The “Reluctant Hegemon”

Europeanisation/German Politics

Outline

- Intro
  - Recap
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- Germany’s role in Europe
  - 1950s to 1990
  - Post unification
  - Germany as a “Reluctant Hegemon” in the Euro Crisis
- Summary/Class question
  - Summary
  - Your turn
Last week

- Social policy: about welfare of citizens
- EU ostensibly about market efficiency
- Three inroads for Europeanisation
  1. European social policy (positive int.)
  2. Market de-regulation (negative int.)
  3. Spill-overs & side-effects of SEM/EMU
- Germany and other states trying to contain Europeanisation of social policy, but more change likely

Today: CFSP and Germany’s role

- So far, all about “low politics”
- Failed stabs at FP role for EC/EU during 1950s/1970s
- Maastricht
- Germany’s role after unification?
- More pressing thanks to Euro-Crisis
- We’re not exclusively talking Europeanisation today
  - “European” effects on Germany
  - German effects on Europe
How (West)Germany learned to love Europe

- Germany in the 1950s: destroyed, divided, loathed
- “Westbindung” controversial in 1950s
- Successive governments balanced US and France
- European integration made West-Germany “semi-sovereign”
- And provided new identity
- Elites and citizenry Europeanised (up to a point)

Source: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung Bundesrepublik Deutschland, um 1956, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, © Inv.-Nr.: 1990/276

Germany’s role in the integration process

- Close alliance w France within larger EU
- Germany extremely reluctant to lead, but often worked in tandem w France
  - 50s & early 60s
  - Mid/late 70s
  - 1980s
- Often provided side-payments
- (Together w Italy) promoter of EP, campaigned for democratic, quasi-federal EU
### Foreign policy

- Rediscovered Russia, CEE
- More assertive, more willing to (openly) pursue own economic interests
- Still committed to integration
- By and large, no major shifts
- But willing to use military force

### Security policy

- Slippery slope from AWACS crews to Afghanistan
- “Out of area” now considered normal
- Even ditched the draft
- But Germany still tied into NATO/EU structures
- Supported development of EU military capacities, so (still) fully europeanised
Germany’s Post-Unification European Vocation (-2005)

- Unified Germany under Kohl
  - Integration poster boy, yet uploading
  - “Reflexive multilateralism” (Bulmer)
- But . . .
  - Problems/changes created by Eastern enlargement
  - “Resource crunch”
  - Elites
    - Generational change within the elite (Kohl → Schröder)
    - Even Kohl/CDU lowered tone on integration
  - Public
    - Loss of Deutschmark
    - Unification, generational change
    - “Permissive consensus” undermined
- Germany more assertive under Schröder, but also pushed for constitutional treaty

Merkel and Lisbon

- Lucky start
  - Steinmeier busy
  - Staffing
  - Chirac and Blair lame ducks
- Good negotiating skills
- Merkel instrumental in “saving” constitutional treaty
- Acquired lots of political capital in Europe
Merkel and the Euro

- Merkel’s second term widely seen as a failure (outside Germany)
- “Missteps and over-cautious approach"
- Three explanations offered
  1. Merkel
  2. Domestic context
  3. Size and complexity of the problem

- (Success during first term)
- East-German socialisation & coalition politics
- No post-Lisbon strategy
- Focus on ECB job - failure
- Focus on protecting (initial) German concept of EMU
- Failure to garner support of German public for Euro
Domestic context

- Restrictive policy of FCC (Lisbon ruling); but later rulings more pro-integration
- Declining elite support (SPD – but later gave support even in election year)
- Public concerned about Euro, Turkey, Eastern enlargement, and Euro
- Media hostility and framing (Bild); emergence of AfD
- Government (like politicians elsewhere) did not comprehend scale and nature of problem

Nature of the problem

- Euro derailed after apparently working well for 10 years
- Cheap credit, low inflation, high prices
- High sovereign debt, banking crisis
- Eurozone not OCA
- Monetary Union w/o full Economic and Fiscal Union
Germany and Brexit

- Rhetoric notwithstanding, Germany and UK have common interests/preferences
  - (Relatively) liberal approach to economy
  - Limit benefits for EU citizens
  - Germany wants to balance France
- EU institutions take hard line, want to force a quick decision in UK
- Some governments seem keen to get rid of UK asap
- Merkel seems to take more lenient line (but SPD)
  - see the above
  - German exports (national interest)
- Once more, no obvious strong leadership

Summary

- Germany after unification remained firmly integrated into EU
- More assertive
- Yet less diplomatic, less willing to pay
- And still unwilling (and unable) to play the role of the hegemon
In groups of four to five students, discuss the following questions:

1. Do you agree that Germany has been a “reluctant hegemon” in the Euro crisis? How do you explain the government’s policy in this area?

2. Is there a solution to the Euro crisis? What could it look like?