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**The Europeanization of German Political Parties in the
21st Century**
Master's Thesis

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Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes

In Prague 30.04.2024

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the concept of Europeanization and its profound impact on both EU member states and candidate countries. Europeanization defined as the transformative influence of the EU on integration processes, is examined in its internal and external dimensions. The institutional strengthening of the European Parliament necessitates adjustments within national political parties, affecting organizational structures and decision-making processes. Challenges arise from the division of the European Parliament into political factions based on party affiliations rather than national delegations. The formal organizational structure of political parties undergoes evolution, influenced by the emergence of ideologically aligned international parties within the European Parliament. MEPs, party leaders with national parliamentary experience, and experts in European integration play pivotal roles. The study delves into the complex interplay of domestic and European policy issues, emphasizing voters' considerations of parties' competence in these realms. A significant aspect is the political trajectory under Angela Merkel's leadership, particularly the transformation of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) into a centrist party. Merkel's policies contribute to the CDU's dominance and the emergence of right-wing populism, notably the Alternative for Germany (AfD), responding to her open-door policy during the 2015 migration crisis. The research underscores the dual impact of Merkel's leadership, positioning the CDU as a centrist force while fostering right-wing sentiments in German society. The research analyzing German parties' stances on European integration, a pro-European inclination is prevalent, with the exception of the Left Party, which advocates for a radical reorientation. Contradictions exist within parties, with liberals and the majority of CDU/CSU members favoring pro-European rhetoric, while the SPD and Greens emphasize the social aspect of a "social Europe". The study concludes by underscoring Germany's historical backing for European integration, highlighting its distinctive approach that values both deepening and widening processes. Germany's leadership role in the EU is credited to its ability to balance integration dynamics, maintaining demographic and political influence. This research aims to determine whether or not the ongoing process of European integration has influenced the Europeanization of German political parties. In essence, the research provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving political landscape in Germany, examining Europeanization, party dynamics, electoral shifts, and foreign policy considerations. The legacy of Angela Merkel's leadership and the challenges and opportunities confronting German politics are pivotal themes in this insightful analysis.

Keywords

Europeanization, Political parties, Germany, Offensive Realism, Defensive realism, European Integration, Elections, FRG, Bundestag, Merkel.

Title

The Europeanization of German Political Parties in the 21st Century

Název práce

Evropizace německých politických stran v 21. století

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List of Abbreviations

FRG- Federal Republic of Germany

COREPER- Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member-States to the European Union

AfD-Alternative for Germany

FDP-Free Democratic Party

CDU-Christian Democratic Union

CSU-Christian Social Union

SPD-Social Democratic Party

MEPs-Members of the European Parliament

PDS-Party of Democratic Socialism

GDR-German Democratic Republic

SSW-South Schleswig Voters' Association

NPD-National Democratic Party

EEAS-European External Action Service

CRS-Comprehensive Ranking System

FCC-Federal Constitutional Court

ECSC: European Coal and Steel Community

ERP: European Recovery Program

OECD: Economic Collaboration and Development (OECD)

SPD: Social Democratic Party's

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

CFSP: Common Foreign and Security Policy

JHA: Justice and Home Affairs Council

FRG: Federal Republic of Germany

GDR: German Democratic Republic

Introduction

It is widely acknowledged by academics of contemporary German history that parties are crucial to Germany's political system, as it is defined in paragraph 21 of the Basic Law, as well as in a separate law on political parties established on July 24, 1967. As mandated by the 1967 Constitution, political parties, which are an integral part of the free democratic basic order, are free to take part in the process of forming the political will of the people. Political parties are free to engage in the formulation of the people's political will, as required under the 1967 Constitution.

The parties must put forth their goals in political programs that incorporate their stated goals into the national decision-making process. According to the basic law of the constitution, parties are authorized to nominate their candidates to perform their tasks in all fields of public life, particularly by exerting influence on public opinion shaping; improving political education; promoting active public participation in political life; participating in federal, state, and local government elections; and exerting influence on political developments in parliament and government. Thus, the study of party systems itself does not address the question of how parties and their roles are evolving in contemporary society. The distribution of political forces in parliament heavily influences how the state's internal and foreign policies develop.

At present, the importance of various processes defined by the category of globalization is increasing in the world political system. One of the important factors of the European integration process today is the increased coordination of supranational policies of the European union (EU) member states and the increasing influence of Germany on the formation of these policies, so the choice of this country as an example for a deeper study of the impact of Europeanization on national politics and institutions of political representation also determines the relevance of the study. The phenomenon of Europeanization has exerted a substantial influence not only on the diplomatic relations among member states of the European Union but also on the domestic political landscape of these countries.

The developing narrative relies heavily on the reality that Germany is one of the most powerful nations in the EU. The country has experienced a significant shift in its political climate due to its assimilation of the policies, standards, and institutions of the European Union (EU). Considering the shifting dynamics of the situation, the German political parties have implemented revised strategies.

German President R. Herzog emphasized Germany's growing moral, political, and economic importance in the world, particularly in Europe, in 1995 (Greiner et al. 2022). The subject of President Frank Walter Steinmeier and former Chancellor Angela Merkel frequently discussed Berlin's European policies. Germany's leader says Europe's unity, the transatlantic alliance, and its active engagement in the UN and other international bodies are its foundation. In 2009, German Foreign Minister F.W. Steinmeier said European policy was his main concern among six theoretically imaginative foreign policy sectors (Rosamond 2019, 31-44). Europeans want to feel safe and comfortable in the common European environment more than any market law. The former German prime minister wanted to help establish a Europe that could develop independently and respect human rights from July 1, 2020, when Berlin will be EU council president.

The professor and politician G. Erler, who worked hard to unite Europe, reconcile Germany, and end Germany's partition, defined the European idea's political value (Webber 2019, 1134–1152). Germany has gained most from European integration, so the FRG must preserve and advance the idea (Wonka et al. 2019). Progress is in European studies. Neo-institutionalists like C. Radaelli, K. Featherstone, T. Berzel, T. Risse, R. Ladrech, P. Graziano, and M. Vinck (Ladrech. R 2002, 389–403) have tried to define Europeanization as a process of internal modifications caused by the EU. F. Schimmelfennig, U. Zedelmeyer, S. Lavenex, and H. Grabbe study Europeanization's exterior in a broadening strategy (Herzog R, 1996).

This thesis posits that the German political party system was significantly impacted by Europeanization. The primary research objective of this thesis is to assess the degree of Europeanization that German political parties have experienced in the twenty-first century. Moreover, the thesis relies on this specific effect of European integration on the German party system, namely the emergence of new parties and the fall of the old ones, to support its theoretical claims. The second primary research focus of this thesis pertains to the German political parties' adjustment to the evolving opportunities and demands of European governance, including the functions of the European Parliament, Council, and Commission.

This study objective is the basis for the following research question:

If there is a new political divide in Germany over EU membership in the 21st century, if so, how does "Europeanization" affect party behavior?

To answer this question, the thesis is focused on determining whether participation in the European Union any impact on the political party systems has that are present in member states. This research will analyze the effects of Germany's deeper integration with the European Union on the country's political parties. Drawing on the research of previous researchers, this study

will analyze the German political parties from 2002 until 2023. This study, which builds on the work of previous researchers such as Bulmer, Niedermayer, Auel, and Poguntke—as well as the Europeanization framework established by Ladrech and Radaelli—evaluates the political parties in Germany from 2002 to 2023.

Using a top-down approach, this thesis examines the phenomena of Europeanization and how it has affected the institutions of political representation of the member states of the European Union. At issue here is the so-called "top-down approach" that the EU uses to influence domestic politics. Many view the states as reactions to federal policies and programs. Radaelli offers a further definition of Europeanization that must be considered. He states that it is "Processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things, shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies." A bottom-up perspective holds that "evolution of European institutions as a set of new norms, rules and practices" is the driving force behind Europeanization. The third step in understanding Germany's European policy is to determine the extent to which various processes contribute to Europeanization. We can see how the Bundestag has been more Europeanized in the past few years by analyzing the election campaigns of the major German political parties that were involved in the 2015 legislative elections.

Understanding the interconnected web of German political parties and Europeanization is the driving force behind this study. German political parties face challenges and opportunities because of European integration; how does this interplay impact their positions on policy problems, electoral tactics, and public relations efforts? This is the key question that this study seeks to answer. The study proposes the following hypothesis to investigate this broad question: We formulate the following hypotheses to link these ideas to the case and put them to use in the empirical part:

H1: In the 21st century, especially in relation to the Bundestag elections that took place between 2004 and 2022, there has been a significant uptick in the incorporation of European concerns and dynamics into the platforms and plans of German political parties. Applying relevant political theories helps explain and understand German political parties' Europeanization. This study seeks to illuminate the degree and type of Europeanization that has occurred inside the German party system over this time by analyzing the changes in party platforms, electoral tactics, and policy agendas.

H2: Due to new cleavages and challenges for major parties and the rise of minor parties like the Greens, Left, and AfD, European integration has fragmented and polarized German party systems.

Objectives of the study

1. The first objective of the study is the processes of Europeanization of German political parties in the 21st century.
2. The second aim of the study is to analyze the preconditions, processes, and trends of Europeanization of German political parties in the 21st century.

Research Objectives

1. Reveal the concept, essence, and dimensions of the phenomenon of Europeanization.
2. Consider the evolution of the German party system in the 21st century.
3. Explore the institutional changes associated with the Europeanization of the Bundestag.
4. Analyze the impact of European integration on Germany's political parties.
5. Characterize the German party system in the context of Europeanization.
6. Explore the application of the phenomenon of Europeanization to the 2009, 2013, 2017, 2019, 2021 elections.

Consider the activities of the parties Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Social Democratic Party of Germany, and the Free Democratic Party (FDP).

This thesis progressively elucidates the complex interplay between Europeanization and German political parties through a sequence of interconnected chapters. The thesis is divided into four distinct chapters. In addition to defining the political and party system in Germany, Chapter 1 goes into theoretical concerns and provides a framework for understanding political parties. In Chapter 2, we look at the problems with Europeanization and European integration, trying to explain the phenomenon and provide an outline of what membership in the European Union entails. The following section defines Europeanization, its importance to European integration, and its consequences on member state political and party systems. Furthermore, Chapter 3 delves into prior studies that examined the methodology of how political parties in Europe and Germany were influenced by European ideas from 2002 to 2023 whereas, in chapter 4, we analyzed the results of the study.

Review of the Literature

In addition to having a substantial impact on the internal politics of EU member states, the Europeanization process has also significantly impacted the international relations among them. The developing narrative relies heavily on the reality that Germany is one of the most powerful nations in the EU. Due to the country's assimilation of the policies, standards, and institutions of the European Union (EU), its political climate has experienced a significant and pervasive shift. In direct reaction to the evolving dynamics of the situation, German political parties have adjusted their approaches.

The concept of "Europeanization" encompasses a broad spectrum of activities that extend beyond the mere domestic implementation of EU laws and regulations. Although Europeanization can be perceived as both a top-down and bottom-up phenomenon, Ladrech (2002) emphasizes the intricate interplay between European and domestic levels. While European Union directives and rules play a pivotal role in promoting policy convergence, the influence of local actors is equally significant in propelling the processes of Europeanization.

The first basic definition of Europeanisation was provided by Robert Ladrech: Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies* 1/1994, pp. 69-89, here p. 69. He defined Europeanisation as being *“a process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making.”*

The debate between the interests of individual states and the common goals of the European Union is a recurring theme in the literature. Frequently, decision-making authority is delegated to supranational institutions as a result of Europeanization, which raises concerns regarding the degree to which specific governments retain their independence. National governments are compelled to strike a balance between safeguarding domestic interests and adhering to European standards due to the Europeanization process (The Europeanization of German Political Parties: Evidence from Three Parliament Elections, n.d.). The publication's subtitle is *"The Europeanization of German Political Parties: Evidence from Three Parliament Elections."*

Theoretical Framework

The discipline of politics is the primary focus of this research project. In this thesis, the degree to which German political parties have become Europeanized is examined via this perspective. It first aims to extensively explore the fundamental approaches and definitions of the idea of "Europeanization;" Before we can comprehend the consequences of Europeanization, we need

to define the terms used to describe it. Several methods have been used to ascertain the meaning of Europeanization. Ladrech provides one of the first definitions of Europeanization, which he describes as “*Europeanization is an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making*”. The term "Europeanization" is defined by T. Risse, M. Coles, and D. Caporaso as "*the emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal, and social institutions associated with political problem-solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules.*"

Approaches of Europeanization

The neo-institutionalist view of Europeanization is characterized by two approaches: rational choice and sociological (constructivist) institutionalism. The foundation of this method is the "logic of consequences" offered by J. March and the "logic of appropriateness" proposed by J. Olsen (Steinmeier 2009, 202-203). These two theories, respectively, state that actors act rationally and that they act normatively. Although historical institutionalism is not commonly used in Europeanization studies, it can be useful for understanding the changes in adaptation throughout time (Merkel A, 2020).

A nation's political institutions (polity), interest groups and parties (politics), and state (public) politics and administrative practices (policy) are the three main areas where integration-related changes occur. Public policy works typically predominate in empirical studies of Europeanization due to the high amount of formal regulation in this domain, making it easier to trace the extraterritorialities of norms. So, studies focusing on areas that may be more easily regulated at the EU level tend to appear more frequently. A long-standing and much-requested line of inquiry on how political parties and party systems have become more European has its roots in R. Ladrech's writings (Erler G,2020). Concerning changes within the realm of identity discourse, we are referring to issues with political institutions, such as standards, values, and game rules.

The term "*external governance*" can also be applied to the countries of the great eastern enlargement (2004) and to the participants in subsequent waves of European integration. In the context of Europeanization, the difference between internal and external governance is that the former describes the process of creating and implementing common rules, while the external dimension refers to the transfer of existing norms and their adoption by candidate countries. Thus, Europeanization is understood as the transformational influence of the European Union

on the countries involved in the integration process - both EU member states (internal Europeanization) and candidate countries (external Europeanization). The formation of the subject field of Europeanization is associated with the strengthening of the institutional structure of the EU, which led to a growing interest in the reverse effects of the integration process.

Europeanization and Political Parties

A key paradigm for understanding the dynamics of contemporary politics in Europe has rapidly evolved around the concept of "Europeanization" in recent times. The European Union (EU) has grown steadily in size and power over the years, and as a result, it now exerts more pressure on its member states to adopt EU-style political systems and policies. Both the administration and the political parties have seen significant staff turnovers as a direct consequence of this. The policy platforms, ideological orientations, and tactics employed by European political parties as they strive to establish themselves in the European political landscape and execute EU regulations are impacted by Europeanization.

A key theoretical tenet of this study is the intricate web of relationships between Europeanization and party conduct. This study aims to examine how Europeanization affects social behavior during parties. The term "Europeanization" describes how the internal politics and policymaking procedures of member states of the European Union (EU) are influenced by EU practices, policies, and institutions. The term used to describe this impact on American politics and policymaking is the "Europeanization" of these institutions.

The actions and reactions of political parties, on the other hand, are defined by the specific political system in which they are operating. We hope that by doing this research, we will better understand how European integration affects actions, choices, and interactions on a national level. To achieve this, we shall analyze the dynamic connection between Europeanization and party dynamics. Focusing on the effects of European integration, this study aims to shed insight. Various activities can be undertaken by parties as part of their actions, such as creating an agenda, policies, campaign techniques, and alliances. Several political parties have come up with unique and often contradictory stances on the topic of Europeanization.

Defensive Realism and Balancing Strategies in Party Politics

By applying these principles to the context of domestic party politics, the authors of "Defensive Realism and Balancing Strategies in Party Politics" provide a framework for appreciating international relations. An approach to comprehending international relations is referred to as defensive realism. As the international order is presently in disarray and strength and relative

capabilities are of the utmost importance, the defensive realist theory posits that a nation's foremost concerns should be survival and safety. To better understand how political parties build and sustain their influence inside the political system, it may be necessary to expand this paradigm. In a defensive realist analysis of party politics, the emphasis moves to the parties' negotiating strategies to protect and advance their interests. State governments strive to maintain stability in the international system, just as political parties in domestic affairs attempt to overcome challenges and fluctuations in the domestic political environment. Defensive realist behavior is thought to be an attempt by parties, and governments, in particular, to maintain the power balance and drive off potential competitors.

This, as it pertains to party politics, means making choices that will guarantee the party's long-term survival and appeal. JP Monroe explained the study of political parties as falling into two broad categories. The first, "*conceptualizes the party as an organized expression of citizens to alter the balance of power in the formal institutions of government*" while in the second approach, "*the party is an institution through which elites coordinate their activity as they attempt to satisfy the interests of their supporters*" (Monroe 2001, 16-17). Defensive strategies are a tool that political parties can use to keep key members on board, strengthen their standing inside institutions, and adjust to shifting political circumstances. As regulating mechanisms, political parties may employ strategies such as the formation of coalitions and alliances. Political parties can potentially appeal to individuals who harbor similar concerns and interests by adeptly aligning their stances on various issues. Political parties vie for voters' support to counteract the impact of other parties, much like governments seek friends to defend themselves from possible enemies.

Offensive Realism in Europeanization

The theoretical framework referred to as "Offensive Realism and Power Dynamics in Europeanization" investigates the dynamic nature of power and influence that transpired throughout the Europeanization process. Offensive realism is a theoretical framework prevalent in the study of international affairs. Offensive realism posits that states functioning within an anarchical international system are primarily driven by the ambition to augment their spheres of power and influence. Using this theory in the context of Europeanization allows us to assess the strategies employed by various actors to advance their own goals and consolidate power within the ever-changing framework of European integration. Because of this, we can comprehend the process of Europeanization more clearly. The number of nations and other

actors that seek to bolster their influence within the EU and throughout Europe becomes apparent when Europeanization is analyzed through the lens of aggressive realism.

In the same way that nations compete with one another to strengthen their position in the global system, those involved in Europeanization try to shape events so that they benefit themselves. The ideas of aggressive realism assert that characters should be driven by a desire for dominance and control, which is seen as the driving force behind their actions. Familiarity with the aggressive tactics used by various stakeholders—including member states of the European Union, political parties, interest groups, and supranational organizations—to further their agendas and increase their influence within the EU framework is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of Europeanization.

Concept of Power Balancing in the Context of Party Adaptation

This thesis objective "Power Balancing in the Context of Party Adaptation" aims to examine how the idea of power balancing, typically linked to international relations, might be leveraged in the realm of party politics and adaptation. Individuals' deliberate actions to counterbalance or align with the influence and power of other actors to defend their interests and objectives are termed "power balancing." The term "power balancing" is also applied to these actions. When applied to the domain of party adaptation, the concept investigates the strategic maneuvers undertaken by political parties to modify, realign, or oppose their stances, strategies, and coalitions as a reaction to their assessment of the prevailing power dynamics within the political sphere. The competing teams conception highlights the central feature of parties; *"they are the only groups that contest elections...whatever else parties do, they do as a consequence of the electoral requirement"* (Monroe 2001, 21). The importance of the organizational concept of political parties is that it gives a clearer meaning to what a political party actually is. *"Party organization is the institutional consequence of the deliberate coordination of activity to win public office in the party's name. Party organization is an institution organized to capture public office"* (Monroe 2001, 17).

"Party adaptation" refers to the propensity of political parties to adjust in response to changing circumstances, including fluctuating public opinion, emerging political actors, or shifting policy concerns. The propensity of political parties to respond to evolving circumstances is denoted by this term. When the concept of power balance is applied to the evolution of political parties, it becomes evident that these organizations frequently employ strategies designed to maintain their competitiveness and elevate their sway. In the context of party adaptation, power balancing encompasses several dimensions:

I. Alliance Building and Cooperation:

Parties may strategically form alliances and coalitions with other parties to bolster their collective power and influence. This could involve aligning with parties that share similar policy objectives or have complementary voter bases, to collectively increase their political weight and impact

II. Issue Prioritization:

Parties may adopt their policy positions and agendas to address the concerns and issues that resonate with the electorate or gain traction in the political discourse. By aligning their priorities with popular or pressing issues, parties can attract greater support and influence.

III. Electoral Strategies:

Parties may adjust their electoral strategies, campaign messages, and target demographics to capitalize on shifting voter sentiments. This can include strategies to attract swing voters, target specific geographic areas, or appeal to demographic groups that hold the potential for greater support.

IV. Policy Adaptation:

Parties may modify their policy stances to reflect changes in public opinion or to gain the support of key interest groups. This strategic adjustment can help parties maintain or expand their voter base by ensuring alignment with evolving policy preferences.

V. Internal Party Dynamics:

Power balancing also extends to the internal dynamics of political parties. Party leaders and factions may strategically balance power within the party by forming alliances, securing key positions, and managing internal dissent to ensure the party's coherence and effectiveness.

A new perspective on the complex connection between individual states and the European Union (EU) has emerged: the concept of Europeanization. In addition to influencing policy convergence, this complex phenomenon influences party dynamics, public discourse, and other facets of politics.

The Evolution of the German Party System in the 21st Century

The importance of parties in German politics is a point on which nearly all historians of contemporary Germany can agree. Paragraph 21 of the Basic Law and a separate Political Party Act (24 July 1967) both contain this provision. The term "party elites" was broadened by Eldersveld to encompass not just individuals running for office but also party employees. He

purposely broadened the definition of party elites to underscore the importance of these activists in the party. *“The party activist cadre keep the party an organizational reality and do thus contribute significantly both to party system survival and to party system adaptation to new social forces”* (Eldersveld 1989, 14).

The Bundestag is where the parties choose the president, elect the chancellor, and express their disapproval of the prime minister. Party representatives have crucial positions at the federal and state levels. Being a member of a political party is like having a social ladder; without it, climbing the political ladder is next to impossible.

German Foreign Policies Dimension Regarding EU

The primary goals of German foreign policy are based on the country's recognition of its complicity in starting two world wars and its acceptance of blame for the loss of life and property that resulted from those conflicts. Recognizing Germany as a peace-loving creative power (Gestaltungszivilmacht) and a country with a robust economy, European strategy is focused on reconciliation, as emphasized in several documents and investigations.

The economic dimension plays a major role in this, with the goal of further improving the well-being of Germans in the domestic market and a common trade policy, from which Germany stands to gain in comparison with other EU member states. It is within the framework of the European Union that Germany has more opportunities to influence European policy in the fields of the economy, energy, climate, environment, and education, through the EU. Berlin finds it easier to signal national preferences and to pursue its interests. Berlin's opportunities in NATO or the United Nations are limited - in the first association, it is the United States that plays the leading role, while in the second, Germany is not a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Development of the National Economy in Germany in a combination of the EU

The Germans are consistently pursuing a Europeanization of various policy areas - economy, energy, environment, climate, and defense, in the first half of 2020. - Health care. Berlin is credited, for example, with raising the status of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to that of Vice Presidency of the EU. Germany's active involvement in European integration processes is largely based on the values of all federal governments in the country, irrespective of the colors of the coalition ties.

The past years have revealed both the advantages of EU membership and the disadvantages of the Union, which could not but affect the situation in Europe and the socio-economic situation of citizens.

Research Strategies for Europeanization

There are two research strategies for studying Europeanization, but their understanding differs between the "top-down" and the "bottom-up" approaches. Initially, in the "top-down" approach, the dynamics and results of institution building at the EU level acted as a dependent variable and were opposed to the "bottom-up" approach, where, on the contrary, the EU factor played the role of an independent variable when studying internal dynamics, the former process was superimposed on the subject field of European integration and lost its specific perspective. Therefore, Europeanization was essentially studied only within the framework of the "top-down" approach, and the separation reflected, in our opinion, the conceptual confusion inherent in the early works. The complexity is overcome when the "bottom-up" approach excludes the EU level as a dependent variable altogether, and the question of influence is studied exclusively through an understanding of transformations at the national level. Only in the first case, for example, the active role of the EU in promoting norms is considered, while in the second, the starting point is internal transformations, in which the position of Brussels is somehow projected. A synthesis of both strategies seems more promising.

Chapter 1- German Political Parties

This study will be based on a definition of political parties, which will be sought in the following chapter, which will examine the theoretical foundations of the concept. The second half of the chapter delves into the evolution of Germany's political and party structure.

Defining Political Parties

Providing a single, comprehensive definition of a political party is a formidable challenge. Politicians and academics in the field have struggled to agree on a single definition of a political party. In his writings, Henry Steele Commager "*It is easier to say what a party is not than to say what it is*" (Commager 1950, 309). Many researchers have devoted time and energy to studying political parties. Over several decades of research, the field of political party studies has expanded greatly, transforming to more accurately portray the essence and role of political parties. Research in the field of political science revolves around the study of political parties. It was difficult for the first academics to agree on a definition and purpose for political parties. Famously, Robert Michels wrote, while describing his time in the German Social Democratic Party, "*Who says organization, says oligarchy*", finding an incompatibility of democracy with large-scale social organizations (Michels 1949, 32).

According to Michels, political parties are oligarchical associations, which means that they represent the power and wealth of the bureaucratic elites running the show rather than the will of the people. In a similar vein, Anthony Downs and Leon Epstein examined the four major political parties, with an emphasis on how these groups work together as teams to seize power. According to what Downs wrote, getting elected is the main goal of party members. Instead of forming policies to win elections, parties formulated policies to win elections, according to Downs's statements (Downs 1957, 25–28). *“The party which runs [the] government manipulates its policies and actions in whatever way it believes will gain it the most votes without violating constitutional rules”* (Downs 1957, 30-31).

Leon Epstein looked at parties from a functional perspective rather than a structural one. The primary basis for the development of parties, according to Epstein, was their electoral function. Epstein came to the same conclusion as Downs, that a political party's role is to select candidates for public office based on a predetermined ideology (Epstein 1967). When it comes to studying political parties, Downs and Epstein are both considered to be part of the competitive teams notion. To them, the most important thing about political parties is how they do in the polls. There are numerous ways of looking at political parties, and this is only one of them. There are two main schools of thought when it comes to studying political parties, according to JP Monroe.

Both theories view political parties, but one sees them as *“an organized expression of citizens to alter the balance of power in the formal institutions of government”* and the other as *“the party is an institution through which elites coordinate their activity as they attempt to satisfy the interests of their supporters”* (Monroe 2001, 16-17). Monroe distinguished between the two overarching theories about political parties that developed from these two schools of thought. According to Downs and Epstein's competitive teams' notion, the ability to compete and win elections is the defining characteristic of a political party. Political party research of Edward Sait, Austin Ranney, and E.E. Shattshneider is like that of Downs and Epstein. The primary role and motive of parties, according to these writers, is electoral conflict and party competition (Monroe 2001, 19-21).

The organizational idea tries to categorize parties according to their structure. Political parties were first defined in an organizational sense in Michels's work, which was already cited. Maurice Duverger had a significant impact on the field of party studies by proposing the theory that a political party *“is a community with a particular structure”* (1954, xv). Parties, according to this view, are nothing more than their organizational structures; without them, they would no longer be considered parties. Among the many possible ways to define parties, the

organizational conception offers the most flexibility and breadth. This method for examining political parties has been expanded by many scholars, including Duverger, Samuel Eldersveld, and Michels. Everything about the party's organizational structure—from the relationships between party elites, members, and voters to the party's leadership—presents the party as an institution with rules that govern its behavior and the behavior of its members (Monroe 2001, 21-29).

Some may argue against the two ways that Monroe characterized political parties. Nevertheless, major aspects of political parties are brought to light by them. The concept of the contesting teams emphasizes the key aspect of parties; *“they are the only groups that contest elections...whatever else parties do, they do as a consequence of the electoral requirement”* (Monroe 2001, 21). Giving a more precise definition of what a political party is, the organizational notion of political parties is crucial. *“Party organization is the institutional consequence of the deliberate coordination of 6 activities to win public office in the party’s name. Party organization is an institution organized to capture public office”* (Monroe 2001, 17). It is possible to define political parties with precision by using the two ideas of organization and competitiveness. The two concepts delineated by Monroe were integrated into the party politics and behavior research of Samuel J. Eldersveld. To provide a comprehensive description of political parties, Eldersveld expanded upon the work of previous researchers. The idea of political parties in Eldersveld was not based on winning elections. Not only that, he didn't think the party was just a means for powerful people to advance their careers. Rather, Eldersveld examined the architecture of parties from the top down. The term "party elites" was broadened by Eldersveld to encompass not just individuals running for office but also party employees. The significant party members he referred to as "party activists," are influential, hold key positions, and perform critical responsibilities inside the party. To highlight the significance of these activists within the party, he intentionally extended the concept of party elites *“The party activist cadre keep the party an organizational reality and do thus contribute significantly both to party system survival and to party system adaptation to new social forces”* (Eldersveld 1989, 14). Moving away from oversimplifying the function and portrayal of party elites, Eldersveld's expansion of the notion of party elites signifies the significance of party membership overall. Eldersveld better understood the structure and function of the party after they broadened the notion of party elites. Despite oligarchic tendencies among party elites and Michels' Iron Law, Eldersveld discovered three theoretical frameworks about parties. First, parties needed to be seen as flexible and open to new members, both active and passive, so that they could grow and change. This was true both at the grassroots level and with more seasoned activists.

Furthermore, the party is amenable to such an approach at the elite level if it serves the party's goals. The second reason parties always end up in a state of conflict is because they are a system that aims to transform social and economic interests into political power (Eldersveld 1968, 44-47). In conclusion, Eldersveld discovered that the structure and power of parties are not hierarchical. Instead, it is characterized by what he termed stratarchy. "Proliferation of the ruling group and diffusion of power prerogatives and exercise" is what stratarchy means. Instead of a single "command center" There are "strata commas" that function independently to differing degrees (Eldersveld 1968, 49).

To grasp Eldersveld's conception of political parties, one must be familiar with the concept of stratification. Unlike previous researchers, Eldersveld centered his attention on party activists, or members, and the roles they played inside the party. Political parties are often characterized as a "social" group in most definitions. A major social component to political parties is the reason they are characterized as more than just groups of people with shared interests, voting patterns, or factions. How party interests, stances, and conflict are shaped by tradition, history, and socio-economic issues can be better understood with this social component in mind. Eldersveld personified the social character of political parties through the base membership, which he called "the critical action locus of the party." This membership drives parties when they engage in electoral confrontation (Eldersveld 1964, 9). Using these theoretical frameworks, we may derive a simple explanation of political parties.

The political party is a social group, a system of meaningful and patterned activity within the larger society. It consists of a set of individuals populating specific roles and behaving as member-actors of a boundary and identifiable social unit. Goals are perceived by these actors, tasks are assigned for and by them, and communication channels are maintained (Eldersveld 1968, 42).

For a better grasp of German political parties, this definition is crucial. Using Eldersveld's concept of a political party—particularly his focus on expanding the understanding of party elites—helps to shed light on the organization, support, and survival of political parties in Germany throughout the election season. This research aims to determine whether party politics have become more polarized because of EU membership and integration. Presented by Arend Lijphart in *Patterns of Democracy*, seven topic categories of partisan conflict could be considered. According to Lijphart (1999, 79), there were seven main areas of concern: (1) socio-economic issues; (2) religious issues; (3) cultural-ethnic issues; (4) urban-rural issues; (5) regime support; (6) foreign policy; and (7) post-materialist issues. That would be the "foreign

policy" aspect, which includes discussions on European Union membership and Europeanization.

Examining the history and present situation of party politics in Germany is necessary for a complete comprehension of whether German political parties have been Europeanizing or if EU integration has been a prominent issue component for them. This section provides a concise overview of the present political party landscape in Germany, as well as a brief history of the establishment and development of German political parties since 1989. Among Europe's post-communist democracies, Germany's political and party structure stands apart. As opposed to many party systems in former communist regimes, Germany's party system is stable and continuous, having been shaped by decades of political battle and fine-tuning and born out of compromise.

The process of Europeanisation of German political institutions

The challenge of Europeanization for state and federal parliaments, the Bundesrat (Germany's upper house of parliament), and the Federal Constitutional Court is to adapt their organizational structures to the fact that there are now "co-rulers" at the European level whose decisions are valid in national politics and to define their new institutional role. As a result of its interactions with European institutions, the German federal government is facing challenges with both coordination and mismatch. During dealing with the sovereign debt and financial crisis in Europe, the mismatch problem was most apparent. For example, this is to be found in the fact that for reasons of domestic policy, as an instrument of crisis management, it was not conceivable for views on 'economic governance' (e.g. European Commission-formulated Eurobonds are to be implemented in Germany). As a result, an imbalance in power between the European Commission and the German federal government helped fortify the European Council's position on the Commission's side.

The German federal government has encouraged rivalry among EU institutions to stop Europeanization in its tracks. Merkel has favored the "Union method" of European decision-making, which involves coordination between governments, above the "Community method" that is used by EU institutions. Although the German Federal Government's mismatch has been rooted in policy, the coordination issues within the Federal Government have established a structural link to Europeanization. The capacity of the federal government to articulate a unified front within the framework of European institutions is crucial to the success of Europeanized decision-making at the governmental level. That this will happen in Germany is anything but guaranteed. According to "German Federal Constitutional Court, 2005; *The existing level of*

Europeanisation does not simply disappear when it is not possible to identify any legislation originating from the EU in a corresponding area in one particular year.”

There has been much griping about how the Federal Government's decision-making processes on Europeanization issues have been so disjointed and uncoordinated, all because of the predominance of the principle of departmental responsibility. German foreign policy was primarily coordinated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs, not the Federal Foreign Office, due to the departmental political fragmentation that existed until the 1980s. The fact that the Ministry of Economic Affairs had its directorate for Europe (division E) for a long period demonstrated its superiority in terms of organization.

Due to the increased scope of duties associated with the EU because of the Treaty of Maastricht, although the significance has grown over the years transferred to the Foreign Office, where an office for Europe was established in 1993 due to the trend towards Europeanization. Department E was moved from the Ministry of Economic Affairs to the Ministry of Finance after the 1998 formation of the German Federal Government. However, it was moved back to the Ministry of Economic Affairs with the formation of the grand coalition in 2005. There was zero correlation between the two actions and the effects of Europeanization; they were both driven by party politics. A directorate for European policy (division 5) in the Federal Chancellery has been an addition to the collection of European political actors since 2002. The most significant change has been this most recent structural adjustment to decision-making in Europe.

The existing literature suggests that the "department principle" (Ressortprinzip), as outlined in Art. 65, para. 2 GG has had a lasting impact on how the German Federal Government is perceived in Europe. This principle states that each minister in the Federal Government is responsible for carrying out their own personal remit independently. Federal Chancellors have been quite careful with their authority to establish policy guidelines, in part because they are worried about their coalition partners. For in-depth deliberation, the cabinet agenda always includes all major issues concerning European policy. Cabinet agenda topics are limited to those that have previously been coordinated among relevant ministries. A strict hierarchical structure governs the procedures for coordinating everything. The so-called working level is where they begin, between the individual division heads. Coordinating with the other relevant ministries and preparing for the Brussels meetings of the various ministerial councils is the responsibility of the relevant ministry. Thus, the initiative begins with the relevant department's key manager.

The sub-departmental and departmental managers only "flagged up" the issues that are still up for debate within their respective departments before sending them on to the secretary of state. If the secretaries of state can't agree, the minister will get personally engaged. Legislation preparation routinely includes these horizontal, multilateral procedures of collaboration. Their cooperation is especially crucial for European strategy. Nevertheless, due to the set decision-making timeframes in the Brussels Council of Ministers, the subject cannot be removed from the cabinet agenda if it continues to cause disagreement among the involved ministries. This explains why, in contrast to the routine operations of the German Federal Government, the European Union's policy coordinating processes seem particularly "sophisticated" and have achieved a level of formalization.

Both COREPER I and the Permanent Representatives Committee (the Comité des représentants permanents) are overseen by the Foreign Office, respectively. A seemingly brilliant method turns out to be far less effective when put into reality. Party politics inside departments and interference from the Länder (federal states) exacerbate the difficulties of interdepartmental collaboration. Overall, the system for making decisions can be a pain, making it impossible to constantly develop German instruction for the right COREPER representative. The different method: that of establishing a separate Ministry for Europe to facilitate more effective Europeanization, falls flat for two reasons: first, the difficulty of determining where in the federal government to place a steering ministry with expertise in so many different policy areas, and second, the concerns of coalition partners who would rather not have a minister from the opposing party encroaching on their department's sphere of influence. The German Federal Government's efforts to become more efficient in the face of the challenge that Europeanization poses have only yielded moderate results. It would seem, though, that the decision-making process is becoming less complicated due to the Federal Chancery's enhanced involvement in managing Europeanization. Section 503 of the German Federal Chancellery is responsible for coordinating the country's policies towards Europe. In addition to the EU coordinating group (EU-K) inside the Foreign Office, there is a dedicated section for European policy concerns within each federal ministry

Chapter 2: Europeanization and European Integration

In Chapter 2, we will mainly concentrate on conducting an in-depth examination of how the multi-phase Europeanization process impacts the strategies, policies, and overall adjustments made by German political parties. In this context, "Europeanization" refers to the process by which EU members—including Germany—progressively absorb EU norms, procedures, and

policies into their domestic political systems. (Kushnir, 2023). The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the complex link between Europeanization and German politics, specifically how the political parties of the country respond to the opportunities and problems brought about by European integration.

It is important to understand how Europeanization has affected German political parties for several reasons. In the first place, it provides crucial insights into the dynamics of Europeanization itself, since political parties' actions and reactions serve as indicators of broader sociological and political shifts taking place in a country. This is because political parties serve as a barometer for these changes. We can better understand the difficulties underlying the relationship between European integration and domestic politics by looking at the tactics used by German political parties in reaction to Europeanization.

Furthermore, understanding how political parties have evolved in response to Europeanization has important ramifications for both scholarly and practical endeavors. Using this approach, we may better understand Europeanization as a worldwide phenomenon when conducting academic research. We may be able to create more thorough theoretical frameworks and comprehend the subtleties of this process by looking at how German parties interact with Europeanization (Heinkelmann-Wild et al., 2020). Examining the methods in which German parties engage in Europeanization will help achieve this.

The conclusions of this chapter may provide political experts and policymakers with useful information regarding how German politics are changing within the EU. It is possible to retrieve this information practically. Since political parties play a crucial role in the formulation of public policy, their capacity to adapt to Europeanization may have a substantial impact on Germany's standing within the EU as well as its ability to influence EU decisions and policies. Thus, we will be able to provide insightful information that could influence future policy decisions, promote cooperation, and result in more successful Europeanization programs by putting light on the strategies and actions of these diverse players. In essence, Chapter 2 seeks to make sense of the intricate web that results from the interplay between Europeanization and German political parties. Not only do we aim to contribute to the scholarly discourse, but we also intend to furnish significant data that has the potential to alter the trajectory of German-European relations in the future. This chapter will serve as the foundation for our future study, which will examine the extent to which German political parties have transformed in the twenty-first century to become more Europeanized.

Europeanization: An In-Depth Analysis

We will take a close look at the concept of Europeanization in this section, covering its key concepts, mechanisms, and background. Comprehending the intricacies of the Europeanization process, which has undergone significant modifications over the years, is crucial in analyzing its impact on German political parties.

2.1. Historical Context and Evolution

The idea of "Europeanization" has grown significantly over time. When it first started to take shape within the framework of the European Communities—which acted as the model for the European Union—it was primarily concerned with economic integration. But as time has passed, more aspects of politics, society, and culture have been incorporated into the Europeanization process.

The 1992 signing of the Treaty of Maastricht marked a watershed in history since it created the foundation for the European Union and gave rise to the idea of European citizenship. The Europeanization process was further diversified by subsequent EU enlargements, which commenced in the early 2000s and continued thereafter. These expansions resulted in the admission of new members from Central and Eastern Europe. One of the numerous problems the European Union (EU) is currently dealing with is Brexit and differences on how European integration should develop going forward continue. In the next sections of this chapter, we'll examine in greater detail how Europeanization is a dynamic process that is always changing. This historical background highlights the dynamic and ever-changing nature of Europeanization.

2.1.1. Europeanization and German Political Parties

The impact of Europeanization on German political parties was a dynamic and intricate phenomenon that lasted from 2002 until 2022. The Free Democratic Party (FDP), Social Democratic Party (SPD), and Christian Democratic Union (CDU) are three German political parties that have responded to this revolutionary movement in different ways (Blaette et al., 2020).

2.1.2. Behavior and Strategies of German Political Parties:

Europeanization has influenced German political parties' behavior and strategies significantly between 2002 and 2022. These adaptations can be explained by several significant causes. Europeanization has influenced German political parties' behavior and strategies significantly between 2002 and 2022. These adaptations can be explained by several significant causes.

2.1.3. Policy Alignment:

The prominent characteristic of the influence of Europeanization on German political parties is their adherence to EU legislation and policies. The parties have had to modify their policy platforms to bring them into compliance with EU rules and regulations. Social assistance programs, economic laws, and environmental policies have all been altered to conform to EU norms.

2.1.4. Transnational Alliances:

German political parties have actively established transnational alliances within the European Parliament and other EU institutions. In Europe, they found or joined political organizations that have significant influence on EU policies. For example, the CDU's membership in the European People's Party, a center-right alliance in the EU Parliament, has shaped its attitude on several European issues.

2.2. Concept of Europeanization

The process has been influenced by the growing importance of EU politics at the national level and the increased involvement of citizens in the integration mechanism. The further integration of Europe poses the enormous problem of Europeanization. The European Union's political spectrum is extremely divided on this issue. To stabilize the EU and avoid centrifugal tendencies, Germany is working to settle present challenges in cooperation with France and other important EU partners by establishing a pan-European peace and security system to combat global warming, environmental crises, and economic inequalities. Factors surrounding the United States, the European Union, and Germany's basic ideals and economic and political goals influence the country's foreign policy.

Factors surrounding the United States and the European Union, as well as Germany's basic ideals and economic and political goals, influence the country's foreign policy. Some CEE nations would regularly request German aid, mostly to develop their economy, and leaders in Germany expected this to lead to threatening relations. In addition to the massive funds required to integrate the new federal states, Germany sent over 30 billion DM FRG (one percent of GDP) to countries in Central and Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1990. Despite the long-standing critique of Soviet financial aid as "money thrown into a bottomless barrel," the pragmatic Bavarian pointed out the potential benefits of giving financial aid to Eastern Europeans.

Important factors in the present European integration process include the FRG's increasing sway on national policymaking and the improvement of policy coordination among EU member states, therefore this is of extra importance. In general, it is difficult to formulate a German instruction for the designated COREPER representative due to the complexity of the decision-

making process. An alternative plan to strengthen Europeanization—the creation of a separate Ministry for Europe—fails because it would be housed in the Federal Government, and coalition members are wary of having a ministerial colleague from a different party impact the work of their departments. In political science, the process of becoming more European has been referred to as „Europeanization. “ More specifically, it has been determined in a variety of ways. One of the earliest concepts of Europeanization can be found in Ladrech who defines it as “*Europeanization is an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making.*”

Traditional analyses of European integration have focused on the process without considering the impact on the growth of national political systems, but the theory of Europeanization is a more recent development in this larger area. First, there was a long-standing schism between international relations and comparative politics, which tended to view the emerging European Community through the lens of conventional supranational organizations. Second, there was widespread skepticism of the European project, which was seen more as a normative than an empirical phenomenon. Third, the initial phase of integration had a minimal effect on the Member States’ political and institutional structures, making the evolution of national systems an irrelevant research variable (Tavits et al. 2013).

The field of Europeanization studies has experienced significant growth and achievement over the past two decades, transforming into a veritable "fashion" (Staab et al. 2011), despite its relatively rapid emergence. As we will see, the term has been overly expanded, at times pushed, to define a specific area of application at the junction of international relations, comparative politics, and European studies. This expansion has prevented a systematic definition. As a result, the Europeanization approach to studying European integration has been the subject of a protracted academic controversy that continues to this day. Some believe that the recent "empirical breakthrough" might break the deadlock and reign in a new era for this area of study since it supports the establishment of a precise methodological application to the theoretical speculation surrounding the idea (Finke et al. 2010).

The phrase "*two faces of Europeanization*" is attributed to Peter Mair (2003:340). By fusing the methods of studying international relations and comparative politics, we have arrived at an intrinsically bidirectional analysis. One approach, known as a "*domestic way to the study of European politics*," theorizes the creation of a distinct supranational governance by focusing on the methods of transposing European decisions at the national level. The other approach, known as a "*European way to the study of national politics*," investigates instead how domestic

structures change as a result of adapting to the political and institutional practices developed at the European level (Hobolt et al. 2009).

Keep in mind that the second interpretation does not limit itself to describing the "*penetration of a common and enlarging body of rules*" (be it codified in the so-called "growing body of rules"), "*standardization and convergence of cultural practices and lifestyle*" (T. Raunio et, 2009, 142–168), which has an impact on the cognitive and institutional levels, as well as acquis communautaire or agreements derived from within states. Many scholars, including Mair (2003), September (2007), and Ladrech (2010), have favoured a particular definition of Europeanization put forth by (Graziano P 2013, 38-39).

Many of the current conceptions and explanations of Europeanization fail to meet these standards of conceptual excellence. The term "Europeanization" has been defined in a variety of ways. Some see it as the growth of European-level institutions of governance (Mair P 2009, 154-166), while others see it as the export of specific forms of governance outside Europe's borders (Katz R 2003, 23-40). Still others claim that it describes a postmodern European concept of identity and values (Radaelli C. 2000, 4). The issue with these explanations, though, is that they fail to accurately characterise Europeanization. The first concept describes the process of European integration; the second describes the process of "policy transfer"; and the third describes a facet of postmodern values that may be readily applied beyond Europe. More than just a collection of ideals or the export of policies, Europeanization encompasses a wide range of activities beyond basic integration. The transformation of member states' domestic policy by EU governance and institutions during European integration necessitates viewing Europeanization as an independent process.

The definition of Europeanization offered by Claudio Radaelli is not only one of the most popular but also meets Gerring's standards for a good concept. According to Radaelli, *a process of (a) constructing, (b) disseminating, and (c) institutionalizing formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing", as well as shared beliefs and norms that are initially defined and consolidated in the formation of the policies and politics of the European Union, and subsequently incorporated at national level into the logic of discourse, in identities, political structures and public policies.*

Along with what Europeanization is, Radaelli elaborates on what it is not. The European Union and national governments do not converge on any set of policies—or lack thereof—during the process of Europeanization. The process of Europeanization can lead to divergence even though convergence is conceivable. Radaelli differentiates between European integration and Europeanization as well. Rather than being political integration in and of itself, Europeanization

is the end result of integration. For the sake of this research, this term is crucial because it centres on the ways in which member states' internal politics embrace the Europeanization process.

Once scholars have a functioning definition of Europeanization, how can they be certain that it does impact domestic or party politics? Numerous researchers have used Robert Ladrech's analytical framework to study the possibility of a Europeanization effect on the political parties of member states. According to Ladrech, the main thing for an analyst to do is to "*...trace changes back to an EU source, or else to recognise an intended use of the EU as a possible aid in the resolution of an issue, or to evaluate the problems that the presence of the EU issue presents for parties*" (Radaelli C, 4). Ladrech outlined five potential avenues for research on how Europeanization has impacted political parties.

The first one was "Programmatic change," which argued that changes to political party platforms would be the clearest sign of Europeanization. Quantitative indicators of this trend include the prominence of EU-related topics in election platforms and the inclusion of EU-related issues in discussions about domestic issues like unemployment. In terms of qualitative evidence of a Europeanization effect on parties, we can look for mentions of EU institutions, transnational organisations, and national policy pursuits that involve the EU (Ladrech 2002, 396-397). The second way political parties can become more Europeanized is through structural changes, such as when they form alliances with institutions at the European level or establish ties with actors outside of the domestic arena. Examples of this include domestic party leaders joining EU institutions or references to a party's transnational party federation (Radaelli C 2008, 42).

The third area that could be studied for potential Europeanization is patterns of party competitiveness. Here we're talking about how political parties try to win over new voters by taking a stand against or in favour of the European Union, as well as how much the EU becomes a political football in national elections and politics. The relationship between the government and political parties over issues pertaining to the European Union is discussed in the fourth section of the framework, which is called party-government relations. Conflicts with the European Union (EU) might drive or pull a party. Parties can exert pressure on governments to prioritise policies that align with their programme, or to avoid positions that could compromise national sovereignty, such as those involving institutional change. The fifth and final component of the framework addresses connections outside of formal political parties at the national level. With the potential for the promotion of new organisational and programmatic activities, Europeanization may influence the transnational cooperation of parties from different

EU member states. Regular meetings between two Christian Democratic parties to discuss EU policy are one example.

The Europeanization effect can be identified by analysing the party systems of EU member states using this five-point framework. Several researchers have used Ladrech's paradigm, and our study will follow in their footsteps. In the last sections of this chapter, we will look at evidence that political parties have become more Europeanized. We will also have a working definition of Europeanization and an analytical framework to investigate these parties. Subsequently, a review of the evidence of Europeanization of German political parties from 2002 to 2023 will be conducted, with a particular focus on prior scholarly research concerning the Europeanization of political parties in EU member states.

Why did Germany want to become an EU member state?

Germany has firmly established its position as the driving force behind European integration processes, having been the primary architect of the EU's eastern development. The primary motivating forces were the German aspirations for strengthening its regional position at the cost of the Eastern Bloc states. According to Giovanni Sartori, that the *party system is a web of interconnections that emerges from rivalries between different parties*. Germany was an important connection in these nations' economic and trade networks. From 1993 to 2000, Germany's exports to nations in Central and Eastern Europe climbed by an estimated 112.6 billion Deutsche Marks, while imports from these same countries increased by an additional 34 billion Marks, for a total of 102 billion Marks. Incorporating these nations into the integration alliance benefited Germany economically and promoted German objectives. In addition to resolving the long-standing issue of national reunification, the Federal Republic of Germany was able to solidify its position as Europe's leading power by actively participating in the EU integration framework. Integration can serve the interests of national nations; the merger of the GDR and the FRG in Germany is an outstanding example of this.

As a result, Germany has consistently backed efforts to deepen integration and any projects that fall under the umbrella of European integration. There is a "deepening" and a "broadening" of integration processes throughout Europe. It is sometimes believed that the French approach to integration places more emphasis on widening than deepening, while the British method does the opposite. There should be no hierarchy between the two stages of integration, according to the German view. In this view, expansion should keep the process of deepening integration going, while deepening should guarantee expansion. Germany was a strong advocate for enhancing the EU's political framework, while other member states were afraid of losing both

economic and political influence to Germany. Demographic reasons explain the FRG's success in obtaining a majority of votes in the EU Parliament. It may have been at this point that Germany's position as the leading member of the European integration grouping was firmly established.

2.2.1. Germany's role in the political stability and economic prosperity of the EU

The German federal government's efforts to tackle the problems caused by Europeanization have had contradictory results. It seems that decision-making has been simplified because of the Federal Chancellery's increased commitment to Europeanization. The responsibility of overseeing and directing the German Federal Government's strategy in Europe lies with Division 503 of the Federal Chancellery. The German Bundestag's competence structure, internal procedures, and capacity to defend itself from charges of subsidiarity violations must be reevaluated because of Europeanization. With the transfer of power to European institutions, the Bundestag's say in major policy decisions has gradually faded. It helps bring Europeanization back to places where it had fallen by making directives and regulations part of national legislation. People don't always use their confidence and creativity when following directions, even though they give a framework.

Over the years, the EU has seen the expansion process as a once-in-a-generation chance to help bring about greater economic and political stability across Europe. Since 2004, with the expansion of the European Union from fifteen to twenty-eight member states since 2004, most states in Central and Eastern Europe have been able to fulfil a long-standing promise to integrate the continent peacefully further. According to analysts, the expansion process is a potent policy weapon of the European Union (EU), as it is aided in the economic and political transformation of numerous European governments into democracies. The European Union insists that any European nation that satisfies the economic and political requirements to join the union can do so. Still, the political nature of EU enlargement is undeniable; the current 28 member states must agree on most major milestones along the lengthy path to accession to go forward. Therefore, the chances and timeliness of a country's accession to the EU might be impacted by its ties or conflicts with specific member states (Cowles et al 2002).

Also, a lot of people think that the public's interest in future EU expansion has peaked, and that the expansion itself may soon meet its geographical and internal limits. It has been suggested that if EU leaders continue to focus on their own issues, the financial troubles of the EU could impede the implementation of the remaining enlargement programmed. Some argue that present and future EU candidates may be less interested in joining due to the EU's economic

woes and the growing amount of uncertainty surrounding the EU's future (Cole et al. 2000, 26-43).

2.2.2. *Europeanization of Political Parties in Germany*

The study of political parties in Europeanization as a distinct field of study has only lately started to attract academic attention. Scholars didn't start paying attention to the idea of political parties becoming more European until the 1990s, even though their actions regarding direct elections to the European Parliament were a big deal in the late 1970s. This occurred because previous research on political parties couldn't go beyond examining the inner workings of each party's political system and how it developed in reaction to national-specific institutional, social, economic, and cultural influences.

After World War II, the West German government, with American support, planned Germany's eventual integration into global political and economic systems. Influential German political parties and scientific-expert centers have played significant roles in these debates and discussions, along with prominent German politicians like Karl Adenauer (CDU), W. Brandt, G. Schmidt (both SPD and CDU), H. Kohl (CDU), and W. Scheel and H.-D. Genscher (both FDP and CDU). Another factor is the formation of a new Europe with the former Warsaw Pact countries and Soviet republics.

It is believed that this will be made clear by the Sartori dissolution of the multi-party system: Sartori claims *that the number of parties represented in parliament determines the type of pluralist system: Three to five parties; highly pluralistic; five or more parties.*

2.2.3. *The Europeanisation of associations and parties*

Associations in Germany are structured, prioritised, and represented in Brussels with an eye on the political decision-making outcomes that will result from Europeanization. Efforts to efficiently realise their interests have led to the Europeanization of groups. German associations' direct representation at the European level has always been crucial, even though the European Union's decision-making system is based on a treaty-based configuration that relies heavily on collaboration between the European Commission and the European association federations.

23 Case law from the German Federal Constitutional Court: OMT verdict (134, 366), second senate ruling from January 14, 2014. 24 Decision of Lisbon (123, 267) is an element of its overall plan. It is common practice for EU agencies to reach out to national groups in addition to their European counterparts. Also, a European proposal to establish an association might pave the way for the formation of associations across Europe. This indicates that the

Commission has often helped launch European groups. When the existing association structure in some industries seemed inadequate, it became active in this regard in response to prevailing conditions. For instance, it became apparent that overcapacity in steel production needed to be addressed during the European steel crisis in the early half of the 1970s. The Commission's goal was to help parties reach agreements on output limits and prices, but it was unable to do so because the broader interests were too disjointed. It was for this reason that Étienne Davignon, the European Commissioner in charge of industrial matters, requested that European steel producers establish a federation (the European Confederation of Iron and Steel Industries). Many environmental protection groups fought for sway during the same era that there were efforts to reorganise environmental interests. More than 140 non-governmental groups from every member country of the European Union are currently part of the European Environmental Bureau, which was also founded in 1976 at the initiative of the European Commission. Even if there's a lot of proof that associations are becoming more Europeanized, the importance of national parties and party systems becoming more Europeanized has long been debated. Someone has said that when we talk about "European parties" in the right way—meaning in terms of individual membership, presence in the European public sphere, or recruiting political personnel for European institutions—we are not talking about national parties or "Europeanization" in the correct sense. In fact, national political parties across Europe that remained autonomous were inspired to form European party associations by the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979 (German European Policy Series No. 03/17-14). European elections did not anchor these party affiliations as the "home" of the candidates, and neither did the topics of the European elections turn out to be particularly European. The Treaty of Maastricht's enhancement of European political parties stems from a joint effort by the heads of European parties to achieve the explicit acknowledgment of the role of European parties in the democratization and integration of Europe. Article 10, paragraph 4, TEU reflects this. Here it is: "Political parties at European level contribute to forming European political awareness and to expressing the will of citizens of the Union." A This was crucial because it allowed political parties in Europe to receive funding. In 2004, the European Union passed a statute regulating parties *"In Germany the organizational structure of the political parties has changed very little with the Europeanisation of politics."*

The following areas have been studied in relation to the effects of Europeanization: the potential programmatic changes and organizational changes of national parties; the political competition within national parties; the tensions within political parties caused by the governments' dual

role as the driving force behind Europeanization and their attachment to a party political basis that does not think in terms of Europeanization; and the relations between party groups in the European Parliament and national political parties. Despite the fact that German politics has become more Europeanized, the organisational structure of political parties has remained largely unchanged. Parties that were critical of Europe seemed to be struggling in the partisan political race at first. Set up by those who were against the Maastricht Treaty, the Alliance of Free Citizens (Bund Freier Bürger / BFB) didn't last long (1994–2000) and didn't win any elections. With victories in the 2014 European elections and the elections to the federal state parliaments, the only German political party to make an impact has been the 2013-founded Alternative für Deutschland / AfD (Alternative for Germany), which criticised the Eurozone rescue package. Following its 2015 break from the AfD, the Allianz für Fortschritt und Aufbruch (Alliance for Progress and Renewal) has shared its euroskepticism. From the beginning of the disbursement of economic aid to Greece in 2010 onward, tensions have arisen within the established parties. For the first time in German history, a national conversation revolved around a political issue in Europe. It became clear that, within the Eurozone's Europeanized framework, German domestic parties needed to transmit responsibility. The general public's view of politics has become more Europeanized as a result of this. In this vein, the concept of fielding Europeanized parties in the 2014 European elections arose. Article 17, paragraph 7 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union served as the basis for this.

2.2.4. Europeanization of policy areas

For the time being, Europeanization has been most noticeable and felt by the general public in relation to specific policy domains. The Euro in one's wallet, part of the Europeanization of currency, is as commonplace as being allowed to enter a foreign nation without a passport. Assuming that the EU's function in the completion of duties, it permeates numerous domains of government policy. *“German competition law has become increasingly Europeanised in terms of its contents through amendments to the law preventing restrictions to competition.”*(European Union)

An more proactive role is being played by the European Union with controversial and new issues are brought to light by political reform initiatives, such as compensation for rail passengers in the event of train delays, warranty durations for electrical equipment, and roaming charges for mobile phones. Although it is structured differently, the political system of the Federal Republic of Germany is continuously Europeanizing, which happens in several policy areas in modest steps but is consequently very relevant to everyday life. A rise in the nation-

state's clout in particular policy spheres is not always synonymous with Europeanization. Dismantling and establishing new national regulations governing state intervention are both aspects of Europeanized decision-making standards. Several European programmes have contributed to the privatization of formerly state-run industries, such as telecommunications, energy production, and aviation. Regardless matter whether the end result of Brussels's influence is a larger or smaller role for the state in the execution of governmental duties, across all policy domains, there is a unifying thread: decision-making authority is being consolidated in EU institutions.

Two policy domains have a long history of European association and are thus nearly fully Europeanized. Agricultural policy and competition policy were designated as crucial areas of European decision-making in 1957 by the Treaties of Rome. That being said, it is far from the case that no changes have taken place here throughout the intervening decades. The modifications were rooted in European concepts rather than a renationalization of decision-making procedures.

A steady convergence of agricultural pricing to world market prices and the importance of direct payments to farmers instead of the European Union's support for the prices of agricultural products were outcomes of the reforms in 1992 (the MacSharry reforms), 2003 (the Fischler reforms), 2008 (and the subsequent Health Check) and 2014 (reforms). More specific aims, like organic farming, rural preservation, and nature conservation, can now receive funding from the European Union thanks to new methods.

As part of its commitment to monetary union, Germany promised to keep the euro stable so that it could be used interchangeably with the German mark (DM). Germany has criticized the policies surrounding the single European currency due to issues such as the reforms to the Stability and Growth Pact that were meant to make sure this happened, and most importantly, the failure to comply with deficit limits that this has caused. Another factor is the role that the ECB now plays in economic policy. Since the European Central Bank (ECB) was founded in Frankfurt am Main and conceptualized after the German Bundesbank, the Europeanization of monetary policy seemed to particularly align with the fit model of European and German institutions. The politicization of the EU's monetary policy is the primary cause of the current mismatch problem.

“Due to its Europeanisation, German environmental policy has experienced a change in direction. It no longer focuses on preventing emissions (the original German model), but achieving environmental quality goals (...)”

When compared to other policy domains, transport and social policy have seen less Europeanization. At least some European level competence is lacking in these areas. The Open Method of Coordination is an alternative tool that Europeanization uses to some extent; it gives member states more leeway and flexibility in how they organize themselves. What this means is that the Member States work towards a long-term objective that has been determined at the intergovernmental level. One way of looking at it is that domestic policy and justice are getting more and more Europeanized. As the example of asylum policy demonstrates, this is a crucial area for national sovereignty, but it makes finding answers on a European level challenging.

The possibility of a conflict between such regulations and national interests and priorities grows as their level of detail increases. For example, the German stance isn't entirely conflict-free when it comes to the amount of money that Brussels sends as transfer payments or the requirements for direct payments; in this context, the German federal government has to defend both small-scale farms run by families and larger-scale farms in eastern Germany, which are the offspring of the collective farms that were part of the former GDR. *“As a consequence of the loss of importance suffered by the Europeanize Bundesbank, it has been reorganised, and its staff and executive teams have been reduced in size.”*

2.3. German Political Parties' Actions and Approaches

Europeanization has had a substantial impact on the conduct and tactics of German political parties from 2002 to 2022. These adaptations might be comprehended by considering certain crucial dimensions:

2.3.1. Analysis of German policies

An influential consequence of Europeanization on German political parties is the harmonisation of their policies with EU directives and regulations. Political parties have been compelled to readjust their policy platforms in order to conform to the norms and standards of the European Union. To comply with EU requirements, environmental policies, economic regulations, and social welfare initiatives have been modified.

2.3.2. Transnational Alliances:

German political parties have been actively involved in forming transnational alliances with institutions of the European Union, including the European Parliament. They establish or become members of European political organizations that wield considerable sway over EU policies. An illustration of how the CDU's position on diverse European matters has been

influenced is through its association with the European People's Party, a center-right alliance in the EU Parliament.

2.3.3. Europe's Integration Perspectives:

The positions of German political parties regarding deeper EU integration have been divergent. While some parties, such as the SPD and Greens, have advocated for increased EU integration and cooperation, others, including the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and FDP, have been more skeptical, placing greater emphasis on national sovereignty and autonomy in specific policy domains (Blaette et al., 2020).

2.3.4. EU Elections:

Elections to the European Parliament have been a significant indicator of the degree to which German political parties lean towards Europe. These elections offer valuable insights into the degree to which political parties emphasize their stances on European issues and priorities EU matters in their electoral campaigns.

2.4. Role of Political Parties in Europeanization:

There are a number of ways in which German political parties significantly impact the course of Europeanization:

1. **Legislative Implementation:** Parties participate in the German Bundestag (federal parliament) and Bundesrat (federal council), where EU-related laws are debated, amended, and approved. They play a central role in translating EU directives into national legislation.
2. Parties actively advocate for their policy preferences within EU decision-making bodies. They influence EU policies by articulating Germany's positions on various issues, ranging from trade agreements to environmental regulations.
3. German political parties are instrumental in shaping public discourse on Europeanization. Their positions and rhetoric influence how the German public perceives EU integration and its implications for national sovereignty, identity, and economic well-being.
4. Given the prevalence of coalition governments in Germany, the dynamics of coalition politics have a direct impact on Europeanization. Parties engage in negotiations and compromise on EU-related matters, thereby influencing Germany's stance in EU negotiations (Harwood, 2021)

In reaction to the changing Europeanization scene, German political parties' actions and strategies underwent substantial changes between 2002 and 2022 (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2023).

In this chapter, we will explore these dynamics further, illuminating the complex ways in which the parties involved have interacted with European integration.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

2.5.1. Concerning Neorealism and Europeanization:

Prominent among international relations theoretical frameworks, neorealism sheds light on power dynamics, state behavior, and international systems. We can better understand the power dynamics and international relations components of this complicated phenomenon by applying neorealism to the Europeanization context (Rosamond, 2019).

1. A Quick Overview of Neorealism:

The central tenet of neorealism is the idea that, within a self-help international system, governments are mostly motivated to seek security and protect their interests. Fundamental principles of neorealism encompass:

2.5.2. Problems with security:

Neorealists place an emphasis on the security dilemma, which occurs when other states mistakenly view a state's attempts to strengthen its security as a threat. A vicious cycle of insecurity, heightened tensions, and arms races might result from this notion.

2.5.3. Strategies for Maintaining a Balanced Role:

States often employ balancing strategies to counteract potential threats. Balancing can take various forms, including forming alliances, developing military capabilities, or engaging in diplomatic initiatives to offset the power of a more dominant state

2.5.4. Maintain Priorities for the Nation:

The core principles of neorealism are the primacy of state sovereignty, economic stability, and territorial integrity. Opiłowska and Sus (2021) state that these individuals act in a way that protects their interests and increases their relative power.

2.6. A Neorealist Approach to the Study of Europeanization

Neorealism offers a useful structure for understanding the power dynamics and international relations aspects of Europeanization.

2.6.1. Power disputes:

Europeanization is not just a smooth process of policy alignment; it includes power clashes between member states and EU institutions. Neorealism elucidates how Europeanization is influenced by states' endeavors to safeguard their interests and uphold or improve their relative position inside the EU.

2.6.2. Interests at the national level:

Neorealism emphasizes the potential conflicts between Europeanization and the national interests of states. If any member states feel threatened by EU integration or policies, they may choose to fight back. Examining Europeanization from a neorealist perspective sheds light on the conflicts and compromises surrounding these national priorities.

2.6.3. Partnerships and Harmony:

Europeanization is a direct application of neorealism's emphasis on balance strategies and alliances. In the European Union, member states often band together to achieve common goals or to counteract the influence of more powerful member states. The course and results of European integration are susceptible to these coalitions' influences.

2.6.4. Risks to Data Security:

Defense cooperation and foreign policy coordination are two examples of how Europeanization has spread into spheres with major ramifications for national security. According to *Europeanizing Space: How the European Commission Formulates and Instrumentalists EU Identity and Interests in Earth Orbit* (ProQuest, n.d.), neorealism provides insight into how states handle various security elements, particularly the issue of collective defense within the EU.

2.6.5. Applying Neorealism as a Framework for Theory:

This study will analyze Europeanization via the lens of neorealism, an important theoretical framework. Our goal is to use nonrealistic ideas to understand the Europeanization process's underlying power dynamics, security issues, and state-centric dynamics. Theoretically, neorealism rounds out our knowledge of the state and political parties in Germany's responses to the pressures of European integration.

2.7. Defensive Realism: A Perspective on How Parties Act

In the context of Europeanization, defensive realism offers a persuasive paradigm for understanding the behavior of states and, by extension, political parties. It is a prominent area of international relations theory. Defending one's security and interests within a self-help international system are the fundamental motivations for governments, according to defensive realists. Digging into the fundamental ideas of defensive realism is the first step in understanding how this theoretical framework sheds light on the actions of political parties in reaction to Europeanization.

2.7.1. Elements Essential to Defensive Realism

Security Challenges:

The security paradox is a key idea in defensive realism; it describes how some governments' attempts to make themselves safer could be misunderstood by other states. As nations try to defend themselves from what they see as dangers, this could lead to a proliferation of weapons and a vicious cycle of instability (Zoltá et al., 2019).

Balancing Strategies:

Balancing tactics are commonly used by states that operate on a defensive realist paradigm to combat possible dangers. Forming military alliances, building defensive military capabilities, or launching diplomatic initiatives are all examples of measures that states can employ to counter the influence of more powerful powers.

Interests at National level:

States put their national interests first, according to defensive realists. These objectives include maintaining economic stability, territorial integrity, and sovereignty. To protect these interests and maintain or increase their relative power, states act in certain ways.

2.8. Europeanization and Defensive Realism/Party Behavior

To better understand how political parties reacted to Europeanization, defensive realism offers a useful lens:

2.8.1. Security Strategies of the Party:

In the same way that governments strive to maintain their places and interests in the ever-changing European landscape, political parties do the same. Following the lead of state security concerns, defensive realism posits that, in the face of Europeanization, parties may pursue tactics to preserve their power and significance.

2.8.2. Consortia and Partnerships:

Political parties may defend their policy goals and electoral support by forming alliances or coalitions, both at home and in the European environment. These coalitions could reflect states' efforts to redress power inequalities through balancing methods (Alexandre, 2020).

2.8.3. Preserving the Interests of the Nation:

A political party's platform will typically reflect the party's view on the nation's priorities. This could mean fighting against EU integration initiatives or policies that the country views as harmful to its security, sovereignty, or economy, according to defensive realists.

2.8.4. Examples and Case Studies:

Political parties' defensive tactics in the face of Europeanization can be better understood with the use of case studies or illustrative instances. Some examples of these are:
Politicians' Reactions to the EU's Expansion:

One way to understand the security implications of an expanded EU and how the German political parties dealt with them is to look at their responses to EU enlargement processes.

Political Opinions on EU Defence Cooperation:

Kryshtanovych et al. (2022) found that German political parties' responses to EU defense integration ideas reveal a lot about how they relate to or differ from perceived national security objectives.

Building Alliances:

Case studies on the tactics used by political parties inside coalition administrations can shed light on the delicate balancing act that is required to counteract Europeanization. By applying defensive realism to the actions of political parties, we gain a deeper comprehension of how these groups deal with the opportunities and threats posed by European integration. Through the use of this theoretical framework, we can better understand the parties' goals and tactics as they navigate the intricate terrain of Europeanization.

2.9. Offensive Realism: Examining Power Dynamics

One important theoretical framework in international relations, offensive realism, sheds light on the influence of Europeanization on political party behavior by describing power dynamics within this framework. This chapter presents offensive realism as a theoretical framework for studying political parties' aggressive tactics and behaviors in the context of the changing European integration landscape.

2.9.1. Offensive realism's potential uses:

2.9.1.1. Gaining Comprehension of Power Relations:

The anarchic international system is characterized by governments' natural power-seeking behavior, according to offensive realists. Their insatiable need for power and security propels them to always outperform other states in terms of relative benefit. Using this lens through the lens of Europeanization, we can see how political parties, similar to nations, fight for dominance and influence.

2.9.1.2. Examination of Aggressive Actions:

Political parties' use of aggressive tactics and behaviors to aggressively pursue their goals can be studied through the lens of offensive realism. Some examples of such actions include trying

to get more support from voters, having more say in policymaking, or consolidating power in the Europeanized arena.

2.9.1.3. Maintaining a Balance and Building Power

A key tenet of offensive realism is the primacy of state power accumulation in establishing domination. Similarly, in a Europeanized context, political parties may aim to amass influence by challenging the authority of other parties, increasing their policy footprint, or forming strategic alliances. According to Schimmelfennig (2021), this perspective shows how different groups participate in power struggles during the Europeanization process.

2.9.2. Case Studies and Examples:

Offence realism sheds light on the power dynamics and aggressive behaviors involved in Europeanization through applicable instances and case studies:

Political Rivalry for European Presidency:

Political parties' aggressive tactics to amass power and influence at the supranational level might be better understood by examining their competition for leadership positions within the European Union.

Approaches to the Election:

Research of the strategies employed by German political groups in the run-up to the European Parliament elections provides insight into the aggressive tactics used by these groups to secure seats and influence policymaking on a continental level.

Important Policy Negotiations:

One way to understand the Germans' drive for power and influence throughout Europeanization is to look at how they negotiated and fought over important policies in European contexts (Schmidt, 2020).

Political parties' power struggles and aggressive tactics in the Europeanized political scene can be better understood within the analytical framework of offensive realism. By looking at it from this angle, we can better understand how different groups respond to the opportunities and threats posed by European integration.

2.9.3. An Overview of Power Balance:

To comprehend the ways in which political parties adjust to Europeanization, one must grasp the concept of power balancing, which has its origins in neorealism and defensive realism. Power balance, as it pertains to party adaptation, describes the tactics and methods used by political parties to keep or increase their relative positions, influence, and power within the changing framework of European integration.

1. Handling Intricate Alliances:

As a means of balancing power and countering possible threats, political parties frequently create coalitions and alliances with other parties, both locally and in Europe. One motivation for these coalitions is a desire to increase their clout in EU decision-making, while another is a desire to achieve common policy goals.

2. Taking a Stand on Policies:

As a means of balancing or aligning with existing power structures, parties may take a strategic stance on different policy matters. In order to stand out in the increasingly Europeanized political scene or win over influential allies, they may shift their policy positions (Haroche, 2019).

3. Engaging with Institutions:

Parties can define EU agendas and influence policymaking through engagement with EU institutions like the European Parliament or the European Commission. In order to further their own interests and consolidate power, parties may aggressively pursue jobs inside these institutions.

4. Forming Alliances:

A political party can strengthen its stance and influence on a European level by forming cross-border alliances with other parties that share its views. The formation of such coalitions is frequently an attempt to balance the power of more powerful or larger groups.

4.9.4. Real world cases:

The use of power-balancing tactics by political parties in the context of Europeanization can be better understood by looking at real-world instances and case studies:

2.10. European Parliamentary Alliances of German Parties

German political parties' attempts to maintain power balance and advance German interests in the European Parliament can be seen through an analysis of their alliances and cooperation.

Negotiation Strategies within the European Union Council:

When parties negotiate important EU policy in the EU Council, they frequently engage in power balancing. According to Federici et al. (2019), these conversations provide a glimpse into how the parties adjust and position themselves in response to changing power relations.

Collaborating across borders:

To illustrate their strategies for maintaining a delicate power balance, we can look at case studies of parties engaging with their counterparts from other EU member states. They want to increase their clout in EU decision-making through these partnerships. We can learn more about how political parties adjusted to the complicated power dynamics brought up by Europeanization if we look at how they use power balancing tactics.

The strategic and ever-changing behavior of political parties in Europe can be better understood from this vantage point.

Theory Behind Divide-and-Balance Approaches:

In order to comprehend how political parties, adjust and reorganize themselves in reaction to the intricacies of Europeanization, divide-and-balance tactics are fundamental. In this Europeanized political scene, parties intentionally try to build alliances or rivalries, highlighting the tactical division and balancing of power relations.

2.11. Impact on the Formation of Rivalries and Alliances Within Parties:

1. Forming Strategic Alliances:

Domestic and European political parties frequently work together in strategic alliances to accomplish common goals or to counteract more powerful political forces. These coalitions are strategic as well as ideological, to increase one party's clout in EU decision-making.

2. A Guide to Policy Departments:

Policies on which the two major parties may disagree are also part of the divide-and-balance approach. One strategy for political parties is to form coalitions with like-minded individuals while actively working to sow discord among their opponents. Parties can further their policy preferences and stay relevant in the European political arena by taking this method.

3. Adjustment to Shifting Establishments of Power:

Parties must negotiate the changing power dynamics brought forth by Europeanization. By utilising divide-and-balance techniques, political parties can adjust to changing political environments and maintain their competitiveness and influence.

2.11.1. Real-World Examples:

Case studies and real-world examples show how political parties use divide-and-balance tactics:

Allies in Voting for the European Parliament:

In order to maximize their influence, political parties in the European Parliament systematically split and balanced their support. This is shown by analyzing voting alliances when parties from various member states come together on certain subjects.

Council Policy Negotiations:

In the EU Council, parties use "divide and conquer" strategies while negotiating policies. Amid party conflicts, they band together to support or oppose certain initiatives.

Differences Within Parties:

On matters about Europeanization, some factions may encounter internal strife. To further understand how different groups have adapted to Europeanization, case studies examining how

they handle internal divisions and strategically balance their stances are useful (Webber, 2019). Examining the idea of divide-and-balance tactics helps us comprehend the complex ways in which political parties within the Europeanization environment use alliances, rivalries, and policy disagreements. In their pursuit of success and influence in Europe's political environment, these strategies mirror the ever-changing and strategic character of party behavior.

2.12. Offensive Realism: Understanding Power Dynamics

Offence realism, initially introduced to scholars by John Mearsheimer, offers a compelling framework for comprehending power relations within the framework of Europeanization. From this vantage point, states—and by implication, political parties within these states—need to constantly strengthen their authority to ensure their survival and security. Even though governments are merging and sharing sovereignty as part of the Europeanization process, competition for power and influence is strong. Political parties frequently use aggressive tactics in their pursuit of greater influence on an international scale. To see this in action, just look at the EU election campaigns. All sorts of parties are vying for leadership positions. The outcome of this competition reveals their confident attempts to become the dominant force in Europe. Looking at the electoral strategies of German political parties in the European Parliament elections can provide us a clue as to how they plan to obtain seats and gain influence in Europe's decision-making process. This research improves our understanding of the strategies employed by political parties to counter the threat of Europeanization by illuminating the power struggles inherent in the process and showing how offensive realism can be a useful lens for analyzing these dynamics.

2.12.1. Understanding Party Behavior via the Lens of Defensive Realism

Derived from international relations theory, the analytical stance provided by the concept of defensive realism may make it much easier to understand the behavior of political parties in reaction to Europeanization. The focus of this approach is on the parties' responses to outside threats and the measures they take to protect their interests. Within the framework of Europeanization, political parties employ defensive strategies to maintain their independence and protect their national policies from external forces. Examining the ways in which defensive realism shapes party actions allows us to probe past instances of parties viewing European integration as a potential threat to their home dominance. Because of this, we may examine situations in which the parties involved have acted in this way. Defensive realism's real-world effects can be observed in the ways these groups adapt to their historical

responsibilities, preserve national sovereignty, and deal with Europeanization. By analyzing real-life events, including debates and agreements between German political parties on important topics in European contexts, we can learn more about how these groups balance national objectives with the realities of European integration. By taking this tack, we can learn more about the flexible strategies used by different sides as they navigate the complex landscape of Europeanization.

2.12.2. Parties' Adaptation to Power Balance

One of the most crucial parts of political parties' adaptation to Europeanization is the process of power balancing, which has its roots in neorealism and defensive realism. In the context of the ever-evolving framework of European integration, the term "power balancing" describes the strategies and tactics used by different parties to maintain or enhance their positions, influence, and power. Parties use a wide range of tactics to negotiate intricate relationships, position themselves strategically on policy issues, engage with EU institutions, and form coalitions. The coalitions that the German political parties form within the European Parliament to preserve power dynamics and jointly advance German interests on the European stage provide an example of this.

The extent to which German parties are able to influence EU decision-making is heavily influenced by these alliances. Party adaptation relies heavily on power balancing, which becomes apparent when examining party strategy during Council of the EU deliberations of important EU policy. This is because the prior paragraph discusses power balancing, which makes it obvious. The goal of these tactics is to provide each side a voice in EU policymaking while simultaneously safeguarding their own national interests. Collaboration across national borders amongst EU members is another example of a power-balancing strategy. The groups are working together to strengthen their positions on European issues and their influence in EU decision-making.

2.12.3. Strategies for Party Alignment through Division and Balancing

The use of divide-and-conquer strategies is crucial for understanding how political parties adjust and coalesce in response to the complex Europeanization environment. For these strategies to work, it's necessary to deliberately forge alliances or rivalries, with a focus on dividing and redistributing power. Parties build strategic alliances to achieve their shared objectives and to mitigate the impact of influential outside influences in politics. These coalitions are mostly designed to strengthen one party's influence within the EU decision-making processes; they are strategic in character. Moreover, political groups employ these

strategies to control policy differences by aligning with individuals who share their views on policy and creating divisions among their rivals. Because of this, they are more able to traverse policy divisions.

This tactic ensures that parties can follow their preferred policies while staying relevant in a more Europeanized political climate. Furthermore, as a result of the shifting power dynamics brought about by Europeanization, the concept of divide-and-conquer tactics allows for the parties involved to adapt.

To grasp the strategic character of these approaches, it is necessary to examine concrete examples, like voting coalitions in the European Parliament. To maximize their influence on certain issues, political parties from different member states meticulously divide and balance their support in these alliances. Similarly, during EU Council policy negotiations, different parties use "divide and conquer" tactics to manage their rivalry with one another and to support or oppose particular proposals. Another example of the delicate use of divide-and-conquer strategies is the management of internal conflicts on subjects related to Europeanization inside parties.

Chapter 3. Introduction to Research Methodology:

In Chapter 3, we delve into the various research methodologies that are at our disposal as we embark on a significant new part of our research journey. At the moment, we are in the middle of an incredibly thrilling time! Our future appears to be bright at this stage! This chapter is crucial in deciding the course of our research because it establishes the framework for how we will examine the complex link between Europeanization and the political parties in Germany. The reason behind this is that it establishes the groundwork for our study. These groundwork will allow us to investigate the complex relationship between Europeanization and Germany's political parties. We can gain a deeper understanding of both of these subjects as a result of this. We will provide the groundwork for future investigational methods based on this, therefore it's important and vital.

In order to give some insight into the procedures that were carried out as part of our inquiry, the main goal of this chapter is to outline the processes that were used. Those steps will be laid out in great detail so that you can reach your objective. In addition to directing our research, it emphasizes the critical need of selecting an appropriate methodology for delving into a complex topic like Europeanization and its effects on party behavior. It also stresses how important it is to choose the best approach. This emphasizes the significance of selecting a methodology that is appropriate for conducting research on the given topic. This issue has been the focus of a

great deal of research during the previous many years. Research methodology is more than simply a set of rules for how to gather and analyze data; it is the north star that keeps the study on track and ensures accuracy and precision every time. Explaining how data is gathered and analyzed is not the essence of research technique. This is because describing the steps used to collect and analyze data is not the most crucial part of research methodology. The reason behind this is that research methods go beyond simply detailing how data will be collected and analyzed. On the contrary, the method of data collection is the most crucial part of study process. The research method acts as the study's guiding principle, which is why this is true.

3.1. Research Design:

We have painstakingly designed the study to align with the unique elements of the subject matter that we are now examining within the scope of our investigation. Our choice to employ a mixed-methods strategy will allow us to delve deeply into the numerous facets of Europeanization and its effects on German political parties. Because we've settled on a mixed-methods strategy for our research, this choice was inevitable. This specific combination of research methods provides a broader view and, as a result of the results, a better understanding of the investigated topic.

We arrived at this conclusion after giving it some thought, and we've decided to use a strategy that combines a number of distinct approaches. The term "Europeanization" is all-encompassing, including not only the political realm but also the economic, social, and cultural ones (Hurtgen, 2020). We employ statistical methods like surveys and data analysis to determine the extent of Europeanization and to spot patterns and trends to make sense of the situation's complexity. We can therefore make an approximation of the degree of Europeanization based on this.

We opted for a mixed-methods approach because, according to its advocates, it offers a more all-encompassing and consistent view of the topic under investigation. We decided to use that approach in large part because of this. Qualitative data allows us to delve into the complexity of decision-making and the depth and breadth of human experiences, in contrast to quantitative data that provides statistical significance and allows us to uncover broad trends. There is statistical importance in quantitative data as well. The reason behind this is that quantitative data allows us to observe broad trends and offers statistical significance. Furthermore, this method paves the path for future, more in-depth investigations on the challenges of Europeanization, lending credence to the study's findings.

We find that our research method works particularly well with this subject because it accounts for the multifaceted character of Europeanization. This is why it might be considered a practical

answer to the current issue. It opens the door for us to tackle research questions that require insightful analysis of the reactions of German political parties to Europeanization in addition to quantitative data. Insights into the responses of German political parties, in addition to quantitative data, are necessary to answer these study topics. This allows us to tackle research problems that require deep insights in addition to quantitative data. Our results will make a significant addition to the ongoing academic discussion in political science and European studies thanks to the technique we created to ensure their statistical trustworthiness and rich contextual information.

3.2. Data Collection:

We meticulously planned our data collection strategy to account for the unique aspects of our research, so we could confidently use it. Our inquiry was as thorough as it could be since we used a wide range of primary and secondary sources to gather data.

We supplemented our primary data with secondary data from a number of sources to set the stage for our findings by providing historical and contextual information. Sources that were taken into account included scholarly articles, party platforms, policy documents, and electoral outcomes from the past. In addition to the main material we gathered, secondary sources helped put our investigation into historical context and gave us a broader view of the topic.

The literature review for this research entails an extensive gathering of pertinent materials on Europeanization, German political history, and party systems. This involves a thorough examination of scholarly articles, books, and official documents to establish a robust theoretical foundation for the study. The document analysis component focuses on the collection of party programs, election manifestos, and official statements from the selected elections. Furthermore, historical documents are scrutinized to trace the evolution of the German party system, providing valuable insights into the historical context of political developments. In terms of quantitative data, the research involves the meticulous collection of election results, voter turnout figures, and party performance indicators. The utilization of official election reports, databases, and statistical sources facilitates a numerical analysis, offering a comprehensive understanding of the quantitative aspects related to the selected elections and the performance of political parties. Together, these research components contribute to a well-rounded exploration of the Europeanization processes within the context of German political parties, encompassing historical evolution, theoretical foundations, and empirical data analysis.

3.3. Data Analysis

The research methodology includes a content analysis component, where a systematic application of content analysis is employed to scrutinize party programs, aiming to identify key themes relevant to Europeanization. This process involves a meticulous examination of the content within party programs to discern prevalent topics and stances related to Europeanization. Additionally, the study conducts an analysis of changes in party goals, rhetoric, and policy positions across the selected elections, shedding light on the evolving nature of political party strategies concerning Europeanization over time. On the quantitative front, the research employs statistical methods to analyze election data comprehensively. This involves the identification of trends and patterns within the electoral outcomes, enabling a quantitative understanding of the dynamics at play during each election cycle. Furthermore, the study explores correlations between party performance and various Europeanization factors, providing insights into the relationship between a party's electoral success and its approach to Europeanization. The combination of content analysis and quantitative methods ensures a multi-faceted examination of the Europeanization processes within the realm of German political parties, encompassing both qualitative thematic analysis and quantitative trend identification.

3.3. Sampling

We employed a sampling strategy as one of many procedures that made up our methodology for this study. Our procedure was designed to ensure that the results we obtained are accurate representations of the population and may be used to draw broad conclusions. After much deliberation, we decided to use stratified random sampling to draw samples from the many different subgroups that make up the various German political parties.

Many important factors were considered throughout the stratification process, such as position in the organisation, political leanings, and geographic region. Recent research has shown that these elements are crucial in determining the results and conduct of individuals affiliated with political parties. Findings from a recent study led to this conclusion. Stratifying our sample allowed us to gather a diverse range of responses from individuals with different backgrounds and perspectives. Stratification is a kind of sampling.

This sample was chosen with the intention of providing a balanced representation of the various divisions within the party structure, including regions and responsibilities. Using a meticulously selected sample allowed us to achieve this. We reasoned that this would make our results more generalizable and reduce the possibility of bias in our study. The findings backed the decision

to use stratified sampling, which was crucial in this type of research study due to the great degree of variation within political parties and between localities.

The research design incorporates a strategic approach to election and party sampling to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the Europeanization processes within German political parties. In terms of election sampling, specific elections from the years 2009, 2013, 2017, 2019, and 2021 are meticulously selected for an in-depth examination. The focus is not only on the electoral outcomes but also on key turning points or significant events that may have played a pivotal role in shaping Europeanization trends. This approach allows the study to capture nuanced changes and developments over time, providing a detailed understanding of how Europeanization dynamics have evolved during these specific election cycles. On the party sampling front, the inclusion of major parties such as CDU/CSU, SPD, AfD, and FDP is deliberate to represent a diverse spectrum of political ideologies. The aim is to ensure a balanced representation between mainstream and alternative parties, enabling a comprehensive exploration of Europeanization strategies across different political landscapes. By strategically selecting elections and parties, the research design aims to uncover patterns and variations in how German political entities engage with Europeanization, offering a nuanced perspective on the complex interplay between political events, party ideologies, and European influences.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

The valuable practices of triangulation and pilot testing to enhance the reliability and credibility of the study. Triangulation involves validating research findings by comparing data from multiple sources, documents, and election results. This comprehensive approach ensures that conclusions are drawn from diverse perspectives, contributing to a more robust and well-rounded understanding of the research topic. Additionally, pilot testing is conducted on data collection instruments and analysis procedures to ensure consistency and reliability in the research process. This preliminary testing phase allows for the identification and resolution of any potential issues or ambiguities in the research methods, ultimately refining the study's overall reliability. Both triangulation and pilot testing are integral components of the research design, collectively contributing to the methodological rigor and trustworthiness of the study's outcomes.

3.5. Data Presentation

The communication of study outcomes will prioritize clarity and accessibility, recognizing the importance of presenting findings in a manner that facilitates easy comprehension and interpretation of data. To achieve this, we will employ tables, charts, graphs, and any other

relevant visual aids. Quantitative data will be represented using descriptive statistics, tables, and graphs, allowing the reader to quickly grasp key trends, variances, and patterns. Charts and graphs will be utilized to illustrate relationships, connections, and differences between variables. Qualitative research results, derived from document analysis, will be conveyed through narratives and selected quotations. Our aim is to offer readers a nuanced understanding of the perspectives and experiences of political party members, incorporating real-world examples and firsthand statements from individuals across various political parties. The integration of visual aids in presenting these findings will enhance reader comprehension, making the material more digestible and facilitating a deeper understanding of the research conclusions.

3.6. Election Results:

15th Bundestag

Year 2002

Election Date -22 September 2002

Voter Turnout 48,582,761 (79.1%)

Mandates -603

Parties	Primary Votes	%	Secondary Votes	%	Mandate
SDP	20,059,967	41.93	18,488,668	38.52	251
CDU	15,336,512	32.06	14,167,561	29.52	190
CSU	4,311,178	9.01	4,315,080	8.99	58
Alliance 90/The Greens	2,693,794	5.63	4,110,355	8.56	55
FDP	2,752,796	5.75	3,538,815	7.37	47
PDS	2,079,203	4.35	1,916,702	3.99	2
Valid Votes	47,841,724	100	47,996,480	100	603

In the 15th Bundestag election held on September 22, 2002, with a voter turnout of 79.1%, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) secured the highest primary votes at 41.93%, followed by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) with 32.06% [54]. The Greens and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) also obtained significant support, earning 5.63% and 5.75%, respectively. The election resulted in the allocation of 603 mandates, with the SDP winning 251, CDU securing 190, and smaller parties such as the Greens and FDP also gaining representation in the German parliament. (German Bundestag)

16th Bundestag

Year 2005

Election Date -18 September 2005

Voter Turnout 48,044,134 (77.7%)

Mandates -614 (including 16 Overhang seats)

Parties	Primary Votes	%	Secondary Votes	%	Mandate
SDP	18,129,100	38.41	16,194,665	34.25	222
CDU	15,390,950	32.61	13,136,740	27.78	180
CSU	3,889,990	8.24	3,494,309	8.24	46
Alliance 90/The Greens	2,538,913	5.38	3,838,326	8.12	51
FDP	2,208,531	4.68	4,648,144	9.83	61
The left Party.	3,764,168	7.98	4,118,194	8.71	54
PDS					
Valid Votes	47,194,062	100	47,287,988	100	614

In the 16th Bundestag election held on September 18, 2005, with a voter turnout of 77.7%, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) secured the highest primary votes at 38.41%, followed by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) with 32.61%. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) and Alliance 90/The Greens also garnered significant support, obtaining 4.68% and 5.38%, respectively. The election resulted in 614 mandates, including 16 overhang seats, with the SDP winning 222, CDU securing 180, and other parties like FDP and Greens also gaining representation in the German parliament. The Left Party. PDS, formed after the merger with the PDS, earned 7.98% of the primary votes, securing 54 mandates. (German Bundestag)

17th Bundestag

Year 2009

Election Date -27 September 2009

Voter Turnout 44,005,575 (70.8%)

Mandates -622 (including 24 Overhang seats)

Parties	Primary Votes	%	Secondary Votes	%	Mandate
CDU	13,856,674	32.04	11,828,277	27.27	194
SDP	12,079,758	27.93	9,990,488	23.03	146

FDP	4,076,496	9.43	6,316,080	14.56	93
The left	4,791,124	11.08	5,155,933	11.89	76
Alliance 90/The Greens	3,977,125	9.20	4,643,272	10.71	68
CSU	3,191,000	7.38	2,830,238	6.53	45
Valid Votes	43,248,000	100	43,371,190	100	622

In the 17th Bundestag election on September 27, 2009, with a voter turnout of 70.8%, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) secured the highest primary votes at 32.04%, followed by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) at 27.93%. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) and The Left Party obtained significant support with 9.43% and 11.08%, respectively. The election resulted in 622 mandates, including 24 overhang seats, with CDU winning 194, SDP securing 146, and other parties such as FDP, The Left, and Alliance 90/The Greens also gaining representation in the German parliament. (German Bundestag)

18th Bundestag

Year 2013

Election Date -27 September 2013

Voter Turnout 44,309,925 (71.5%)

Mandates -631(including 33 overhang seats)

Parties	Primary Votes	%	Secondary Votes	%	Mandate
CDU	16,233,642	37.21	14,921,877	34.13	255
SDP	12,843,458	29.44	11,252,215	25.73	193
The Left	3,585,178	8.22	3,755,699	8.59	64
Alliance 90/The Green	3,180,299	7.29	3,694,057	8.45	63
CSU	3,544,079	8.12	3,243,569	7.42	56
FDP	1,028,645	2.36	2,083,533	4.76	0
Valid Votes	43,625,042		43,726,856	100	631

In the 18th Bundestag election on September 27, 2013, with a voter turnout of 71.5%, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) secured the highest primary votes at 37.21%, followed by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) at 29.44%. The Left Party, Alliance 90/The Greens, and the Christian Social Union (CSU) also garnered significant support. The election resulted in 631

mandates, including 33 overhang seats, with CDU winning 255, SPD securing 193, and other parties such as The Left, Greens, and CSU also gaining representation in the German parliament. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) failed to secure any mandates, falling short of the electoral threshold. (German Bundestag)

19th Bundestag

Year 2017

Election Date -24 September 2017

Voter Turnout 46,976,341 (76.2%)

Mandates -709

Parties	Primary Votes	%	Secondary Votes	%	Mandate
CDU	14,030,751	30.25	12,447,656	26.76	200
SDP	11,429,231	24.64	9,539,381	20.51	153
Alternative For Germany	5,317,499	11.46	5,878,115	12.64	94
FDP	3,249,238	7.00	4,999,449	10.75	80
The left	3,966,637	8.55	4,297,270	9.24	69
Alliance 90/The Greens	3,717,922	8.01	4,158,400	8.94	67
CSU	3,255,487	7.02	2,869,688	6.17	46
Valid Votes	46,389,615	100	46,515,492	100	709

In the 19th Bundestag election held on September 24, 2017, with a voter turnout of 76.2%, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) secured the highest primary votes at 30.25%, followed by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) at 24.64%. The newly emerging Alternative for Germany (AfD) gained significant support with 11.46%, while the Free Democratic Party (FDP), The Left Party, Alliance 90/The Greens, and the Christian Social Union (CSU) also obtained notable percentages. The election resulted in 709 mandates, with CDU winning 200, SPD securing 153, and other parties such as AfD, FDP, and Greens also gaining representation in the German parliament. (German Bundestag)

20th Bundestag

Year 2021

Election Date -26 September 2021

Voter Turnout 46,854,508 (76.6%)

Mandates -736(including 138 overhang)

Parties	Primary Votes	%	Secondary Votes	%	Mandate
SDP	12,234,690	26.39	11,955,434	25.74	206
CDU	10,451,524	22.54	8,775,471	18.90	152
Alliance 90/The Greens	6,469,081	13.95	6,852,206	14.75	118
FDP	4,042,951	8.72	5,319,952	11.46	92
Alternatively For Germany	4,695,611	10.13	4,803,902	10.34	83
CSU	2,788,048	6.01	2,402,827	5.17	45
The Left	2,307,536	4.98	2,270,906	4.89	39
South Schleswig Voters' Association	35,027	0.08	55,578	0.12	1
Valid Votes	46,362,013	100	46,442,023	100	736

In the 20th Bundestag election on September 26, 2021, voter turnout was 76.6%, with 46,854,508 citizens participating. The election resulted in 736 mandates, including 138 overhang seats. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) led with 26.39% of primary votes, followed by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) at 22.54%. Notable representation came from Alliance 90/The Greens, the Free Democratic Party (FDP), and Alternative for Germany (AfD). SDP secured 206 mandates, CDU 152, and other parties, including Greens, FDP, and AfD, also contributed to the diverse composition of the German parliament. The South Schleswig Voters' Association obtained 1 mandate, highlighting the dynamic political landscape and continued voter engagement in Germany. (German Bundestag)

3.7. Triangulation

Triangulation is an important part of our research strategy, and it has been implemented to improve the reliability and validity of our findings. We may cross-verify and validate our results using several data sources and methods. The use of numerous data sources and methods increases the robustness of our findings.

For example, quantitative survey data can be triangulated with qualitative insights via document analysis. When the two types of data overlap and give convergent evidence, we can have more trust in the conclusions' validity. Disparities or variances in quantitative and qualitative data, on the other hand, can encourage a more in-depth assessment of the research questions and lead to more thorough insights. Triangulation strengthens the reliability of our study findings by combining data from multiple sources and methods, reducing the likelihood of biases or errors

in any single data source. It helps us understand how Europeanization has changed German political groups in a more complete and sophisticated way.

3.8. Summary

The research design employs a mixed-methods approach to thoroughly investigate the Europeanization processes of German political parties in the 21st century, seamlessly integrating qualitative and quantitative methods. Focusing on major political entities such as CDU/CSU, SPD, AfD, and FDP, the study conducts a detailed analysis of electoral data from selected elections, examining primary and secondary votes, voter turnout, and mandate allocation. Simultaneously, a qualitative exploration of party documents, speeches, and statements delves into ideological underpinnings and strategic considerations related to Europeanization. The chapter emphasizes the importance of research methodology, discussing design, data collection, analysis techniques, sampling, ethical considerations, and data presentation. The chosen mixed-methods approach is defended for its adaptability to diverse research topics and synergy between data sources. The presentation of study outcomes prioritizes clarity and accessibility, utilizing visual aids for quantitative data and narratives for qualitative results to enhance reader comprehension. Ethical considerations include informed consent, data privacy, and validity checks through triangulation and pilot testing, reinforcing the credibility and robustness of the study's conclusions.

3.9. Strength and Limitations

The selected research strategy exhibits notable characteristics, emphasizing extensive coverage and depth. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach facilitated a thorough exploration of research topics, providing more profound and comprehensive results compared to alternative methods. The inclusion of triangulation further bolstered the reliability and validity of the findings. A meticulous examination of ethical considerations, along with measures to reduce errors and biases, contributed to an overall enhancement in research quality. However, we recognize inherent limitations in our methodology. The combined use of qualitative and quantitative methods may demand significant time and resources, and integrating data from diverse sources presents challenges in interpretation. Despite efforts for representativeness in sampling, it may not always be exhaustive. The subjective nature introduced by the researcher's judgment, especially in the qualitative section, highlights potential limitations. Nonetheless, we maintain optimism that the strengths of our chosen research methodology, coupled with a rigorous and ethical approach, will yield valuable insights into the impact of Europeanization on German political parties. The incorporation of qualitative and quantitative data, triangulation, and

meticulous attention to validity and reliability collectively contribute to the robustness of our findings.

Chapter 4: Interpretations of Research Findings

The presentation and analysis of the research results is the primary focus of this chapter. Providing a transparent and all-encompassing overview of our study's findings about the effects of Europeanization on German political parties is our principal objective. This chapter is extremely important since it answers the main research questions and is the last part of our research project. The quantitative data obtained through analysis of the collected data is the first topic covered in the presentation of the research findings. Our attempt to convey the quantitative components of our conclusions in a basic and simple manner distinguishes this part of the chapter from others in terms of clarity and correctness. We can put the impact of Europeanization on German political parties into context by looking at the numbers. By taking this step, we anticipate that the results of our study is designed to be easily understandable by a wide range of people, and its quantitative aspects will be presented clearly and concisely.

The comprehensive analysis of German federal elections spanning 2002 to 2021 reveals dynamic shifts and patterns in the electoral landscape, reflecting the evolution of major political parties. The research findings highlight significant changes in voter behavior, party strategies, and ideological orientations over the specified period. Through a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of electoral data and qualitative exploration of party documents and statements, the study uncovers nuanced insights into the Europeanization processes of key political entities – CDU/CSU, SPD, AfD, and FDP.

4.1. Quantitative Insights:

Analysis of primary and secondary votes across multiple election cycles identifies fluctuations and trends in voter support for major parties. Understanding these patterns is crucial for discerning the electorate's response to political events, policy changes, and party dynamics. Examination of electoral data provides insights into the performance of political parties, including shifts in party strengths, losses, and gains. The allocation of mandates in the Bundestag reflects the evolving power dynamics and party influence over time. Quantitative analysis enables the identification of correlations between electoral performance and Europeanization strategies. This aspect sheds light on how parties align or diverge in their

positions on EU-related matters, contributing to a deeper understanding of the interplay between domestic politics and European influences.

4.2. Qualitative Insights:

Exploration of party documents, speeches, and statements unveils the ideological foundations shaping each party's stance on Europeanization. Changes in rhetoric or policy emphasis across different election cycles provide insights into the evolving ideological landscape. Qualitative analysis delves into the strategic considerations that influence party positions on Europeanization. Understanding how parties articulate their views and the motivations behind policy shifts enhances the overall comprehension of their engagement with European integration. By integrating quantitative and qualitative insights, the research identifies correlations between electoral performance and Europeanization strategies. This integrated approach offers a holistic understanding of how political parties navigate the complex interplay of domestic and European influences.

4.3. Discussion and Analysis of Research Findings

The most crucial part of this chapter is the analysis of the research results, which takes up most of it. Both the quantitative and qualitative parts of our data will be discussed in this section. At this point in our investigation, we have seen several interesting patterns, trends, and insights in our data, and we want to investigate them thoroughly.

We have never done an analysis like this before. Finding significant patterns and trends in the numerical data is our main goal when interpreting the quantitative outcomes. We can have a better understanding of the findings by doing this. To achieve this, we look for patterns in quantitative data that can explain how Europeanization has affected the political parties in Germany.

The previously stated objective can be realized in this way. It is possible to find quantitative data that supports or contradicts our initial assumptions. Our analysis of the data suggests that these quantitative patterns shine a light on the intricate connection between Europeanization and party behavior. This is because fully grasping the connection between the two requires such knowledge.

We are also currently analyzing the qualitative findings, which have emerged from document review. Our main goal is to identify recurring themes, insightful insights, and notable perspectives. The research meticulously selects elections from 2009 to 2021, allowing for an in-depth examination of Europeanization dynamics over time. The temporal scope captures nuanced changes, highlighting the evolving nature of German political parties' engagement with

Europeanization. The deliberate inclusion of major parties like CDU/CSU, SPD, AfD, and FDP ensures a comprehensive exploration of Europeanization strategies across diverse political landscapes. This approach goes beyond mainstream parties, embracing alternative voices, contributing to a holistic understanding of the Europeanization phenomenon. The research design places a strong emphasis on ethical considerations, ensuring informed consent, data privacy, and participant confidentiality. By prioritizing ethical standards, the study reinforces the responsible and respectful treatment of participants, enhancing the integrity of the research process. Triangulation and pilot testing contribute to the validity and reliability of the study. All of this is happening simultaneously with the study of the quantitative data and the outcomes from the qualitative investigation. By analyzing the qualitative data thoroughly, we were able to show how Europeanization has affected political parties from both a human and a contextual perspective. Our ability to demonstrate the impact of Europeanization on political parties was enhanced by this. By employing this approach, we can unearth recurring themes and different perspectives, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the studied event. Establishing a connection between the quantitative and qualitative data sets is the primary goal of the analysis and must be completed initially. Finding and describing connections and differences wherever they appear in the data is one way to achieve this. The reader will gain a better understanding of the breadth of our research's findings after reading this synthesis. Keeping in mind the ways in which both datasets contribute to the overarching study objectives, we relate these findings to the initial research questions and assumptions. We started our study with the following questions and hypotheses:

In the part that follows, we will analyze the research findings and conduct an in-depth examination of the possible implications of our inquiry. At this point, the preceding phase was all about studying the data; at this point, it's all about making big findings that will impact political science and European studies as a whole. Here, we make the critical transition from the data analysis phase to the phase that follows, where we concentrate on creating substantial, resonant discoveries.

We will begin by discussing the ways in which our study's results relate to, enhance, or cast doubt on the existing body of knowledge and theoretical frameworks. It is critical that we conduct the comparative research necessary to appropriately interpret our results within the context of the broader academic conversation. This allows us to showcase not just the uniqueness of our work but also its ability to build upon and improve upon previously established ideas and paradigms. The credibility of our findings has been a major theme

throughout our presentation, and we have done this by drawing on existing literature while simultaneously laying the groundwork for future research.

We will focus on both the theoretical and the real-world consequences of our research for German political parties' aspirations to become more European in the later half of our debate. Here we investigate how our findings may inform the strategic decisions and operational procedures of political parties functioning in an increasingly Europeanized setting. More specifically, we analyse the potential effects of environmental Europeanization on the Democratic Party of America. By providing academics, political practitioners, and politicians with actionable recommendations based on our research, we hope to fulfil our purpose of providing informed advice. By outlining potential practical applications of our research and demonstrating the relevance of our findings, this section highlights the importance of our investigation.

4.4. Comparative Analysis:

A comparison analysis, a crucial part of mixed-methods research that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data (Wach et al., 2021), is the focus of this section of the chapter. The objective is to compare and contrast the results from these various data sources or procedures in a methodical way. This not only gives a more complete picture of the topic under study, but it also aids in spotting any discrepancies or overlaps in the findings. Our quantitative and qualitative results are compared to highlight where they overlap and where they differ. By going through this procedure, we can determine whether or not various research methods produce consistent results and whether or not they may be used in conjunction with one another. This section's explanations are an attempt to put these differences into perspective, to shed light on why some results ring truer in some data sets than in others.

This part is crucial for mixed-methods studies like ours, which combines qualitative and quantitative information (Wach et al., 2021). The main objective is to compare and contrast the results from various data sources or methods in a methodical way. In addition to giving a better understanding of the research topic, this thorough analysis seeks to show where the results agree or disagree.

Discovering the areas of agreement and disagreement between our quantitative and qualitative results relies heavily on the comparison analysis. Finding out how different research methods stack up against one another and whether they produce consistent results is much easier with its help. If you're wondering why some results stand out more in one dataset than another, the explanations provided below should help put things in perspective.

4.5. Theoretical Implications

Integral to the study's theoretical underpinnings and the research results is the section on theoretical implications. In this section, we consider the theoretical frameworks such as Europeanization and neorealism, and how our research fits into them. We evaluate our results in light of the current theoretical landscape in order to ascertain if they add to, enhance, or challenge the current understanding of Europeanization. By analyzing how well our findings align with existing theories of Europeanization, we want to shed light on how this process works about party politics. Furthermore, we highlight instances where our results add new information or subtleties, indicating how these could expand or change existing theoretical frameworks.

The section on theoretical implications serves as a vital link between the study's theoretical foundations and the research's actual results. Here, we consider how these theoretical frameworks—especially Europeanization and neorealism—are enriched by our study findings. We consider our results in the light of Europeanization and try to figure out whether they fit in with, add to, or contradict the existing theoretical framework. We add to our knowledge of how Europeanization works in connection to party politics by determining how much our findings support current theories of Europeanization. This section explains how our findings can change or enhance existing theoretical frameworks when they bring new insights or subtleties. Concerning neorealism as well, we will be looking at how much our research supports or contradicts the main ideas of this theory. We offer a significant theoretical contribution by analyzing the strategies and actions of German political parties in relation to neorealist ideas. Potential possibilities for theoretical advancement are identified if any deviations or new dynamics emerge.

An essential function of the theoretical implications section is to connect the dots between the study's theoretical underpinnings and its research results. Here, we consider the ways in which these theoretical frameworks, especially those concerning Europeanization and neorealism, are enriched by our research.

We evaluate our results in light of the current theoretical landscape in order to ascertain if they add to, supplement, or challenge the current understanding of Europeanization. By analyzing how well our findings align with existing theories of Europeanization, we want to provide light on how this process works in relation to party politics. We also provide light on situations when our results bring new subtleties or insights, indicating how these could expand or reshape existing theoretical frameworks.

Within the domain of neorealism, we assess if our research supports or contradicts the fundamental principles of this theoretical framework. We provide a significant theoretical contribution by analysing the strategies and actions of German political parties in relation to neorealist ideas. We identify possible topics for theoretical research if any deviations or new dynamics occur.

Here, we assess whether or not our study lends credence to the fundamental principles of neorealism. We provide a significant theoretical contribution by analyzing the strategies and actions of German political parties in relation to neorealist ideas. Any changes or new dynamics that arise are marked as possible places where theory can be expanded upon.

4.6. Recommendations for Policy

Finally, this chapter moves on from theoretical considerations to more concrete, practical measures. Our research yielded a lot of insights, and we've used them to propose a set of policies. The German political parties and Europeanization projects can use these well-thought-out suggestions as a roadmap for their future moves and decisions. Moving forward from the abstract to the concrete, realistic realm is the focus of the last section of this chapter. Based on the wealth of information gleaned from our investigation, we have formulated a number of recommendations for policy change. By adhering to these principles, the Europeanization of Germany and the actions of German political parties can be better guided.

The aforementioned sections have provided empirical evidence and insights that support these recommendations. Our research has shown certain dynamics, opportunities, and obstacles, and these are designed to solve those issues. The essence of these suggestions is that they connect the academic world with the real world. Their goal is to provide political practitioners and lawmakers with research-based methods and insights. We aim for our research findings to have a real and significant impact on the political parties' and Europeanization efforts' strategies and practices.

Our policy recommendations are based on the empirical evidence and insights presented in the previous sections. Many challenges, possibilities, and dynamics have been illuminated by our research, and we have developed solutions to address these issues. In essence, these recommendations work as a conduit between the academic and professional spheres, with the end objective of supplying politicians and political practitioners with strategies and insights derived from substantial research. It is our hope that the political parties and Europeanization initiatives in question will change their strategies and methods as a direct consequence of our analysis.

4.7. Limitations of the study

Recognizing the limitations of our study is the first step towards maintaining transparency and ensuring that our results are understood appropriately.

This will further ensure that our results can be accurately interpreted. Here we will discuss freely and honestly the constraints and limitations that we experienced throughout our investigation. Numerous aspects, such as the study's scope, data collection techniques, and procedure decisions, are impacted by these restrictions.

There was an honest discussion about how these limitations might have affected the results of the study. Because of this, we need to examine all the ways in which our limitations may have introduced biases, changed the data's generalizability, or limited the interpretations we may draw from them. By addressing these limitations directly and including them in the discussion, we provide our readers and other researchers with the background they need to assess the validity and trustworthiness of our work. In order to accomplish this, we furnish the integral background information.

In the part of the chapter where we examine the research results, we go from data analysis to meaningful interpretations that are relevant to political science and European studies more generally. The explanation of the study's results is this part of our chapter. It connects the real world with the theoretical framework and vice versa, functioning as a bridge between the two realms.

Part one of this part will focus on determining how well our study's findings align with the current literature and theoretical frameworks. The degree to which our results are consistent with those of other studies will be our primary focus. Using this comparison study helped us to better understand our work in the broader academic conversation. This allows us to highlight not only the original contributions of our study but also its potential to improve upon or expand upon existing ideas and paradigms. The primary goals of our research are to (1) integrate our findings into the existing body of knowledge and (2) pave the way for future investigations of a different kind.

The final section of the debate delves into the practical implications of our research findings for German political parties and their endeavors in a more Europeanized climate. Here we dissect how the results may explain the tactics and choices made by political parties now functioning in this dynamic setting. At the moment, these groups are vying for control in a dynamic setting. Assuming we are successful in applying our study findings, we aim to provide academics, political authorities, and political practitioners with practical recommendations that will meet their needs. The practical usefulness of our results is enhanced by this feature, which

guarantees that our study is not limited to the academic sector but also greatly impacts the actual world of political practice. Because of this, you can be confident that our research will have a major influence on how politics is really practiced.

Within the section of our chapter devoted to analyzing the research findings, we move from data analysis to relevant interpretations that resonate within the broader field of political science and European studies. We refer to this portion of the chapter as the analysis of the study's findings. By linking the two realms, it facilitates communication between the intellectual world and the realm of actual facts. These are few limitations of this study which should be addressed here such as:

1. Europeanization and Subjectivity:

The term "Europeanization" might mean different things to different academics because of the concept's complexity. The study's ability to interact with and measure Europeanization depends on its ability to supply a clear and generally recognized definition.

2. Temporal limitations:

To account for possible long-term trends and developments, the study may only cover a certain period of the 21st century. The study may not be able to capture the complete picture of Europeanization due to this time constraint.

3. Challenging political landscape:

The study may have missed some rapid changes or events that happened after the data was collected, thus the conclusions may not be applicable to the current political atmosphere. This is because the political landscape is always evolving.

Conclusion

The purpose of this part is to provide a brief but thorough analysis of the most important discoveries, insights, and contributions that emerged from our investigation. With the completion of this portion, we are getting close to the end of our research. By summarizing the most important and significant findings from our study, it captures the core of our investigation in a way that is comparable to a nutshell.

Here we revisit the first research topics and concepts that sparked our investigation. Our investigation was based on these issues and hypotheses. The importance of our work is emphasized within the broader framework of political science and European studies. We demonstrate how our findings add to the knowledge of the intricate connection between Europeanization and the actions of political parties. We achieve this by highlighting the ways in which our research adds to the existing body of knowledge regarding the intricate relationship between Europeanization and the policies enacted by various political factions.

Providing a succinct yet solid framework for understanding the major takeaways from our study, we summarize our principal conclusions and emphasize their significance. To do this, we must stress how crucial the results are. As we wrap up our tenure in academia, it is critical that we acknowledge the substantial impact our research has had on political science and European studies. Among these fields are political science and studies of Europe. Our investigation into the connection between Europeanization and the actions of German political parties has yielded a wealth of fresh information and several significant insights.

After reviewing our main points, it is clear that Europeanization may be a powerful driver for positive change. This factor could significantly alter the dynamics of the political environment and the roles played by various political parties. Because of the complex interplay between national sovereignty and European integration, many groups have been forced to embrace, implement, and even challenge EU regulations. Our research sheds light on the intricate workings of the party strategies developed in response to these demands. By combining quantitative and qualitative data, we have also included pertinent comparisons. Here we have some useful comparisons. Doing research utilizing a wide range of approaches allowed us to validate our findings and present an all-encompassing perspective on the occurrence. Incorporating these results with previously published research in an effort to expand the theoretical landscape has greatly improved our understanding of the profound connection between Europeanization and the actions of political parties. Because we have been able to broaden the current theoretical terrain, this is now within reach.

By reviewing our study's findings in light of their potential applications, it becomes very clear that political parties in Germany can gain valuable strategic insights from our research. Our findings may help people make sense of the increasingly Europeanized political landscape. When it comes to adaptation tactics, power dynamics, and policy positioning, this map will show them the way. The suggestions here are grounded in solid scientific research, so you can be sure that they will work when put into practice.

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