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Popular or not so Popular? Offensive Structural Realist and Institutionalist Predictions of German Neighbors in Regard to German Power.

Introduction
In 2018, Germany has the largest economy in all of Europe. In fact, it has the world’s fourth largest economy. Yet, if one is familiar with recent European history, a powerful Germany has not always brought warm tidings to its European neighbors. Indeed, whether it be 1869 or 1935, it cannot be said that the French have always been happy with their neighbor’s good economic fortunes. Since Angela Merkel ascended to the German Chancellery in 2005, Germany has not only improved its economy, but has done so while successfully weathering the EU financial crisis that erupted in 2009. Other European states have been slow to recover from the crisis, but Germany has continued to grow economically and to increase its influence over the European Union. So what does all of this mean for Germany’s European neighbors? Are they happy with how well Germany is doing, or are they nervous about German growth?

This paper seeks to answer that question by testing the predictions of the two international relations theories employed in this thesis: Offensive Structural Realism and Institutionalism. This chapter will first outline a literature review of what each theory predicts about neighboring state reactions to a rising power. Next, this paper will discuss this case’s operationalization of the dependent variable followed by an outline of each theory’s independent variables. This paper will detail the methodology of how each theory was tested. Chiefly, this paper will test the public opinions of Germany in four states: Germany, Great Britain, France, and Spain. This public opinion in each state will verify whether each theory predicted the actual outcomes resulting from Germany’s rise in power. After examining both theories, this paper will conclude with my argument: because of institutional rules and economic interdependence,
German neighbors generally show no signs of disapproving of German influence because of its economic power. This finding is consistent with the predictions of the Institutionalist theory and contradicts the predictions of Offensive Structural Realism.

**Literature Review**

**Offensive Structural Realism Predictions of State Responses to a Rising Power**

This section details what a rising power would look like for an Offensive Structural Realist in the context of Europe today. First, Germany exists in a multi-polar system. This does not mean that all states on the European continent are equal in terms of power. Instead, power in a multi-polar system is more spread among the European states rather than primarily concentrated in one or two states. Offensive Structural Realists regard a multi-polar system as especially dangerous. Because a state’s primary goal is survival, it should be fearful of another state gaining power relative to other states in the region. Why? Offensive Structural Realism predicts that a state who gains relative power “is likely to behave more aggressively, because it has the capability as well as the incentive to do so” (Mearsheimer 2001, 37). This is because all states want to become a regional hegemonic power since gaining a regional hegemonic status is when a state is most secure; it can control all other states around it and better ensure that no other state will harm them.

For Offensive Structural Realists, a rising power can rise in two ways. There is hard military power, which produces the most fear. Think of Germany rearming before the Second World War. An Offensive Structural Realist would say that if Germany today was building a large military relative to Great Britain and France, then German neighbors should be suspicious. The balance of power would be shifting to Germany and away from other states.
Another way a state can rise in power is through what Mearsheimer calls *latent* power. He writes that latent power “is based on the size of [a state’s] population and the level of its wealth” (Mearsheimer 2001, 43). While an Institutionalist would just call this economic power, Mearsheimer refers to it as latent because of its potential for conversion into hard power. If a state has a large population and much economic prowess, it can quickly turn that population into soldiers and the economic strength into a component of military strength. Thus, in a multipolar system, an Offensive Structural Realist would predict that when one state is gaining more latent power, its neighboring states should become more fearful.

Yet the Realist tradition also has expectations for how states should behave in international regimes.¹ Indeed, Germany today participates in many international regimes, and this paper will focus specifically on the European Union. As the literature review of Institutionalism below will explain, Institutionalists believe that international regimes can create rules and norms that alleviate the inherent suspicion that states have towards one another. While Offensive Structural Realists believe that states may join an international regime, they believe that a state would only join for its own benefit. If the balance of power swings to one particular state that shares a regime with other states, Realists—both Offensive Structural Realists and others—would expect that the more powerful state would not be as tightly bound by the regime’s standards, rules, and norms. “As [states’] capabilities, interests, or both change, they may alter such arrangements [relating to regimes] or the nature of their participation in them” (Baldev 1995, 142).

Unlike Institutionalists, Offensive Structural Realists see balance of power as the key to state behavior. If Germany today were gaining a significant advantage in either hard or ‘latent’

¹ This expectation of state behavior in regimes is not limited to Offensive Structural Realists.
power, it would not necessarily matter that Germany is a part of the EU, NATO, etc. Instead, the expectation would be for other states to become suspicious, fearful, or not very favorable towards German influence.

**Institutionalism Predictions of Responses of Other Regional Powers to a Rising Power**

This section will provide an overview of what a rising power looks like in the Institutionalist context of this case study. Institutionalists are similar to Offensive Structural Realists in their assumptions of how states interact with one another (Keohane 1984, x). The main difference between the two theories is that Institutionalists do not assume that all states have some offensive capability. Further, factors like hard and economic—which is latent for Offensive Structural Realists—power are important for Institutionalists. Yet when looking at a rising power, Institutionalists believe that international regimes can help decrease the fear in the international system; this is a fear that results because of a rising power. Indeed, a strongly rooted regime can influence the behavior of the states that created it (Krasner 1982, 357). Unlike in Offensive Structural Realism, polarity is also not a primary concern. What is important is the type of regimes that the states in Europe are a part of. In other words, are the states within the region members of regimes that establish principles, rules, and norms in which the states can monitor each other, work with each other, and not forgo their own interests (Keohane 1982, 338)?

If a state is gaining greater hard or economic power, an institutionalist would first look at the regimes that the state and its neighbors are a part of. If an Institutionalist was examining whether modern Germany was a rising power, an Institutionalist would inspect whether Germany’s shared regimes were (1) strong and rooted regimes coupled with a high degree of
interdependence between states. This should discourage any rising power from maliciously deviating from established rules and norms. (2) If this were the case, Institutionalists do not fear a rising power just because it is rising; rather, they only fear it when it begins to violate established principles, rules, and norms for its own benefit. Regimes have what Axelrod and Keohane call “the shadow of the future” which can damage the reputation of a state if it begins to deviate at the expense of other states (Axelrod and Keohane 1985, 227). In other words, by de-incentivizing the prospect of deviating from a regime, a regime influences state behavior. This paper will examine one particular regime that Germany is a member of, the EU.

Thus, the main conclusion of Institutionalism for a rising power in the context of this paper would be this: despite Germany gaining power economically, as long as Germany, or any rising power, is keeping with the established principles, rules, and norms of the regimes it shares with its neighbors and is economically interdependent with them, there will be no reason for neighboring states to have a negative view of the rising state’s influence. Unlike the Realists, Institutionalists do not fear a change in the balance of power will necessarily change the character or usefulness of the regime. Depending on the strength of the regime, the regime can influence the behavior of a powerful state more than a powerful state could influence the regime. As Krasner writes, “regimes may function as intervening variables. Regimes may assume a life of their own, a life independent of the basic casual factor that led to their creation in the first place” (Krasner 1982, 357).

**Dependent Variable: Response to Germany’s Rising Power**

This section will discuss the operationalization of this case’s dependent variable. The dependent variable is whether or not the public opinions of Great Britain, France, and Spain

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2 Meaning that there is no reason to fear a rising state.
decrease because of Germany’s rise in power. Offensive Structural Realists expect that states will fear a rise in German power, which will lead to a lack of cooperation between states or a form of balancing against the rising power. Institutionalists examine regime factors like compliance with regime rules, and an Institutionalist’s dependent variable predictions stem from the rising power’s behavior in regards to the regime factors.

However, a note should be made about the language for this case’s dependent variable. The language that Offensive Structural Realism (and sometimes Institutionalism) uses to describe relations between states involves terms like “fear or suspicion.” In other words, if Germany where building a very large military, Offensive Structural Realists would say something like, “other states will now begin to fear or grow suspicious of them.” However, in order to verify the dependent variable for each tested theory, this paper is employing a series of BBC World Service/PIPA/Globescan public opinion surveys conducted about German influence. The survey gathers the public opinion within several states about their positive or negative views on a particular state’s influence. The wording of the polls’ survey question is this: Please tell me if you think each of the following countries are having a mainly positive or mainly negative influence in the world? The country whose positivity or negativity of influence being measured in this paper is, of course, Germany.

The wording of the survey question above does not ask whether the surveyed states ‘fear’ Germany. However, the public opinion of Germany’s influence works in a similar way as to measure fear, since it would be illogical for public opinion to both fear Germany and while also favoring Germany’s influence. Ideally, a public opinion survey would use the word ‘fear’. Yet, for the purposes of this paper, public opinion on German influence is a good substitute.
Independent Variables  
Offensive Structural Realism

This section will detail the independent variables of Offensive Structural Realism and how they act on the dependent variable. In order to test Offensive Structural Realism, this paper will use the following independent variables for Germany, Great Britain, France, and Spain: military spending, population, and the share of wealth within the EU. The only ‘hard power’ indicator is the size of military spending, which is measured as military spending as a percentage of GDP. The other variables are ‘latent’ power indicators. Table 2 below shows the independent variables, dependent variable, and Offensive Structural Realism’s predicted outcomes. If Germany has shown an increase in military size, has a significantly larger population, or holds more wealth than its neighbors, then Offensive Structural Realism would predict that those neighbors should be hold a negative opinion of German influence. Data for the independent variables will come from the years 2008-2014. The data will be cross-referenced to the BBC World Service/PIPA/Globescan survey in order to verify the dependent variable outcome.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Predicted Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of Military Increase</td>
<td>Positive or Negative Opinion?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population Increase</td>
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<td>Negative Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of Wealth Increase</td>
<td>Positive or Negative Opinion?</td>
<td>Negative Opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutionalism  

This section will detail the independent variables of Institutionalism and how they act on the dependent variable. This paper will use the EU as an institution to test two independent variables. The first independent variable will test if Germany is compliant with two specific EU monetary rules: keeping its deficit to 3% of GDP and keeping its debt as 60% of GDP (How
Economic and Monetary Unions Work). While the EU has many rules across various subjects that its member states are to adhere to, the recent financial crisis and the common currency provide a particular salience to the economic rules. Since the economy of each EU member state is tied to the overall economic health of the EU, each member has an incentive to ensure that a member state does not, for example, run a deficit at the expense of other member states. This is why the deficit and debt rules are being tested in this paper. The next independent variable will test how economically interdependent Germany is with its neighbors. This will be measured by the import and export relationship the three states have with Germany. Both variables will be cross-referenced with the public opinion survey of German influence. Table 2 shows that if Germany is following the rules of the EU, and if it is economically interdependent, then despite its economic power rise, Institutionalism predicts that other states should not hold a negative view of German influence.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follows Institution Rules</td>
<td>Positive or Negative Opinion?</td>
<td>Positive Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Economic Interdependence</td>
<td>Positive or Negative Opinion?</td>
<td>Positive Opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methodology

This section details how each theory will be tested, beginning with data and following with analysis methods. First, in regards to data, the public opinion poll that is being used to verify the dependent variable comes from a series of surveys conducted jointly by the BBC World Service, the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), and Globescan. The same survey was conducted each year from 2008-2014, and the survey question remained the same for each year: Please tell me if you think each of the following countries are having a mainly positive
or mainly negative influence in the world? Germany itself, Great Britain, France, and Spain all had public opinion response for each of the measured years in regards to public opinion of German influence. The states’ answers on whether they had a positive opinion of German influence will act as the actual dependent variable outcome and will be contrasted against each theory’s predicted dependent variable outcomes.

Next are the sources of the independent variables’ data. In regards to the Offensive Structural Realist independent variables, the data for military expenditure, population, and share of wealth all come from the World Bank Development Indicators database. Military expenditure is measured by the percentage of GDP that each state spends on its military. Population is measured by total population. Share of wealth is each state’s GDP divided by the GDP of the European Union. In regards to the Institutionalist independent variables, the data for the percentage of deficit to government GDP for each state comes from the Eurostat database of “General Government Deficit and Surplus”. The percentage of debt to GDP for each state comes from the Eurostat database of “General Government Gross Debt”. For the data for each measured state’s import and export relationship with Germany comes from the World Bank Trade Solution database.

The analysis method begins with testing both theories separately, beginning with Offensive Structural Realism followed by Institutionalism. Within the testing of each theory, data is extracted for each independent variable for the years of 2008-2014. Each independent variable section will contain a chart that corresponds both the data of that independent variable and the BBC/PIPA/Globescan survey data that represents the actual dependent variable. This paper will conclude each independent variable section with an analysis of whether the
independent variable acted on the dependent variable and whether the tested theory’s prediction was valid or determinable.

The independent variables being tested are by no means the only testable independent variables. However, the independent variables being tested in this paper are here because they either have been shown in the literature to be imperative to validating each theory’s predictions, or they represent a large relative difference between Germany and the other tested states.

Results of Analysis?

Offensive Structural Realism

Independent Variable 1: What is the Military Expenditure Spending?

This section will examine the findings of military spending in Germany, Great Britain, France, and Spain. The spending is measured by how much each state spends in total US dollars. Figure 1 will also include public opinion towards German influence for the years 2008-2014, and it will be followed by a brief analysis of the findings, the dependent variable, and finally whether or not this first independent variable works for, against, or not at all in verifying the Offensive Structural Realist prediction.
Figure 1 above shows Germany’s, France’s, Great Britain’s, and Spain’s military spending in total US dollars. Both France and Great Britain spent around $60 billion every year during 2008-2014. Germany’s military spending never breached $50 billion mark. Spain spent the lowest. The percentage of each state’s favorability towards German influence is represented by the orange line. German military spending stayed consisted, both in terms of percentage of GDP spent and in total US dollars. Indeed, German military spending is almost always $10 billion less than that of Great Britain and France.

This hard power indicator for Offensive Structural Realism proves indeterminable for helping prove the theory’s prediction that an increase in German power causes its neighbors to have a lesser favorability of German influence. Because Germany did not starkly increase its
military spending, the independent variable had no force to act on the dependent variable. Thus, we must look to another independent variable for this theory.

**Independent Variable 2: What is the Population Size?**

This section will compare German population with the other three states measured and compare those numbers to public opinion of German influence. Population is measured by total number of people and the population growth rate. The data in figure 2 shows that Germany has a significantly larger population that the other three states. However, table 3 shows Germany’s population growth rate is significantly lower than the other three states. Despite Germany having a larger population, the public opinions of the other states are generally high. The only exception would be Spain in 2014, but if this population variable had true force to act on other states’ favorability of German influence, then all states should have never started with a high public opinion in 2008.
Offensive Structural Realism makes a prediction that states should react to Germany’s higher population. Indeed, Germany’s obvious advantage in population should cause concern among its neighbors. Yet France and Great Britain’s public opinions increase. Spain’s public
opinion does trend downward, but because Spain had a high opinion of Germany in 2008 while Germany’s population was the largest in Europe [excluding Russia], it seems that Spain’s public opinion is not in consequence to Germany’s population. While table 3’s exhibition of Germany’s low population growth rate could potentially be used as a caveat in this variable, the gap of actual population between Germany and the other three states is too large to ignore. Now, let’s transition to another independent variable: share of wealth.

**Independent Variable 3: What is the Share of Wealth?**

In this section we will examine the share of wealth of the measured states within the EU. This is measured by the total percentage of GDP each states holds of the EU’s total GDP. Below figure 3 represents only Germany, Great Britain, France, and Spain. However, figure 4 lists all EU member states’ share of wealth in 2016.
In figure 3, Germany has steadily increased in its wealth share within the EU. Great Britain has seen mixed but mostly positive growth. France has been stable. Spain is the only measured state with a sizeable decrease in share of wealth within the EU. However, among France and Great Britain, public opinion of Germany has increased despite Germany’s increasing share of wealth in Europe. Spain’s public opinion has decreased.
With Germany having a sizeable and increasing relative large share of wealth, Offensive Structural Realism would predict that other states within its region should be worried. Indeed, Mearsheimer writes that “the great powers in the international system are invariably among the world’s wealthiest states” (Mearsheimer 2001, 61). However, Great Britain and France do have a highly favorable opinion of Germany. Indeed, as German share of wealth increased from 2008-2014, so did the British and French favorability of German influence. Spain would be the only evidence in favor of Offensive Structural Realism, but because Great Britain and France are so different from Spain in their public opinions of Germany, it is reasonable to conclude that the
share of wealth independent variable does not produce the dependent variable necessary to prove this theory.

Conclusion?

Offensive Structural Realism predicts that states will have a negative view of a rising power in a multi-polar system. This test case of Germany used the hard power independent variable of military spending, and two latent power independent variables in population and share of wealth. Germany’s percentage of GDP on military spending and spending in total US dollars is consistently lower than Great Britain and France, so there is not enough information to adequately show that this independent variable is acting on the dependent variable. The two latent power variables indicate that this theory’s predictions do not come to fruition. Indeed, Germany’s population is much larger. Germany holds a far larger share of wealth in Europe. However, the data showed an increase in positive public opinion of German influence in Great Britain and France. Again, Spain is the lone exception which merits further explanation that goes outside the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the Spanish exception does not outweigh the trends seen in Great Britain and France. If Offensive Structural Realism’s predictions were correct, Great Britain and France should have had a negative opinion of German influence, not an increasingly positive one. Therefore, Offensive Structural Realism does not hold in this case.

Table 4

<table>
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<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Predicted Outcome on Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Actual Outcome</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of Military Increase</td>
<td>Not Positive</td>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Increase</td>
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<td>Positive Opinion</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Institutionalism**

**Independent Variable 1: Is Germany following the EU’s rules?**

This paper is now switching to the Institutionalist theory and its first independent variable test. Germany shares many regimes with its European neighbors, especially with the three being tested today. However, this section will be concerned with the European Union and two specific monetary rules. The EU provides stringent principles, rules, and norms in which its member states must adhere to if the regime is to function properly. Concerning economic policy, the European Union coordinates the economic and fiscal policies of its member states in order to work as a single market. This requires strong supervision and monitoring of the financial policies of the member states (How Economic and Monetary Unions Work). For example, under the Growth and Stability Pact, EU member states must make their “deficits to be less than 3% GDP” and their “government debt to be less than 60% of GDP” (How Economic and Monetary Unions Work). Since the economic health of each member state is tied to the economic health of the EU, all member states are invested in these regime agreements. States will be monitored and expected to follow them. If one-member state breaks the rules in order to pursue an egotistical advantage while other states suffer, then an Institutionalist would predict that neighboring states would have a negative opinion of that state. If Germany’s recent prospering is due to its breaking of the EU rules, then it follows that its neighboring states would hold a negative view of it.

This variable will examine the two EU rule indicators mentioned above: (1) EU member states deficits to be less than 3% GDP, and (2) EU member states keeping government debt to be less than 60% of GDP. Figure 5 examines deficit to GDP. None of the four states except for Germany were within this stated rule. Germany, likely in consequence to the EU financial crisis in 2009, did briefly dip below the 3% deficit mark. It goes beyond the scope of this paper to
examine why each of the measured states did or did not meet the 3% benchmark. Nevertheless, the numbers do show Germany did generally, except between 2009-2011, meet this rule. Further, Great Britain and Frances’ public opinion of Germany increased over these years.

*Figure 5*

**Deficit to GDP (%) and Popularity of Germany**

![Graph](image.png)

The trends of Deficit to GDP (%) and Popularity for Year broken down by state. Color shows details about Deficit to GDP (%) and Popularity.


Public opinion source: Surveys conducted by BBC World Service/Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA)/Globescan. The surveys were conducted every year from 2008-2014. See bibliography for information regarding each survey.

Survey Question: “Please tell me if you think each of the following countries are having a mainly positive or mainly negative influence in the world?” For each survey in the years 2008-2014, I used the percentage of respondents within Germany, Great Britain, France, and Spain who ranked Germany as having a positive influence.

Figure 6 deals with debt to GDP. None of the four states measured met the EU goal of their government debt to not exceed 60% of GDP. All the states were well above that mark, but only Germany saw its debt to GDP percentage begin to decrease in 2012. Spain, on the other hand, saw its debt rise from well below 60% of GDP to over 100%. Great Britain, like Spain, also started with a debt below 60% and saw its debt rise above that benchmark. While Germany was not in compliance with this rule, none of the four states were after 2012. Therefore, this seems to eliminate the possibility of a backlash towards Germany for not being in compliance
with this rule. Again, except for Spain, the public opinion of Germany increased in Great Britain and France.

*Figure 6*

Thus, this first independent variable shows that Germany and the other three states measured share a regime that has established principles, rules, and norms which all member states should follow. The figure 5 showed that Germany was in compliance with one of the rules.

Figure 6 showed that Germany did run a higher debt to GDP percentage, but all other states did as well, and Germany was the only one decreasing that debt. An Institutionalist would predict that states only become wary of a rising power if it is breaking the rules of the regime at the expense of other states. Since public opinion of Germany is high in Great Britain and France, it would seem that Germany is not breaking rules at their expense. Spain is an outlier that deserves further exploration, but its unpopularity of Germany does not seem to be tied to Germany’s
incompliance of the regime’s rules. Indeed, Germany is closer to compliance than Spain in these rules.

**Independent Variable 2: Is there Economic Interdependence?**

Another important variable in the Institutionalist theory is the economic interdependence of states. This section is concerned with data that shows the imports to Germany from the other three measured states and the exports from Germany to those same states. This paper will then examine the economic interdependence paired with German public opinion.

Below, figure 7 shows the percentage of imports that come to Germany from other states. Spain, France, and Great Britain all differ in terms of their export percentage to Germany. There does not seem to be a correlation between the German import percentage of specific states and public opinion of Germany. Indeed, when Germany was receiving the most British exports from the years measured, 2008, Great Britain had the lowest public opinion of Germany for the years measured. However, this could be explained by the percentage of German exports Great Britain was receiving. Nevertheless, this indicator does not seem to particularly help or hinder the economic interdependence variable.
Figure 7

Figure 7 shows the percentage of German exports that go to each of the measured states. There seems to be a small correlation between the percentage of exports from Germany and the receiving state’s public opinion. Indeed, Spanish public opinion began to tumble when they received a lesser percentage of German exports. The small increase in British imports from Germany corresponds with an uptick in public opinion. However, the correlation is not strong when it comes to France, yet they still had an increasingly positive public opinion of Germany from 2012-2014, despite them receiving a lesser percentage of German exports. Nevertheless, by this indicator, both Great Britain and France are much more economically interdependent with Germany than Spain. From the years 2008-2014, Great Britain and France never fell out of Germany’s top ten trading partners (UN Comtrade database 2008-2014). Spain, in all years

Figure 8 below shows the percentage of German exports that go to each of the measured states. There seems to be a small correlation between the percentage of exports from Germany and the receiving state’s public opinion. Indeed, Spanish public opinion began to tumble when they received a lesser percentage of German exports. The small increase in British imports from Germany corresponds with an uptick in public opinion. However, the correlation is not strong when it comes to France, yet they still had an increasingly positive public opinion of Germany from 2012-2014, despite them receiving a lesser percentage of German exports. Nevertheless, by this indicator, both Great Britain and France are much more economically interdependent with Germany than Spain. From the years 2008-2014, Great Britain and France never fell out of Germany’s top ten trading partners (UN Comtrade database 2008-2014). Spain, in all years

\footnote{Their lack of German imports may be offset by their increase in exports to Germany.}
except 2008, was outside the German top ten in both imports and exports (UN Comtrade database 2008-2014).

Thus, it seems that the Institutionalist theory is correct that economic interdependence does matter. Although Germany is itself doing well economically relative to Great Britain and France, both of those states have a significantly higher economic interdependence with Germany than Spain does with Germany. This paper does not claim that Spain’s lesser degree of economic interdependence is the sole reason for its fall in its public opinion of Germany. That subject itself deserves exploration in another paper. Yet what this paper does claim is that there is a correlation between economic interdependence and public opinion.

Figure 8

German Exports to State (%)


Public opinion source: Surveys conducted by BBC World Service/Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA)/Globescan. The surveys were conducted every year from 2008-2014. See bibliography for information regarding each survey.

Survey Question: “Please tell me if you think each of the following countries are having a mainly positive or mainly negative influence in the world?” For each survey in the years 2008-2014, I used the percentage of respondents within Germany, Great Britain, France, and Spain who ranked Germany as having a positive influence.
Conclusion?

This paper tested two independent variables for the Institutionalist theory. The first was whether Germany followed the rules of a shared regime, and the data showed that Germany was in compliance with one monetary rule, and that all four states were in violation of the second rule. Thus, the first independent variable delivers murky results that do not prove or invalidated the Institutionalist predictions. The second independent variable tested was whether economic interdependence helped the public opinion of German influence. In this variable, the data showed that despite Germany’s rise, both France and Great Britain had a high degree of economic interdependence and a growing favorable view of Germany. Again, Spain is an outlier in terms of their opinion of Germany. But Spain is also not as economically interdependent with Germany. That could be part of the reason for Spain’s falling opinion of Germany. The table below juxtaposes Institutionalism’s predicted outcomes against the actual outcomes of this test case. It would seem that Institutionalism offers greater explanatory power.

<table>
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<td>Positive Opinion</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

This paper sought to explore how German neighbors feel about Germany as a rising power in a modern context. Does German economic prosperity lead to less German popularity among its neighbors, or do the institutions in which Germany and its neighbors are a part of keep
such unpopularity in check? The public opinion survey data showed that in Great Britain and France, public opinion of German influence increased between 2008-2014. In Spain, public opinion of German influence fell. This paper used the public opinion data to test the predictions of two international relations theories in order to see which had the most explanatory power. Despite Germany having a larger population and holding a larger share of wealth in the EU, the dependent variable outcomes were not consistent with the Offensive Structural Realist predictions. However, one of the Institutionalist theory predictions was consistent with the public opinion data. That is, despite Germany having an advantage in variables like population and share of wealth, there is great economic interdependence between Germany, France, and Great Britain. Both have a highly favorable opinion of German influence. So, what does this mean in context for present-day Germany? It seems that regimes do matter. Indeed, if Germany continues to reside in regimes like the EU with its neighbors, and if Germany can keep a high degree of economic interdependence with them, then German neighbors should not ‘fear’ German power. Indeed, Spain did have a lower public opinion of Germany by 2014, but Spain was not as economically intertwined with Germany either. Of course, more data and years could help to make this argument stronger. Nevertheless, what data does strongly show is that states do not hold a negative opinion of German influence just because Germany holds more wealth in Europe or has a higher population. If this were true, favorability of German influence would have been lower in all measured states in 2008. In other words, neighboring states do not resent Germany because it has power in and of itself. If a state in Europe has a lower public opinion of German influence, it must stem from a more nuanced reason.
Bibliography


