministers Germany-Lithuania: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2015/150416_BM_Erklaerung_Litauen.html?nn=385818, [3.1.2017].

states and give a clear sign towards Russia. German confirmed in the first place its participation in the Baltic Air Policing in regular rotation and continues with the shared duty after the last one in January 2012 again in September 2014 (together with Portugal, Canada, and the Netherlands), in August 2015 and again in on September 2016 (together with France).

Further Germany agreed on the implementation of a new NATO *Readiness Action Plan* which marks a turning point in German participation in military and other security cooperation in the Baltic states. In the NATO Wales Summit declaration from the 5th of September 2014, the *NATO Readiness Action Plan* was agreed on and “includes immediate reinforcement of NATO’s presence (assurance measures) and longer-term changes to NATO’s force posture (adaptation measures).”¹⁴¹ Especially the adaption measures shall increase the “readiness and allow the Alliance to deal with any security challenges, including those from the east and the south.”¹⁴² The so-called assurance measures so the Summit “is a direct result of Russia’s aggressive actions in Ukraine.”¹⁴³ This means that Germany not only accepts increasing costs in security cooperation but is ready to take it active part to ensure Baltic states security. This is not only a turn a turn away from its previous approach in security cooperation but is a clear reference to the norm of western solidarity regardless of its material costs.

During the B3+1 Consultations in September 2016 just after the NATO Summit in Warsaw Steinmeier discussed with his Official colleagues of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania the further cooperation. In the mentioned joint statements they agreed on the “commitment to deepening cooperation in the field of security and defence through continued implementation of the decision taken at the recent NATO summit in Warsaw.”¹⁴⁴ Further, Steinmeier promoted his disarmament initiative which he sees as a consequent implementation of the NATO- strategy that since decades is based on two pillars: “One thing is the strengthening of our own defence efforts – the other is the

¹⁴¹NATO (ed.), Fact Sheet, 10/2015, NATO’s Readiness Action Plan: http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_12/20151130_1512-factsheet_rap_en.pdf, [4.11.2016].

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ AA, 13.9.2016, Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Germany: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2016/160913_GemErkl_Riga.html?nn=385818, [3.1.2017].

willingness to enter into dialogue. We have already made very concrete decisions on the side of deterrence. Now we have to make the side of dialogue concrete and to test what is possible.”¹⁴⁵ This means that Steinmeier sees the Baltic states in a special role here and the above-mentioned initiatives for promoting the relations with the Russian minorities is of a key importance to increase also the Baltic-Russian relations.¹⁴⁶

The concrete deterrence efforts Steinmeier mentioned meant from German perspective the increase in material and personnel support as well as the participation in joint NATO military exercises. Thus, in addition to the Air Policing Germany participates since 2015 in joint NATO exercises such as the so-called *Dragoon Ride* and *Saber Strike* and *Persistent Presence*. Since 2011 the U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) with NATO held the Saber Strike maneuver series in the Baltic states and Poland. This Maneuver is a “cooperative training exercise designed to improve joint interoperability through a range of missions that prepare the 13 participating nations to support multinational contingency operations.”¹⁴⁷ German Armed Forces participate for the first time in Saber Strike-Maneuver in 2015 with 600 Soldiers. In the context of *Persistent Presence* 200 German Soldiers from the Jägerbatallion 292 of the German-French Brigade exercises with Lithuanian Military.¹⁴⁸ During her visit in April 2015 in Vilnius German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen guaranteed Lithuania 12 Tanks as well as Fire Control systems and equipment for artillery observation.¹⁴⁹ Germany is also

¹⁴⁵ “Das eine ist die Verstärkung der eigenen Verteidigungsanstrengungen – die andere Säule ist die Dialogbereitschaft. Wir haben auf der Seite der Abschreckung schon sehr konkrete Entscheidungen getroffen. Worum es geht, ist, jetzt auch die Seite des Dialogs konkret zu machen und zu testen, was hier möglich ist“, AA, 13.9.2016, (see footnote 113).

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ U.S. Army Europe, Exercise Saber Strike: <http://www.eur.army.mil/SaberStrike/>, [5.11.2016].

¹⁴⁸ Bundesministerium für Verteidigung (BMVG), 30.11.2016: https://www.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/bwde/!ut/p/c4/NYvBDolwEET_qAsx0dQbhES9chG8kIVuSGNpm2UrFz_e9uBM8i5vBl6Q6_FjVxQbPDoYYFzsdT7UfBhS-JZEztGuMO2TIZ6EU4wEz3LMgyV4kklhLzZZZTAKgYVWV0xizkZZA2NVd219qf6pv3q4N7fzSevu0fYQt635AUrjRp0!, [30.11.2016].

¹⁴⁹ Jan Marberg 15.4.2015, BMVG (ed.), *Von der Leyen verspricht baltischen Staaten Unterstützung*, see: https://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/!ut/p/c4/NYtNC8IwEET_UTaBlujN0ouIFxG1vaVpSFfzxXZbL_54k4Mz8A7zGBigNOoNnWZMUXt4Qm_wMH7EGDYNxmmlsooFzWxptshLTh4Z3_Co18kKk6LISraRsdCR5kQij2fzUpUjMAJeqm6Vir5j_ru7-flcNs1TXdqr5BDOP4Ay2fSmw!!/, [4.11.2016].

planned to take the main responsibility for the deployment of additional battalions of NATO in Lithuania from 2017 onward.¹⁵⁰

To conclude we see a significant increase in German willingness to participate in joint military exercises and to increase the readiness of the Baltic states to respond to military threats. At her visit in Tallinn 2016 Merkel unambiguously stated in a joint Press conference with the Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas that Germany meets the Article 5 of the NATO Treaty with the continuation of the Air Policing mission and supports the joint decision made in the NATO-Warsaw Summit. Accordingly, so Merkel “Germany will be a framing nation in Lithuania. Other will do the same in Estonia.”¹⁵¹ With these measures, so Merkel further “we show that within the Alliance we stand for one another”¹⁵²

4.2.4 Conclusion

Overall the Baltic policy after the annexation of the Crimea indicates a significant emphasis on the diplomacy and security cooperation in a simultaneous lowering emphasis on economic relations and interlocking compared to previous years. While the trade between Germany and the Baltic states decreased, the intensive bilateral relations as such have not declined at all. Instead, many things were actually intensified even more such as a renewed precise definition of bilateral relation through joint statements of the Foreign Ministers for the cooperation to promote a confident EU public society and free press including independent media communication with the Russian minorities in the three states. This is an important symbolic point where the change in Germany’s approach due to the Ukraine crisis comes clear. Of high symbolic meaning was the emphasized of the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations as an important date to confirm the German-Baltic relations and partnership in EU and NATO. The most notable change is undoubtedly in the security cooperation. In addition to the

¹⁵⁰ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) (ed.), 29.9.2016, Bundeswehr soll sich für Stationierung in Litauen bereit halten: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/nato-plant-stationierung-der-bundeswehr-in-litauen-14458447.html>, [8.11.2016].

¹⁵¹ “Deutschland wird in Litauen Rahmennation sein. Andere werden dies in Estland tun.“, BPA, BK, 24.8.2016, Pressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel und dem Ministerpräsidenten der Republik estland Taavi Rõivas: <https://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2016/08/2016-08-25-merkel-roivas.html>, [8.11.2016].

¹⁵² “damit zeigen wir, dass wir im Verbund der Nato füreinander eintreten.“, *ibid.*

continuation of Air Policing Germany participates since 2015 in numerous NATO exercises like the Saber Strike operation. Germany also confirmed to take the main responsibility for the combat battalion in Lithuania starting from 2017 within the Persistent Presence and already has sent couple hundred soldiers to Lithuania to exercise together with the Baltic states armed forces. Further material support with tanks and other equipment is promised by the Minister of Defense Von der Leyen. Even though the economic cooperation within EU policies continued, the focus from overall cooperative structures with Russia shifted towards the domestic strengthening of public society and the institutional stability in the Baltic states as well as increasing cooperation in education and culture what indicate that the shared historical, cultural and value-based relation and exchange shall be extended.

German Baltic policy after the annexation of Crimea

	Economic cooperation	Diplomacy	Security cooperation
German Baltic policy in Post-Crimean time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decreasing exports - strong focus on domestic strengthening - Integration into EU internal energy markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint statements for intensified cooperation. - Symbolic emphasis on the 25th anniversary of bilateral relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In addition to Air Policing since 2015 active participation in NATO exercises: Saber Strike and Persistent Presence. - Responsibility for combat battalion in Lithuania. - Further military material support

4.3 Continuity and changes in German Baltic policy

In the cross-temporal comparison of the periods before and after the annexation of Crimea we see some continuity but also significant changes in German Baltic policy. In economic cooperation, we notice that although the export rates decreased since 2014 the

importance of economic cooperation and energy policy remains overall unchanged. Merkel and other German representatives continued emphasizing the importance of integrating the Baltic states into European markets and a stable finance policy. Also the energy security remains as well of high priority through all the time and is even more stressed after the Crimean Crisis. Russia as an important energy supplier is unquestioned even in light of the economic sanctions and deteriorated relations between EU and Russia. However, the importance of economic cooperation experienced a change in its role and influence on regional stability and bilateral relations.

Thus, in diplomacy we see a change in the language and symbolic messages of German Federal Government visits in the Baltic states. While Germany and the Baltic states always referred strongly to their shared history and culture, we see that before 2014 Germany particularly stresses the importance of economic cooperation also with Russia and promotes the Baltic states to be a link between East and West also in energy policies. After March 2014 the focus is more on the domestic development and stability of the Baltic states. This stronger bilateral or EU internal focus is seen in joint agreements signed by the Foreign Ministers with the aim to increase bilateral relations and focus especially on strengthening public society and the integration of the Russian minority in the Baltic states. The implementation of the resulting action plan promoted by Steinmeier and his frequent visits is characteristic for Germany's changed approach. The most significant change is in the security cooperation where Germany committed itself as an active and essential NATO partner after being more passive before 2014. Since the NATO membership of the Baltic states in 2004 Germany was from the very beginning involved in the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission and continues it up today. The last two rotating responsibilities since 2014 were together with other NATO partners also to emphasize the unrestricted solidarity by the whole Alliance. Until 2014 Germany, however, did not participate in other NATO combat exercises such as the annual Saber strike exercise By the US Military Forces which takes place in the Baltic states since 2011. After the annexation of Crimea the need for immediate security measures became evident and Germany gave no doubts of its solidarity. Accordingly, Germany's participation in addition to the ongoing Air policing was extended to the participation on Saber Strike in 2015 and 2016 (in addition to Dragoon Ride) as well as the deployment of Soldiers in Lithuania and the responsibility for additional NATO

Battalion in Lithuania starting from 2017. Germany also agreed on the new NATO Readiness Action Plan which not only included the short term *assurance measures* in immediate response to Russian aggressions in Ukraine but also the *adaptation measures* to ensure the quick response on any threats in the Baltic states. The following graph summarized in one view the German Baltic policy areas before and after the annexation of the Crimea by Russia:

Summary of German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea

	Economic cooperation	Diplomacy	Security cooperation
Before annexation of Crimean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing exports - Nord Stream pipeline - Focus on stable finance policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on cooperative formats with Russia - Focus on stable finance policy and the dialogue on BSR and EU level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular participation in rotation mission of Air Policing since 2005. - Reserved position in NATO and emphasis on the dialogue with Russia.
After annexation of Crimea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decreasing exports - strong focus on domestic strengthening - Integration into EU internal energy markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint statements for intensified cooperation. - Symbolic emphasis on 25th anniversary of bilateral relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In addition to Air Policing since 2015 active participation in NATO exercises: Saber Strike and Persistent Presence - Responsibility for combat battalion in Lithuania - Further military material support

In the following chapter, the changes in the German Baltic policy will be explained in the shift in prioritization of foreign policy norms, as visible in the the parliamentary debate of the Bundestag. As the constructivist approach suggests the analysis of parliamentary debates shows how the domestic way of thinking and language in issues related to the Baltic states and the references to foreign policy norms play a significant role to understand the developments shown above. Accordingly, the changes in diplomacy and security cooperation and the different perceived importance of economic cooperation and thus, material factors for the bilateral relations should be reflected in the normative argumentation in the Bundestag.

5. Parliamentary debates –norm prioritization in German Baltic policy

The cross-temporal case comparison of German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea reveals significant changes which in the following section will be explained by parliamentary debates and protocols of the German Bundestag. These protocols are searched from the online archive of the Bundestag by keywords that refer to the Baltic states. Firstly the search was done by the keywords of *Baltikum* and *Baltische staaten*. To provide a sufficient amount of sources the search was extended to keywords where Baltic states are expected to be explicitly or implicitly mentioned. Such keywords are *Ostpolitik*, *Westbindung* (to refer directly to the foreign policy norms), *Estland*, *Lettland*, *Litauen*, *Ostseeraum*, *Ostseerat* (to grasp the general way of thinking and language the three states and the BSR are considered).

Based on the constructivist assumption that norms are likely to determine foreign policy actions it is in following to explain if the changes in German Baltic policy before and since 2014 correlates with the shared value based expectations of appropriate behavior expressed in the German Bundestag. If, as assumed norms are likely to determine German Baltic policy the parliamentary debate will show that the Governments actions go back to the, from Boekle described (1) wide agreement within parliamentary fraction (intersubjectivity), (2) agreement on appropriate actions (preciseness) and (3) perception of which circumstances led to the changes (counterfactual validity). As will be shown the parliamentary debate indicate a shift in the normative expectations of Governments actions within German-Baltic relations and thus, show that the prioritization of norms explain the changes in German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea.

5.1 Norm of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* before 2014

For the period before 2014, the results for the keyword '*Baltikum*' and '*Baltische Staaten*' for protocols and parliamentary debates are very rare. Mostly the Bundestag records provided for this time period few written questions from parliamentary opposition towards the governmental coalition and their fraction which are related for example on the economic and ecological consequences of the Nord Stream pipeline

from Russia to Germany through the Baltic Sea and several trade routes for shipping. This initially indicates that the Baltic states indeed are considered in a broader context of regional and EU context.¹⁵³ This is insofar consistent with Germany's approach towards the Baltic states before the annexation of Crimea as the Baltic states were mostly considered within regional and EU context. For example, the parliamentary debates and protocols reveal that *Baltikum* and *Baltische staaten* were mentioned exclusively in the context of economic structures and development in the BSR. In the context of the Nord Stream pipeline, the Baltic states (or Baltikum) were exclusively mentioned in the context of participation in the decision making process, integration into pipeline route, other Baltic Sea Region states and consultations within BSR formats such as Helsinki Commission, Baltic Sea region Energy Cooperation (BASREC) and Baltic 21.¹⁵⁴ Especially the ecological consequences and the energy security concerns of the Baltic states and other Baltic Sea Region states were emphasized. In the parliamentary debate the Federal Government, however, represented more the high importance of the Nord Stream pipeline for the future energy security in Europe. Negative political consequences and any security concerns by the Baltic states were explained with insufficient information policy which according to the Government was not a matter of political representatives but of the private economy sector and companies involved in the pipeline project.¹⁵⁵ In other words the Federal Government actually noticed the energy security concerns of the Baltic states but aimed to solve these issues within multilateral meetings of the BSR countries and emphasized the economic benefits of the pipeline. That indicates that the Government saw the economic development and energy and other security issues connected and suggests a priority towards the norm of change through rapprochement and thus, refer to the logic of *Ostpolitik*.

The Baltic states were mentioned once in a document about *Ecological consequences of the planned Baltic Sea pipeline and the testing of alternative routes*.¹⁵⁶ were the parliamentary opposition mentioned a proposal made by Poland and the Baltic states to use a land route for the Nord Stream pipeline for example by creating additional

¹⁵³ Deutscher Bundestag (BT), 22.6.2006, Drucksache (Drs.) 16/1925: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/019/1601925.pdf>, [24.11.2016].

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.* p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ BT, Drs. 16/8627: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/086/1608627.pdf>, [24.11.2016].

capacity for the Yamal pipeline or the use of the existing Amber pipeline which, so the argument are in economical and ecological sense better than the irresponsible route through the already highly endangered Baltic Sea.¹⁵⁷

Beside the Nord Stream pipeline, also other economic projects in the Baltic Sea Region were discussed in the Bundestag. For example, another request by the Greens on the 18.4.2011 was about impacts of the planned fifth lock in the Kiel Canal on transshipping inter alia to the Baltic states.¹⁵⁸ There the Baltic states were explicitly mentioned in the fifth questions “how high is the transshipping traffic of the ports of Hamburg, Bremerhaven, and Rotterdam from and to the Baltic states via the Kiel Canal?”¹⁵⁹ and the sixth question “to what extend the construction of the Jade-Weser port as a transshipment hub from and to the Baltic states via the Kiel Canal was considered in the planning of the new lock?”¹⁶⁰ The Governments response to the first question was that there are no current data about the transshipping traffic but it would have been analyzed how the transshipping would develop.¹⁶¹ To the second question, the Government just said that such considerations were made.¹⁶² The partly quite general answers of the Federal Government in the parliamentary protocols underlines that the economic cooperation with the Baltic states is mostly considered in the broader context of the Baltic Sea Region. For example the three states were mentioned in the context of the freedom of movement of workers in the European Union that was implemented on 1.5.2011 for the Baltic states and other Eastern European countries and what consequences it might have for the labor market in Germany. Gitta Connemann (CDU/CSU criticized the opposition that “what kind of picture you are drawing for people from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (...) ? I find it scandalous”¹⁶³ a scenario where the freedom of labor movement would take away Germans workplaces and said “for our

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.* p. 3.

¹⁵⁸ BT, Drs. 17/5594: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/055/1705594.pdf>, [15.11.2016].

¹⁵⁹ “Wie hoch ist der Transshipmentverkehr der Häfen Hamburg, Bremerhaven und Rotterdam von und in das Baltikum via Nord-Ostsee-Kanal?”, BT, Drs. 17/5594, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ “Inwiefern wurde bei den Planungen für den Bau der Schleuse in Brunsbüttel bisher berücksichtigt, dass der Bau des Jade-Weser-Ports als Transshipment- Hub auf den Ladungsverkehr von und ins Baltikum via Nord-Ostsee-Kanal Auswirkungen haben wird?”, BT, Drs. 17/5594, p. 2.

¹⁶¹ BT, Drs. 17/5688, p. 3: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/056/1705688.pdf>, [15.11.2016].

¹⁶² *ibid.*

¹⁶³ “Welches Bild zeichnen Sie damit von Menschen aus Estland, Lettland, Litauen, Polen, der Slowakei, aus Slowenien, Tschechien und Ungarn? Ich finde das skandalös”, BT, 14.4.2011, Plenarprotokoll 17/105, p. 79: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/17/17105.pdf>, [3.1.2017].

neighbors it must raise the feeling of not being welcome.”¹⁶⁴ Also, we see the German approach towards the Baltic states integration into European energy market, as Merkel promoted in her visits in 2008 and 2010 and the importance of cooperative structures in the BSR and with Russia find intersubjectively shared expectation in the Bundestag.

The Integration of Baltic states into European energy market and the strong economic interlocking within the BSR was also substantial in the diplomatic relations. As above mentioned Merkel’s visit in Lithuania and Estonia in 2008 underline this German multilateral approach. Notable here is that during her visit in 2008 the Georgian crisis was at hand and even though Merkel criticized the Russian actions and with that shared the international critique, she saw no need to adjust the German policy towards the Baltic states but remained in the approach to emphasize the dialogue with Russia. The Georgian crisis has no impact on the ongoing, from Merkel’s view, important European strategic project of the North Stream pipeline which was underlined also by the President of the Bundestag Norbert Lammert in Lithuania and Estonia in Mai 2011 who promoted the development of sustainable energy policy in Europe.¹⁶⁵

This strong reference to the economic cooperation and importance of Russian inclusion in order to promote a common security in the BSR and entire Europe indicate that the norm of change through rapprochement was prioritized. Since the results for searching with the keyword ‘*Baltische staaten*’ and ‘*Baltikum*’ are rare and do not provide sufficient insight for the norm prioritization of German Baltic policy, the search was extended with keywords in which the Baltic states might be implicitly be mentioned. Accordingly, further keywords were ‘*Ostpolitik*’, ‘*Ostseeraum*’, ‘*Otseerat*’, ‘*Estland*’, ‘*Lettland*’ and ‘*Litauen*’. The aim was to grasp the general way of thinking in the Bundestag related to issues that directly or indirectly concern the Baltic states and could be attributed to the foreign policy norms of change through rapprochement and/or solidarity.

The extended search reveals that the overall emphasis on cooperative structures in the BSR is seen in the broader policy framework of *Ostpolitik*. By searching protocols with the keyword ‘*Ostpolitik*’ 14 protocols were found. Most of them dealt with the future of

¹⁶⁴ “bei unseren Nachbarn muss der Eindruck entstehen, dass sie hier nicht willkommen sind.”, *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ BT, 12.5.2011, Norbert Lammert zu Gast in Litauen und Estland:

http://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2011/34399970_kw20_baltikum/205344, [3.1.2017].

cooperative structures with Russia and its high importance for Germany in light of globalization. Accordingly, the prioritization of *Ostpolitik* in the BSR characterizes the overall way of thinking in the German Bundestag. In the parliamentary debate on 15.12.2011 about democratic movements in Russia Franz Thönnies (SPD) said that “in the core of this policy [*Ostpolitik*] change through rapprochement still applies and today especially in Russia.”¹⁶⁶ In the following years, Russia remains in main focus when it came to the cooperation in Eastern European region. A request by the Social Democrats about the ‘modernization partnership with Russia –common security in Europe through stronger cooperation and interlocking is a good example. It is not surprising that particularly the Social Democrats emphasize the importance of German-Russian relations. In 2010 the German Federal Government was still formed by the coalition of Christ Democratic Union CDU/CSU and the Liberal Party FDP. The Social Democrats demand in Thönnies words a “comprehensive modernization partnership with Russia as a touchstone for the Common Foreign- and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union.”¹⁶⁷ This explains the German restricted security cooperation before 2014 because according to *Ostpolitik* and change through rapprochement the economic and security issues are connected and Russia is of essential importance. It means that a unified EU-*Ostpolitik* is necessary for its initiative to coordinate the different regional policy frameworks such as the ‘Eastern Partnership’, ‘Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region’ and others.¹⁶⁸ Despite this claim came from the at that time opposition it refers also to what Merkel promoted in her visits in 2008 and 2010 in the Baltic states that the importance of cooperative structures in the Baltic Sea region and with Russia is of high importance. In April 2013 the Social Democrats referred once more to the *Ostpolitik* during a debate about no visa freedoms for holders of Russian Service passports but for people from the West Balkans and that it would not be helpful to put hurdles for cooperation and freedom of movements too high because “otherwise the strategy of

¹⁶⁶ “Der Kern dieser Politik, Wandel durch Annäherung, gilt nach wie vor und heute ganz besonders in Russland.“, BT, 15.12.2011, Plenarprotokoll 17/149, p. 73: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/17/17149.pdf>, [3.1.2017].

¹⁶⁷ “eine umfassende Modernisierungspartnerschaft mit Russland. Sie wird gleichzeitig ein Prüfstein für die Gemeinsame Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik, GASP, der Europäischen Union sein.“, BT, 25.3.2010, Plenarprotokoll 17/34, p. 216: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/17/17034.pdf>, [3.1.2017].

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 216.

Willy Brandts *Ostpolitik* with the strategy of change through rapprochement would not have been so successful as it turned out to be.”¹⁶⁹

An essential debate about Germany's foreign policy in the future was held on 10.2.2012 where the shaping of globalization was discussed in the Bundestag. Here the validity of both *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* was confirmed by the Foreign Minister Westerwelle (FDP): “like the new *Ostpolitik* did not question the Westintegration the today’s turning towards new partners is not a questioning of previous partnerships.”¹⁷⁰ In the case of the Baltic states, it would mean that while both norms are of equal validity the previous statements make clear that it is dependent on the context whether one norm is to be prioritized over the other. Westerwelle, as well as other representatives of the Federal Government, however, did not explicitly specify in case of the Baltic states or even on BSR level which norm is to be prioritized. The emphasis on the importance of partnership with Russia, in turn, indicates that Germany prioritized *Ostpolitik* with the norm of change through rapprochement when it came to the cooperation in the BSR and the relations to the Baltic states.

Further searches with the keywords *Estland*, *Lettland* and *Litauen* underline the broader approach and connection to the relations to Russia and the overall BSR. The already mentioned freedom of movement of workers was one of the most noticeable debates. Here we see as well the consideration of the Baltic states in broader developments within the EU. While Russia is not directly an issue, the economic factors and the impact on the internal market were decisive. Overall it is to notice that Germany’s approach towards the Baltic states before 2014 shows no explicit reference to a norm. Nevertheless, the relatively low attention towards these states and mention in the broader context of economic and regional cooperation suggests that the norm of *Ostpolitik* was more likely been prioritized. Or, the behavior that was to follow from the norm did not stand in contradiction to the behavioural expectations that stem from solidarity with the Baltic states. Even though the parliamentary debates do not reveal

¹⁶⁹ “Denn sonst wäre Willy Brandts Ostpolitik mit der Strategie vom Wandel durch Annäherung nie so erfolgreich gewesen, wie sie es denn am Ende war.“, BT, 19.4.2013, Plenarprotokoll 17/235, p. 89: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/17/17235.pdf>, [3.1.2017].

¹⁷⁰ “So wie die neue Ostpolitik die Westintegration nicht infrage gestellt hat, so stellt das Hinwenden zu neuen strategischen Partnern, zu neuen Gestaltungsmächten alte Partnerschaften nicht infrage.“, BT, 10.2.2012, Plenarprotokoll 17/159, p. 4: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/17/17159.pdf>, [3.1.2017].

explicit connection of the norm “change through rapprochement” and the Baltic states the results for the searches in this study allow the conclusion that the economic interlocking and development of regional cooperation to promote security in Europe refers to the norm of *Ostpolitik* as above defined.

This conclusion additionally supported by the fact that Germany’s participation in the joint NATO Baltic Air Policing mission since 2004 is not particularly debated in the Bundestag before 2014. The only mention of the Baltic states in context of NATO and Air Policing in the Bundestag was made by Merkel in Mai 2012 just before the NATO-Summit in Camp David on 20.-21.5.2012.¹⁷¹ There she pointed out the necessity for the Air policing insofar as the Baltic states can use their own resources on other skills instead of built up additionally the own Air Forces.¹⁷² Since the Air Policing is a joint NATO mission within the territory of the alliance, an approval of the Bundestag is not required. However, it is notable that also the not participation in other NATO exercises such as Saber Strike before 2014 was also not debated. Instead the strengthening of European security foreign and security policy was debated for example in the general debate on 29.3.2012.¹⁷³ There Hans-Peter Bartels (SPD) pointed out that with the increasing of European common security cooperation and with other NATO partners should be improved “because it do not make sense that states with a population of 1 million built up their own Air Force. This task can be done alternately.”¹⁷⁴ Further the joint training of military forces, so Roderich Kiesewetter (CDU/CSU) should be coordinated in order to make it more cost-efficient.¹⁷⁵ This supports the assumption that the German restrained an increasing activity in joint NATO exercises in the Baltic states was seen also in the Bundestag as not appropriate and necessary. The increasing coordination and improvement of European military forces instead should be developed in order to make it more cost-efficient. While the alliance solidarity as such was never questioned the actual activity show the validity of the solidarity norms, but do not require active participation under existing circumstances before 2014. The economic consideration and security need are here always mentioned together which therefore,

¹⁷¹ BT, 10.5.2012, Plenarprotokoll 17/178: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/17/17178.pdf>, [5.1.2017].

¹⁷² *ibid.* p. 18

¹⁷³ BT, 29.3.2012, Plenarprotokoll 17/172: <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/17/17172.pdf>, [5.1.2017].

¹⁷⁴ “weil es keinen Sinn macht, dass Staaten, die 1 Million Einwohner haben, sich eine eigene Luftwaffe anschaffen. Das kann man gemeinsam, abwechselnd erledigen.” *Ibid.* p. 145.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.* p. 147.

indicate the prioritization of the norm of change through rapprochement and thus, the principle of *Ostpolitik* in German Baltic policy.

Overall the picture we get from the German Baltic policy before 2014 is that the continuation of *Ostpolitik* with cooperative features is the prioritized norm. Based on these findings in the parliamentary debates we can say that the intersubjectively shared expectation of reasonable behavior was more towards multilateral connection with the Baltic states. The Federal Government acted according to this norm without completely denying the interests of the Baltic states but considered them mostly on the multilateral level. Insofar the German Government takes also into account the norm of solidarity but prioritizes the multilateral formats which are more likely towards the norm of 'change through rapprochement'. The diplomatic relations also underline the multilateral understanding of these relations and the focus on dialogue with Russia was always raised in visits and statements. Even without actually mentioning Russia the domestic intersubjective perception seems to be that Baltic states are dealt within BSR and thus, also in relation to Russia. At the same time, we can also infer that without explicit mentioning, the Baltic states fall under EU, many policies are therefore, covered at the EU level. The Baltic states are not considered individually, but are addressed through these multilateral formats. Also here we see that while the priority on interlocking and the multilateral level was prioritized the economic cooperation was promoted via the strengthening overall regional and EU structures.

When it comes to security issues and cooperation within the NATO or other formats, the records of the Bundestag show, that the Air Policing mission was the only security cooperation, that was mentioned more detailed. This, however, did not lead to actual debates within the Bundestag because despite the fraction DIE LINKE, which refuses the NATO overall and represents the view that Germany shall get out of NATO and even supports the complete dissolution of the Alliance, the Air Policing mission as a peacetime mission is officially not a response to a particular threat namely on the part of Russia but is a general securing of Baltic states airspace. The obvious passive and minimized participation and the missing parliamentary debate clearly indicate that the prioritization of *Ostpolitik* as driving norm in German Baltic policy was evident

5.2 Rebalancing of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* since 2014

While the parliamentary documents before March 2014 reveal a comparatively low frequency in relation to the Baltic states the debates after the Crimean crisis result in an increasing attention towards the changing circumstances. Most of the documents the Bundestag records reveal for the period 2014-2016 are exclusively connected to the Ukraine crisis, NATO, and changing security circumstances. Alone during the parliamentary debate on 13.3.2014,¹⁷⁶ 20.3.2014¹⁷⁷ and 3.4.2014¹⁷⁸ so just at the time of the annexation of Crimea by Russia the Baltic states were in total particularly mentioned around seven times. While parliamentary documents in 2015 emphasized more the NATO and Germany's role in it. The most frequent mentions of Baltic states was in 2016 when the implementation of a new NATO Action Plan was to be decided. Consequently, the Baltic states are mentioned in the parliamentary debate on 7.7.2016 more than 15 times. The Baltic states are mostly mentioned in the context of increasing security concerns, Germany's solidarity with its allies and common values and European and NATO partnership. The very first one to mention the Baltic states was Rolf Mützenich (SPD) on 13.3.2014 who said in the context of the previous meeting of EU leaders on 6.3.2014 about the situation in Ukraine that it would be appropriate to say it is foreseeable that the events in Ukraine and Crimea and the changing relations with Russia mean that "tensions in Europe will unfortunately grow again."¹⁷⁹ Especially from German view, Mützenich further "we have done a great deal to help the relaxation policy to be successful and finally reach a change in policy behaviour"¹⁸⁰ For him it is obvious that this crisis have different levels where not only the Ukraine is affected but also other states with Russian minorities such as Bulgaria and the Baltic states where concerns and insecurity might increase.¹⁸¹ These are countries who would feel their

¹⁷⁶ BT, 13.3.2014, Plenarprotokoll 18/20: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18020.pdf>, [3.1.2017].

¹⁷⁷ BT, 20.3.2014, Plenarprotokoll 18/23: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18023.pdf>, [3.1.2017].

¹⁷⁸ BT, 3.4.2014, Plenarprotokoll 18/26: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18026.pdf>, [3.1.2017].

¹⁷⁹ "Es ist absehbar, dass durch die Vorgänge, die wir auf der Krim und in der Ukraine sehen und in den Beziehungen zu Russland erleben, Unsicherheit und neue Spannungen in Europa leider wieder wachsen werden.", BT, 13.3.2014, Plenarprotokoll 18/20, p. 13.

¹⁸⁰ "haben wir viel dafür getan, um der Entspannungspolitik zum Durchbruch zu verhelfen und letztlich eine Verhaltensänderung in der Politik zu erreichen.", BT, 13.3.2014, Plenarprotokoll 18/20, p. 13.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

security challenged by the international situation and the visit of the Foreign Minister in the Baltic states underline this consciousness.¹⁸²

In the parliamentary debate on the 20.3.2014, the Baltic states were mentioned four times and always in the context of the increasing security concerns. The parliamentary director of the CDU/CSU Bundestag fraction Manfred Grund said that “we know about the fears in the Baltic states, Poland, Transnistria and the Republic of Moldova”¹⁸³ and the Baltic states, so his argument, would have joined the NATO especially because of the fear of a Russian aggression.¹⁸⁴ The concerns of the eastern partners should be taken serious, so Anita Schäfer (CDU/CSU): “The core idea of the NATO as a security alliance against threats in Europe is gaining increasing importance.”¹⁸⁵ This is a remarkable statement since for the first time in the case of Baltic policy the German Bundestag called the NATO publicly as the crucial security guarantee in Europe. In the parliamentary session on 3.4. 2014 this perception was confirmed once more inter alia by Hans-Peter Uhl (CSU) by saying that “the march of Russian forces on Russia’s western frontier in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in the Baltic states led to great and intelligible concerns. They are expected to be protected, protected from NATO and no one else.”¹⁸⁶ During the parliamentary debate on 7.7.2016 in light of the upcoming NATO-Warsaw Summit on 8.-9.7.2016 particular attention got the role of the Alliance in the Baltic states and the German perception of Russian intentions in that region. This parliamentary debate was the most important one in relation to German Baltic policy after 2014 and MPs, as said, mentioned the Baltic states 15 times and exclusively in context of increased security concerns and the intention of Germany to show solidarity with the Baltic states and support them and thus, refer to the norm of western solidarity. Merkel alone referred to the Baltic states three times by stating that

¹⁸² BT, 13.3.2014, Plenarprotokoll 18/20, p. 14.

¹⁸³ “Wir wissen um die Ängste im Baltikum, in Polen oder in Transnistrien, der Republik Moldau.“, BT, 20.3.2014, Plenarprotokoll 18/23, p. 32.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ “Der Kernzweck der NATO als Sicherheitsbündnis gegen Bedrohungen in Europa gewinnt damit erheblich an Bedeutung.“, *Ibid.* p. 45.

¹⁸⁶ “der Aufmarsch russischer Streitkräfte an Russlands Westgrenze, gerade in Mittel- und Osteuropa, gerade in den baltischen Staaten, zu großer und verständlicher Besorgnis geführt. Man erwartet sich in diesen Teilen Europas Schutz. Von wem? Schutz von der NATO und von niemand anderem.“, BT, 3.4.2014, Plenarprotokoll 18/26, p. 145.

all 28 member states of the NATO such as the Baltic states since 2004 can independently decide their membership within the NATO and share the same goals and values of our community.¹⁸⁷ The second mention was that “the core issue is to enable a stronger NATO presence in the Baltic states (...)”¹⁸⁸ and thirdly that the NATO plans “intend to have a multilaterally composed presence. Where in each of the three Baltic states and Poland one ally take the leading responsibility to ensure the NATO presence.”¹⁸⁹ Merkel’s and Christ Democrats coalition partner of the Social Democrats who are traditionally proponents of the *Ostpolitik* also shared this view as Thomas Oppermann (SPD) pointed out that Russian annexation of Crimea was against international law and military maneuvers by Russia with thousands of soldiers at border areas would increase the fear of Poland and the Baltic states.¹⁹⁰ Further he says that “the collective security alliance [NATO] is for us and particularly for the Baltic states (...) a guarantee for security.”¹⁹¹ His Party colleague Niels Annen notices that while Germany’s commitment to the NATO within different operations such as Air Policing, the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force and other measures would be a “clear commitment to the security of the Baltic states.”¹⁹² Nevertheless, also the dialogue with Russia must from Annen’s view serve the security within the alliance and he “would sometimes wish that the “colleagues in the Baltic states would once take note of it.”¹⁹³ Wolfgang Hellmich also from SPD rewarded Merkel’s statement for the efforts German soldiers make in the Baltic states and elsewhere within the NATO which is “on one hand a part of diplomatic dialogues and on the other hand the efforts to strengthen the alliance’s ability to defend.”¹⁹⁴ From the CDU/CSU fraction Henning Otte emphasized once more that “our partners in the Baltic states (...) are concerned about the integrity of

¹⁸⁷ BT, 7.7.2016, Plenarprotokoll 18/183, p. 15: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18183.pdf>, [5.12.2016].

¹⁸⁸ “Im Kern geht es darum, eine stärkere Präsenz der NATO in den baltischen Staaten (...) zu ermöglichen“, BT, Plenarprotokoll 18/183, p. 16.

¹⁸⁹ “sehen die Planungen eine multilateral zusammengesetzte Präsenz vor. Dabei wird für jedes der drei baltischen Länder und für Polen jeweils ein Alliiertes die Führung übernehmen, um die Präsenz der NATO dort sicherzustellen“, BT, Plenarprotokoll 18/183, p. 16.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.* p. 22.

¹⁹¹ “Die kollektive Verteidigung des Bündnisses ist für uns und besonders für die baltischen Länder und Polen ein Garant für Sicherheit.“, *ibid.* p. 23.

¹⁹² “klares Commitment zur Sicherheit der baltischen Staaten.“ *ibid.* p. 30.

¹⁹³ “Ich würde mir manchmal wünschen, das würde von den Kolleginnen und Kollegen in den baltischen Staaten einmal honoriert“, *ibid.* p. 30.

¹⁹⁴ “auf der einen Seite Bestandteil des diplomatischen Dialogs ist und auf der anderen Seite Bestandteil der Bemühungen, die Verteidigungsfähigkeit der Bündnispartner der NATO zu stärken“, *ibid.* p. 32.

their state territory. We in Germany can emphasize with that.”¹⁹⁵ For him it is obvious that it is necessary to support the Baltic states from the conviction for the alliance and a peaceful future.¹⁹⁶

It is notable that the Bundestag shares Merkel’s statement and the Governments position insofar as the promotion of cooperative structures and the norm of ‘change through rapprochement’ do not provide security guarantees as understood in the *Ostpolitik* but the western solidarity is the essential guarantee for security in Europe. This is totally in line with the above-mentioned assumption made by Peters that Germany emphasizing its traditional transatlantic security policy in the context of the NATO.¹⁹⁷ However, especially MPs from SPD pointed out not to totally abandon the cooperative structures towards Russia which in turn goes in line with Kleuters who sees the ‘change through rapprochement’ and the overall *Ostpolitik* as the right norm to protect the ‘continuity’ of the outcome process especially for peace and European unity. The SPD relativizes this view only insofar as it recognized the need to distinguish economic and security issues and sees them embedded in the corresponding structures which differs from the previous understanding of *Ostpolitik*. Fritz Felgentreu (SPD) who criticized the focus in the current debate as one of the first raised the need to reassess Germany foreign and security policy. In reference to the felt threat by Russian aggression, he pointed out that for a serious security policy in particular it is not the question if Russia wants to attack the NATO or not. This assumption is in his view based on a misunderstanding because serious security policy does not ask about intentions which might change anyway.¹⁹⁸ It would be more likely about the ability and therefore, the cognition should be: “do we have to take note of the fact that Russia is able to attack the Baltic states? We must give the answer: yes, this is the case.”¹⁹⁹ In his understanding, it is not only because of reasonable defence policy but also of historical responsibility that Germany participates on the measures by the NATO because “to the good tradition of German *Ostpolitik* includes beside dialogue and trust building always the irrefutable confession to the

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.* p. 33.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.* p.100.

¹⁹⁷ Peters, (1997), p. 18: See footnote 82.

¹⁹⁸ BT, 7.7.2016, Plenarprotokoll 18/183, p. 105.

¹⁹⁹ “Müssen wir zur Kenntnis nehmen, dass Russland das Baltikum angreifen kann?“, müssen wir die Antwort geben: Ja, so ist es.“, *ibid.*

western alliance.”²⁰⁰ This shows how the foundations of German foreign policy are, in Felgentreu's view to be discussed again and he as a Social Democrat actually question the continuity of *Ostpolitik* in its current form.

Despite the clear commitment and shared expectations within the Bundestag towards western solidarity the repeated emphasis not to neglect cooperative structures underline that the German Federal Government was in a convulsive attempt to reconcile the competing norms in Baltic policy. As shown, the Bundestag particularly debated about the appropriate response to the increasing security concerns in Eastern Europe, the deterioration of EU-Russian relations and the participation of the Bundestag in the decision making of German involvement in the NATO Very High Readiness Task Forces. The Bundestag raised issues of the concept and implementation of the NATO Very High Readiness Joint Task Forces and made detailed questions of what position the Federal Government will take in the following NATO meetings and to what extent and for what purpose the preparations for such Reaction forces are made.²⁰¹ The aim was therefore, to include the Bundestag in the decision making for the NATO Reaction Forces and demand that the Federal Government will not make any decisions in the NATO meeting of Secretary of Defense on 5.2.2015 in Brussels without consulting the Bundestag beforehand.²⁰² This underlines the Bundestag's focus on ensuring the efficiency and appropriateness of German foreign policy behavior.

The Government stated to aim to balance between the strengthening of the collective Defense strategy through the Readiness Action Plan which was agreed at the NATO-Summit in Wales in September 2014 and the confirmation of the rule based European Security architecture including the NATO-Russia Act. As above described the NATO Readiness Action Plan was the response to the annexation of Crimea and the increasing destabilization of Ukraine. The German Government underlined its commitment in advance to the NATO Wales Summit for a credible defense of its NATO partners and the persistent offer to maintain the dialogue with Russia which again shows us that the

²⁰⁰ “Zur guten Tradition deutscher Ostpolitik gehörte neben Dialog und Vertrauensbildung auch immer das unverrückbare Bekenntnis zum westlichen Bündnis.“, *ibid.* p. 106.

²⁰¹ BT, 4.2.2015, Drs. 18/3943: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/039/1803943.pdf>, [18.11.2016].

²⁰² BT, 4.2.2015, Drs 18/3922: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/039/1803922.pdf>, [18.11.2016].

validity of *Ostpolitik* remain despite the current strong emphasis on alliance solidarity.²⁰³ Besides the continuity for the previous reinsurance measures of the NATO like the Air Policing in which Germany as a reliable alliance partner was committed to from the very beginning German Federal Government has from their view made substantial contributions to the implementation of the ‘adaptation measures’.²⁰⁴ In the NATO meeting of Secretary of Defenses in Brussels in February 2015 Germany (together with UK, France, Italy, Poland and Spain) agreed to take a leading role for the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). The NATO, so the Government further “is claiming to provide a response to the violation of international norms such as the NATO-Russia Act by Russia, without questioning the Act itself.”²⁰⁵

The implementation of additional NATO Force units in the Baltic states and other CEE countries is according to the Federal Government not in contradiction to the NATO-Russian Act and therefore, do not show unreasonable aggression towards Russia. It means that the VJTF and the adaptations measures agreed on in the NATO Wales Summit are not a permanent deployment of additional NATO troops and totally in line with the NATO-Russia Act that agrees on a NATO presence in that region on a rotating basis.²⁰⁶ This underline Germany’s increased attention how to balance the competing norms of change through rapprochement and western solidarity in relation to the Baltic states. Beside the efforts in the security cooperation the Action Plan for the Baltic states which Steinmeier and his Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Office colleagues agreed on was from Germanys point of view a way to balance the need for immediate security guarantees by the NATO and the long term goal to seek for dialogue with the Russian minorities and by that the further stabilization of the Baltic states domestic development.

As we can see, it means the Federal Government balanced the competing norms of its Baltic policy in a time frame where the short time need for responding to the security concerns of the Baltic states is followed by the adaptation measures and confirm the

²⁰³ BT, 26.2.2015, Drs. 18/4128, p. 2. See: <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/041/1804128.pdf>, [18.11.2016].

²⁰⁴ BT, 26.2.2015, Drs. 18/4128, p. 2.

²⁰⁵ “Die NATO nimmt für sich selbst in Anspruch, auf die Verletzung völkerrechtlicher Normen wie der NATO-RusslandGrundakte durch Russland eine Antwort zu geben, ohne selber diese Grundakte infrage zu stellen.“, BT, 26.2.2015, Drs. 18/4128, p. 1.

²⁰⁶ *ibid.* p. 6.

norm of solidarity according to *Westbindung* but in the long term seeks to promote the dialogue with Russia and insisting that despite all necessary short term measures the contact to Moscow must be constantly searched for. This ensures that Germany would act according to its continuity of *Ostpolitik* without neglecting its *Westbindung* and unrestricted solidarity with its alliance partners.

All these parliamentary debates show that German Baltic policy was and still is indeed struggling with the balancing of the competing foreign policy norms. This confirms Hyde-Prices' claim that Germany, up today, has not found a strategy in its foreign and security policy and the public discourse about Germany's role in today's world politics is inadequately defined. This inevitably suggests also that the balancing of competing norms in Baltic policy is also an attempt to circumvent such a domestic discussion and Germany is reluctant to set its role in Europe and the world, or let it be set by others. Also in the understanding of the features of norms by Boekle, we see that while the intersubjectivity of both norms was given, the precise definition of appropriate behavior was unclear and which norm, in light of current circumstances, is to be prioritized. It means that despite the fact that the solidarity with the Baltic states was for the great majority of parliamentary fractions out of question it does not mean that the principles of *Ostpolitik* and the norm of 'change through rapprochement' has less validity. The debate is more likely about in what balance the solidarity and the search for dialogue shall be carried out.

The difficult situation in which German Baltic policy finds itself is temporally solved in 2016. As mentioned Merkel and several MPs acknowledged the core role of NATO for European security and in the plenary debate on 7.7.2016 Merkel underlined this by saying that "the alliance solidarity from the Article 5 of the NATO Treaty is a central pillar of the European security architecture."²⁰⁷ Merkel particularly recalled the historical background of the European security architecture after the 1990s and referred in particular to the Charta of Paris where all 35 signatory States (including the Soviet Union) committed on the CSCE Summit in November 1990 to the "right of States to freely arrange their security policies."²⁰⁸ This includes that each state has the

²⁰⁷ "Die Bündnissolidarität aus Artikel 5 des NATO-Vertrages ist zentraler Pfeiler dieser Architektur", BT, 7.7.2016, Plenarprotokoll 18/183, p. 15.

²⁰⁸ "Recht der Staaten, ihre sicherheitspolitischen Dispositionen frei zu treffen.", *ibid.*

sovereignty and the right of chose the alliance they prefer. The NATO-Russia Act was here mentioned only by the way at the end. With regard to the two norms it means that when it comes to security Merkel show that Germany is prioritizing the western solidarity. Nevertheless, Merkel came to the conclusion that Germanys engagement in security cooperation is determined by two central ideas: (1) the Article 5 of the NATO Treaty that states that “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all”²⁰⁹ and (2) the signed NATO-Russia Act from 1997 in which both parties committed “...on the basis of common interest, reciprocity and transparency, a strong, stable and lasting partnership.”²¹⁰ With that the validity of both foreign policy norms characterizing German Baltic policy remain but the weighting is clearly towards the solidarity after 2014 at least for the foreseeable future. In the long run the dialogue with Russia shall be the driving motivation.

²⁰⁹ The North Atlantic Treaty: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm, [20.11.2016].

²¹⁰ “... auf der Grundlage gemeinsamen Interesses, der Gegenseitigkeit und der Transparenz eine starke, stabile und dauerhafte Partnerschaft zu entwickeln.“, BT, 7.7.2016, Plenarprotokoll 18/183, p. 16.

Conclusion

Based on this study it can be confirmed that the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea caused a change in German Baltic policy which can be explained with the new prioritization within the competing foreign policy norms in German Baltic policy. Based on constructivist argumentation it was here suggested that norms are likely to influence German Baltic policy. In light of the developments of German-Baltic relations since 2004 it was argued that the German Baltic policy consists of two competing norms. In the understanding of Germany's continuation of foreign policy one norm is based on the *Ostpolitik* after reunification in 1990 as supported inter alia by Harnisch or Randall. Within the principles of *Ostpolitik*, the driving norm is seen in the *change through rapprochement* where changes are seen to be achieved through economic interlocking and cooperative formats. In the early 1990s and beginning of 2000s Germany's consciousness of the historical responsibility for the consequences the Baltic states faced after the WWII led to the support of the western integration of the Baltic states but still within *Ostpolitik*. The previous studies about German Baltic policy, foremost by Dauchert, outlined therefore, a 'dilemma' in the early German-Baltic relations. The other norm results from the German *Westbindung* where the unrestricted solidarity within EU and NATO is based on Germany's own western integration. While Germany considered the development of European security architecture with the inclusion of Russia and thus, was in the beginning skeptical and even refusing the NATO enlargement and membership of the Baltic states, it changed after 2004 when Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania joined the NATO. Germany in reference to its policy of *Westbindung* is a partner and ally of the Baltic states in the same value community and ensures its solidarity. Therefore, we recognize that the German Baltic policy since 2004 consisted besides the norm of 'change through rapprochement' according to *Ostpolitik* also of the western solidarity by *Westbindung* within the NATO and thus, is characterized by two competing norms.

Before going to the findings of this study, it is to be noticed that the defined two competing norms are here attributed mostly to historical reasons and emphasize the German foreign policy in light of the devastating experiences from the early 20th Century. Germany's *Westbindung* and *Ostpolitik* are here seen as a result of the negative

experiences of former German foreign policy but might also have rational reasons. Since the focus was on the influence of the domestic social shared foreign policy norms the reference to history and the resulting domestic norms and identity in accordance to constructivism seemed most suitable and adequate for this study. By focusing on the impact of the norms of change through rapprochement and western solidarity on few aspects of German Baltic policy, namely economic cooperation, diplomacy and security cooperation this can be considered as a limitation which is not able to grasp all aspects of German-Baltic relation. These aspects are here considered as the most decisive but can indeed be understood and defined in a wider range and include elements which are not considered here. For example, the very close and indeed frequent cooperation between Germany and Baltic states on Federal State level such as by Schleswig-Holstein or Mecklenburg-West Pomerania which both have a coastline to the Baltic Sea are not considered. This might insofar limit this study in a sense that the cooperation between these Federal States and the Baltic states can have elements which are not emphasized on Federal Government level. The decision here to focus on the Federal Government action results from the understanding that foreign policy is considered an exclusive matter of the Federal Government. Therefore, this study focuses more on the general German foreign policy approach rather than to provide a comprehensive presentation of German-Baltic relations. In consequence this exclusive focus on Federal Government and Bundestag level limits the sources where individual aspects of German-Baltic relations might have come too short. This also means that in the evaluation of sources about the general domestic way of thinking in German foreign policy the Baltic states are not always particularly mentioned but often considered inclusively within issues that directly or indirectly affect the German Baltic policy and thus, allow also different set of relevant sources.

For answering the research question ‘what changes we see in German Baltic policy after the annexation of Crimea in 2014?’ we see based on the cross-temporal case comparison that the German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014 indicate some significant changes in diplomacy and security cooperation and indicate that German approach toward the Baltic states experienced a change in German foreign policy approach. Before March 2014 the economic

cooperation, based on the export rates according to the UN Comtrade Database, show a constant increase that a correspondents also with increasing German-Russian economic cooperation. In diplomacy Germany's representatives emphasized the importance of Baltic states in EU structures and particularly in the Neighborhood policy and worked for the increased dialogue with Russia. In security matter Germany participates since 2005 in the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission but despite that did not show any active participation. After March 2014 the economic cooperation decreased in trade numbers and the simultaneous decrease in trade with Russia indicate that the economic sanctions towards Russia also influenced the German-Baltic trade. In diplomacy, however, we see an increased attention on bilateral relations and the reference to shared history and values. Most significant changes we see in security cooperation since 2014 where Germany continued in the Air Policing but show in addition very active participation in other NATO exercises such as Saber Strike and Persistent Presence.

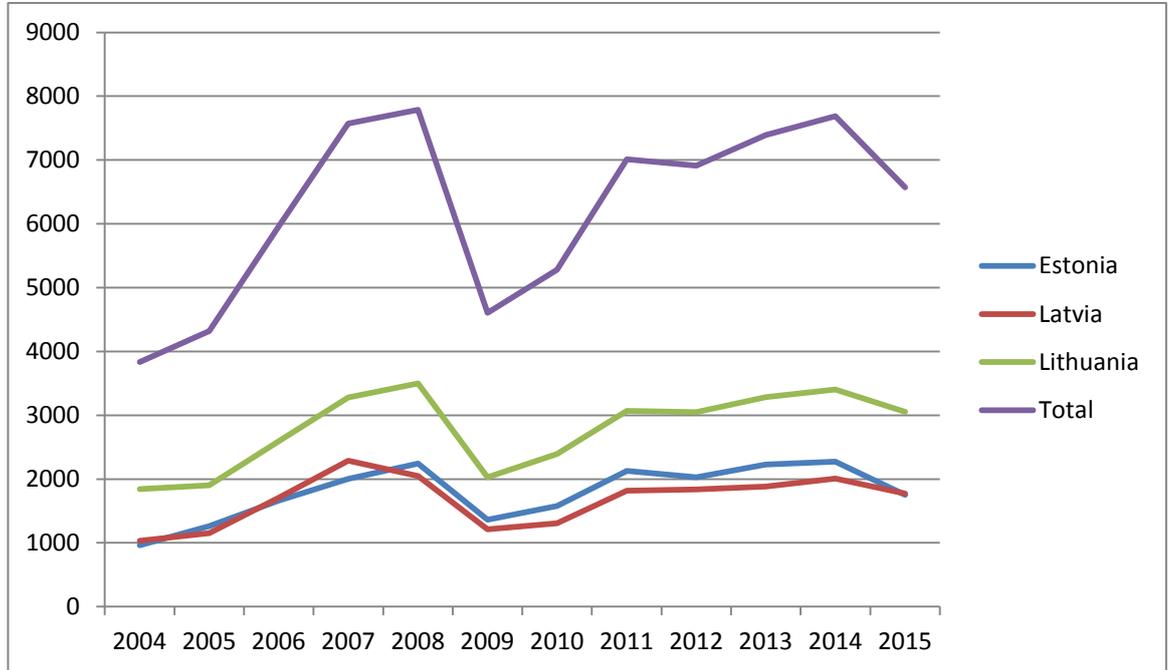
This study explains the changes in German Baltic policy since March 2014 by a change in the prioritization of German foreign policy norms. Based on the constructivist model of logic of appropriateness, where parliamentary debates can be understood as a reflection of domestic social opinion the parliamentary debates in the German *Bundestag* were analyzed within the features of norms by Boekle and indicate that the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of Crimea led indeed to a clearer distinction between the competing norms and clarified the appropriate behavior. Before March 2014 the parliamentary debates showed that the Baltic states are mentioned mostly in the context of energy cooperation foremost the Nord Stream pipeline and other economic projects such as the transshipping in the Baltic Sea Region. This indicates the prioritization of economic interlocking and thus, the norm of 'change through rapprochement' according to *Ostpolitik*. Since March 2014 the parliamentary debates indicated beside the significant quantitative increase in attention towards the Baltic states also the shift of the context where they are discussed. Thus, we see that security concerns and the unrestricted declaration of solidarity with the Baltic states and the emphasis on the value-based community of NATO in light of the Ukraine crisis dominate the debates. Based on these finding the research question 'what guiding foreign policy norm is prioritized for the German Baltic policy before and after the annexation of Crimea?' this

study only recognize a temporal change in the prioritization of norms. Whereas the German Baltic policy until 2014 is here seen clearly in the prioritization of *Ostpolitik* and the norms of change through rapprochement, the annexation of Crimea caused indeed an increasing attention toward the norm of western solidarity and the *Westbindung*. The validity of *Ostpolitik* was, however, not questioned. If this immediate need for solidarity actually also cause a general change in German Baltic policy is too early to say. It is nevertheless a clear finding of this study that German Baltic policy experienced a rebalancing of the competing norms in a time axis where the western solidarity is prioritized in the short term but the validity of the ‘change through rapprochement’ is kept in the long term. If this rebalances in light of the rapid changes caused by the Ukraine crisis require in future a sustainable change in the normative foundation of German foreign and Baltic policy and in particular in *Ostpolitik* remains to be seen.

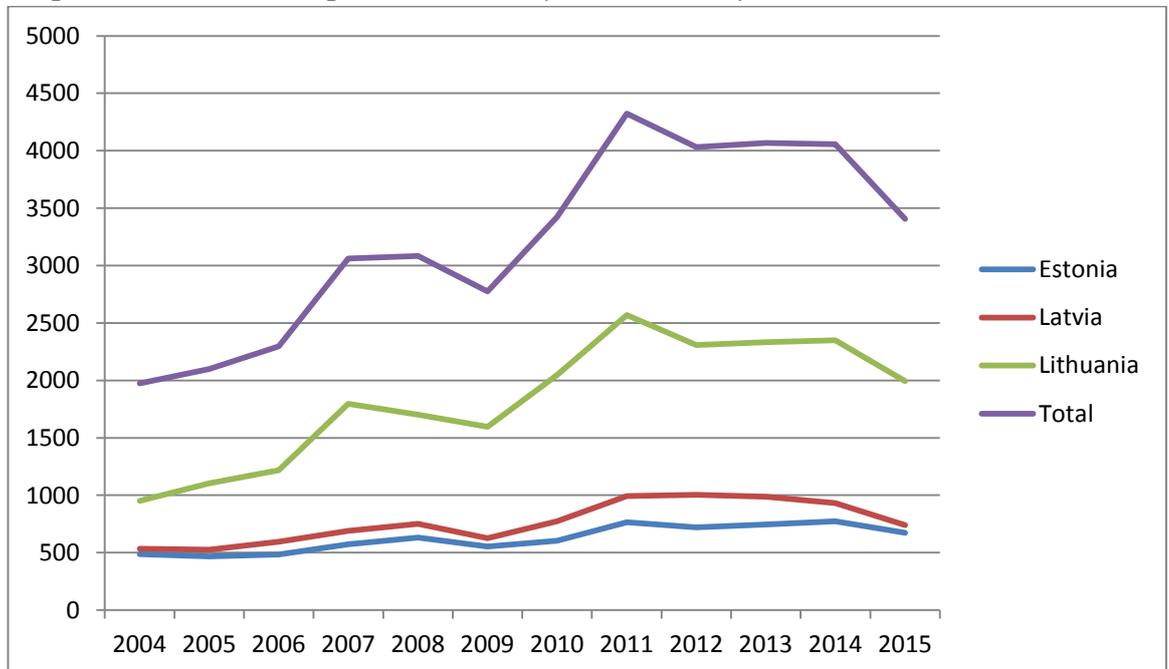
Hyde-Price is right when he say that the need for such debate about the future of German Baltic- and overall foreign and security policy therefore, remains. While the temporary balancing of the competing norms in Baltic policy is seen in the current situation appropriate, the need to discuss the future of the German foreign policy and how it is needed to be reassessed was raised by several MPs such as Felgentreu. In light of the previous researches about continuity and change in German foreign policy, we realize that a German foreign policy has elements of continuation as claimed by Harnisch, Peters or Randall but also changes as suggested by Davis and Dombrowski. The problem in the previous studies is here seen in the exclusive focus of either *Ostpolitik* or *Westbindung*. Insofar this study comes to the conclusion that Marshal is right when he argues that German foreign and security policy tend to defer key decisions about the future. At the same time the historical burden for reconciliation to East and West at the same time puts the German foreign policy in a constant balancing. This applies also to the German Baltic policy. Ultimately these recent plenary debates in the Bundestag indicate that not only the norm prioritization towards Baltic states is to be re-evaluated but also if the German foreign policy principles of *Ostpolitik* and *Westbindung* overall with its basic assumption is still appropriate in contemporary politics.

Appendices

Graph 1: German Exports to the Baltic states (billion US\$/year)²¹¹



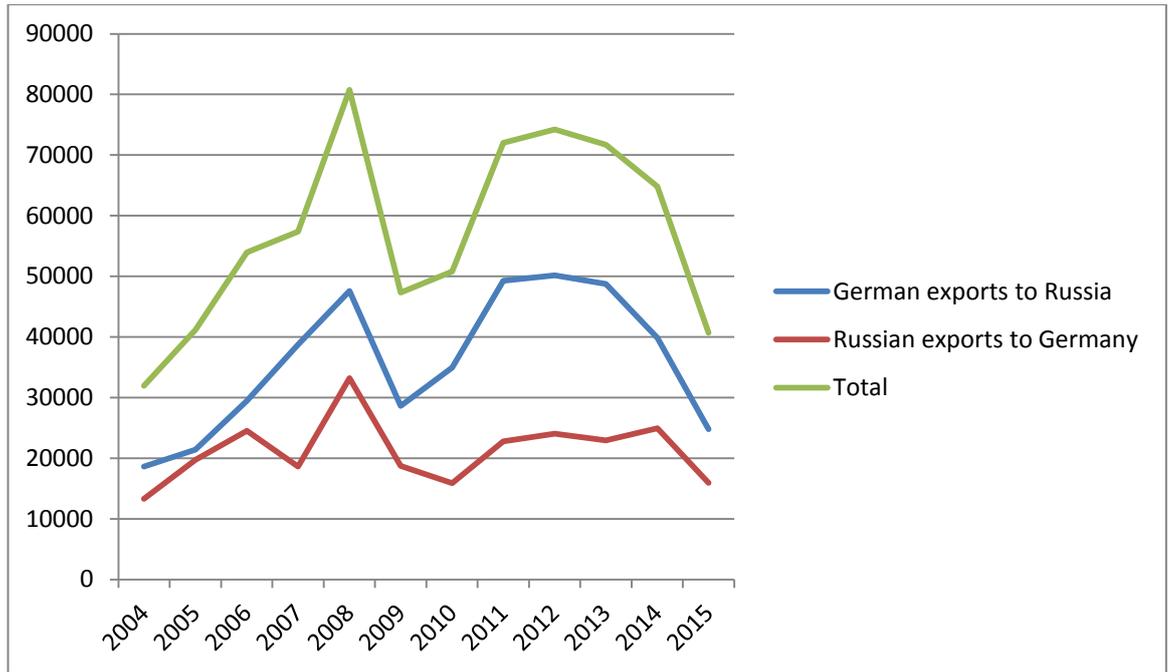
Graph 2: Baltic states exports to Germany (billion US\$/year)²¹²



²¹¹ United Nations statistics Division (2017), UN Comtrade Database: <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>, [5.1.2017].

²¹² Ibid.

Graph3: German exports to Russian (billion US\$/ year)²¹³



²¹³ United Nations statistics Division (2017), UN Comtrade Database: <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>, [5.1.2017].

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