Chapter 6
Polish–German Relations between 1989–2016: Bandwagoning and Its Limits

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The collapse of the bipolar world order in 1989–1990 has opened a new window of opportunity for the improvement of Polish–German relations. The first visit of Chancellor Helmut Kohl to Poland in November 1989 marked a new beginning. Not only was it highly symbolic, but many bilateral agreements were signed which marked the beginning of a new political and legal basis for these relations. It was also a clear first step. The fact that Chancellor Kohl had to interrupt his visit to Poland due to the fall of the Berlin Wall confirmed that. The issue of German unification was back on the agenda, and the future of European politics lay open.

As Kenneth Waltz writes in *Theory of International Politics,* weak states can choose one of two strategies in their relations with strong states: bandwagoning or balancing. Bandwagoning is a strategy that is opposed to balancing. Waltz argues that the weak state will choose this strategy when there are no prospects of successful balancing (Waltz 1979). While balancing means to ally oneself with a weaker power, bandwagoning means to ally oneself with the stronger power. As Stephen Walt writes, weak states 'are more likely to opt for the winning side' (Walt 1985, 17). As Randall L. Schweller suggests, the goal of a weak state may be to profit from this. This strategy may be a useful tool for strengthening the weaker party (Schweller 1994). The discussion around balancing and bandwagoning also features in international political economy. As E. Heginbotham and R. J. Samuels argue, while relatively economically strong countries compete for the leading position in the technological race, those without a developed scientific and technical base will probably bond with a stronger partner (Heginbotham–Samuels 1998). A literature analysis concerning bandwagoning suggests that in the early 1990s, Germany was the ideal choice for Poland to partner up with. An alliance with the United States and Germany would strengthen Poland's international standing and support internal reforms.

The aim of this chapter is to evaluate the initiation, development and limits of Poland bandwagoning with Germany in the last quarter of the century. I will argue that bandwagoning was characteristic of Polish policy toward Germany up until Poland's accession to the EU. Since then, both countries have clashed on numerous issues.

This chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, I will evaluate the historical, legal and geopolitical background of the establishment of 'new' Polish–German relations in 1989–1990; secondly, I will analyse Polish–German political relations; and in the third part I will consider economic issues. In the final part, the role of relations with Russia in the context of energy security will be analysed.

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1. Towards 'New' Polish–German Relations

One crucial element of the 'new' beginning in Polish–German relations was the signature of two treaties. The first one was the Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Poland on the confirmation of the border between them, which was signed on 14 November 1990; the second being the Treaty between the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany on Good Neighbourliness and Friendly Cooperation, signed on 17 June 1991. The Treaty on Good Neighbourliness was intended to bring about a new era in bilateral relations.

The signing of the German–Polish Border Treaty was extremely important. During Germany's unification process in 1989–1990, Chancellor Helmuth Kohl's position as regards the German–Polish border was ambiguous. There was concern that the reunification of Germany might re-open the border issue. The diplomatic efforts of Poland led to four great powers (the USSR, the USA, the United Kingdom and France) supporting the border status quo. The Border Treaty ended the contention of the German Government on the border issue (BARCZ 1994). On the other hand, the Treaty on Good Neighbourliness would open a new era in Polish–German relations. Four thematic issues are distinguishable in the structure of the treaty. The first one concerns provisions on the principles of bilateral relations. The second thematic issue is devoted to the establishment of a system of political consultations. The third includes very important regulations regarding the issues of the German minority in Poland and people of Polish descent in Germany. The fourth thematic issue covers areas of bilateral cooperation. This part is very detailed. Out of the long list of areas of cooperation, we should especially focus on the economic and financial one, which in the following decades would be of great interest (JANICKI et al. 1992).

Polish–German (FRG) relations were weighed down by historical conflicts and 40 years of belonging to opposing political alliances. The first efforts to improve bilateral relations, undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s, brought little success. The first signs of improvement came in the 1970s with the new eastern policy of Chancellor Willy Brandt and then Helmut Schmidt. But the process was hampered due to belonging to opposite political blocs, as well as the dramatic deterioration of the economic situation in Poland in the 1980s. The attempts of 40 years to improve relations did not result in much (BINGEN 1998).

After the start of democratic reforms in Poland in 1989, a new foreign policy was formulated. The goal became to integrate with the institutions of Western Europe and the Euro-Atlantic area, especially to accede to NATO and join the European Union (EU). The accession to the EU would strengthen democratic principles in the political system, increase security, consolidate the market economy, and improve Poland's international standing (SKUBISZEWSKI 1994). Germany was seen as the most important partner since it was regarded as the most powerful country in Europe, whose support or lack thereof might decide the success or failure of Polish foreign policy (KUŹNIAR 2008, 64–65). For Poland, integration with the EU was a question of Polish–German relations. As Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski indicated, improvement of relations with Germany was his primary goal (BARTOSZEWSKI 2009, 10). The Polish Ambassador in Berlin, Janusz Reiter (1990–1995), suggested that for Poland, much like for France, European policy was primarily an issue of relations with Germany (REITER 1996, 109). The term coined by Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski, the "Polish–German community of

interest" (Malinowski–Mildenberger 2001), may indicate how important the relations were. Poland's diplomatic goal was to build this community.

Germany also wanted to improve relations with Poland. It did not want to remain an external border of the EU and was interested in the extension of the "western European zone of stability […] toward east" (Schmidt 1996, 212). Partnership with countries in Central and Eastern Europe was one of Germany's defined foreign policy priorities in the early 1990s. Three terms should describe these relations: stability, cooperation and integration. The EU's enlargement was considered to be in Germany's national interest (Weißbuch 1994). There was also a strong economic interest in strengthening relations with central European countries. These presented new markets for German products, investment opportunities for German companies, and a possible supply of cheap natural resources and semi-finished products (Haftendorn 1997, 142). It is important to note that Germany gave special attention to relations with Poland, which played a key role in German attempts to reshape this part of Europe (Lippert 1996, 127–128).

2. Political Relations between Germany and Poland

Political relations between Poland and Germany in the last quarter of the century may be divided into four periods. The first one was about "creating the political and treaty foundations of good neighbourliness (1989–1992)". The second period was "the first stage of implementing the treaty on good neighbourliness (1993–1998)". The third was "the stage of disruptions in the implementation of the good neighbourhood policy (1998–2007)", and the fourth period may be called "the pragmatic stage in the implementation of the good neighbourhood policy (2007–2016)" (Popławski, Dariusz 2016). The 1990s were a time of great optimism in Polish–German relations. The language was determined by a group of politicians, journalists, scholars and activists who worked on improving Polish–German relations and who, in the 1990s, saw the chance for their 'plans' to come to fruition. The 1990s (the first and second periods) brought about the improvement of bilateral relations, including relationships between the people. A variety of public initiatives, including the establishment of a German–Polish Youth Office and partnerships between Polish and German cities began to form a part of bilateral relations.

But reconciliation proved to be limited. Already in the mid-1990s, some participants in the reconciliation process held the belief that things were not going well. Klaus Bachmann wrote in 1994 about the "kitsch of reconciliation" (Bachmann 1994). Artur Hajnicz declared that "instead of a deep close-up, there was a blast of distrust" (Hajnicz 1995, 45). This was a new and critical view of the development of Polish–German relations. It contrasted radically with the assurances given by political leaders that there was an excellent atmosphere in Polish–German relations.

In the 1990s, the interest of both governments was centred around the issue of Polish accession to the EU and NATO. Germany's role was especially important in Poland's attempts to join the EU. It proved to be a successful promoter of a double strategy: the simultaneous deepening and enlargement of the EU (Hilz 2016, 117). There was a popular phrase going around which said that "the road from Warsaw to Brussels passes through Berlin". It was not only geographically but also politically correct. But Poland's accession

to the EU brought about a new era in Polish–German relations. The early 21st century saw Poland and Germany holding different views as regards some of the most important issues in international politics.

Firstly, there was Germany's opposition towards intervention in Iraq led by the United States. In contrast, Poland supported it. The German position concerning the conflict put Poland in an uncomfortable place. Poland sees in the United States the main guarantor of its security and its most important military ally (ZAJĄC 2009). The disagreement between Germany and the United States forced Poland to support one of the two – a situation it wished to avoid (WIĘC 2011).

Another example of the growing differences between German and Polish governments was the decision, taken in 2005 by the government of Gerhard Schröder, to build the Nord Stream pipeline together with Russia. Germany saw it as a commercial project which was important both in terms of European energy security and developing a closer relationship between Germany, the EU and Russia. On the other hand, Poland regarded the project as a deepening of the EU's energy dependence on Russia, which handed it a powerful means to influence European affairs. After Russia halted the delivery of gas through Ukraine during the winter of 2008–2009, German politicians started to pay more attention to energy security. However, the project was continued. The Nord Stream raises the question of Russia's future role in Europe and how this potential role is to be interpreted. Poland sees Russia mostly as a threat, while Germany sees it as an opportunity (OCHMANN 2011).

The third issue that Poland and Germany were divided on in the first decade was the issue of reforming the EU. For a long time, Poland opposed proposals that strengthened the largest Member States and that were supported by Germany (KOSZEL 2010). The fourth issue was related to German historical policy. The concept of "Centre Against Expulsions" which was promoted by BdV and personalised by the CDU politician Erika Steinbach opened once more the discussion about the Second World War and the period directly following its end (RUCHNIEWICZ 2011). As this short review demonstrates, in the first decade of the 21st century there was already a clear marked shift from the 1990s. In the relevant literature, the term "partnership from long distance" was coined (WOLFF-POWĘSKA 2004).

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, Polish and German politicians put more effort into reducing tensions. The international situation had also changed, and the global financial crisis shifted the German interest toward the Eurozone. Polish and German interests were once again similar. During his speech in Berlin in 2011, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski even argued that he feared "German power less than German inactivity" (SIKORSKI 2011). At the time, the countries were only divided on energy and climate policy (GAWLIKOWSKA-FYK et al. 2017). Germany was working on transforming the European energy system to one based on renewable energy sources, while Poland was more sceptical and expected exemptions for its energy system that, traditionally, had been based on local coal reserves.

Since 2015, relations have deteriorated once again as Chancellor Angela Merkel has overhauled the German migration policy and opened the borders to migrants. This step did not enjoy the sympathy of the Polish Government in Warsaw, neither before nor after the election in 2015. Despite that, the PO–PSL Government accepted the quotas in the last months of its tenure. But the new government is not willing to support this policy and it refused the mandatory EU quotas for refugees that were promoted by Germany. The two

countries have differing views on major European policies (energy, climate protection, immigration and the rule of law). However, they share similar perspectives on the Euro crisis as well as on relations with Russia in the context of the Ukrainian crisis (Malinowski 2016).

3. Economic Relations between Germany and Poland

The development of economic relations with Germany has been very important for Polish foreign policy since the early 1990s. In the joint 1989 Kohl–Mazowiecki declaration, it was stated that "the special importance of their economic and financial cooperation is a factor that strengthens and enlivens their overall relationship. They will therefore continue their efforts to create favourable conditions for the further development of this cooperation" (Die Bundesregierung 1989). As Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski argued: "We attach great importance to Polish–German cooperation in all areas, and first of all in the economic, technological and financial sphere. Greater involvement of German capital in Poland, especially investments of large corporations, is desirable" (Skubiszewski 1997, 327).

The first steps of the development of economic relations were focused on the management of Poland's debt and the stabilisation of its economy. Poland had been unable to fully pay back its foreign debt since the 1980s. This was due to an economic strategy implemented in the 1970s when Poland financed its growth with foreign credits and the import of foreign technologies. Although that helped to modernise the structure of the economy, it did not improve the competitiveness of Polish exporters enough, leaving the country unable to pay back its foreign debt (Olszański 2002, 24–25).

At the end of 1989, Poland's foreign debt had reached 40.3 billion USD, out of which foreign governments held 27.7 billion USD and foreign banks held 9.2 billion USD (Sachs–Lipton 1990, 57). Germany proved to be a crucial partner for Poland in solving its problem with debt. By the end of 1990, Germany became Poland's largest creditor in the Paris Club (public creditors) with a share of 23.9% (7.7 billion USD). Simultaneously, the German mark (DM) was the second most significant currency in the structure of Poland's total debt, second only to the US Dollar. The end of the year saw Polish debt in German currency rise to a value of 16.5 billion DM. Poland's goal was to achieve a substantial reduction of foreign debt – up to 80%. During negotiations with seventeen creditors united in the Paris Club from March to April 1991, a reduction of the net present value (NPV) by 50% was achieved. The agreement was signed on 21 April 1991. It also allowed a higher debt reduction as well as the conversion of 10% of the debt into a fund for the realisation of bilaterally agreed targets. The agreement covered all of Poland's commitments to the Paris Agreements (1982–1984, 1985, 1986–1988, 1989–1990) and the obligations arising from the loans it received before 1 January 1984. Negotiations with the London Club uniting private creditors lasted longer than intended by the Polish side. At first, the British Barclays Bank presided over the London Club. This role was taken over by Dresdner Bank in September 1993 (Sulimierski 1991; Sulimierski 1994). Its position was in line with the stand of the German Government, which was one of the advocates of the agreement between Poland and its loan holders (Tomala 1995). With a share of 24%, German banks were Poland's largest creditor in the London Club (Sulimierski 1993, 142). An agreement was concluded in 1994. Germany was thus the largest Polish creditor in both the Paris and London Clubs. The *Agreement between the Government of the Federal Republic*

of Germany and the Government of the Republic of Poland on the Reduction and Restructuring of the External Debt of the Republic of Poland was signed in Warsaw on 25 March 1992.

The second problem related to Poland's debt with Germany was a so-called Jumbo credit. The agreement concerning this credit was signed in 1975 and it was an element in the Polish–German rapprochement of the 1970s (DAVIS 1999, 89–92). Despite favourable terms of credit, Poland was unable to repay it in the next decade and it became a problem in bilateral relations. On 7 November 1989, Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki came to an agreement on restructuring this debt. The German Government cancelled overdue payment obligations to the value of 760 million DM, while the remaining Polish liabilities (570 million DM) were credited, in Polish Złoty, to the account of the Foundation for German–Polish Cooperation (Die Bundesregierung 1989; ŁODZIŃSKI 1997). However, due to Germany's position in the world economy, its involvement in Polish economic reforms was significantly larger than simply participating in the restructuring of Polish foreign debt. Important was also the 'German share' of funds provided by the European Communities, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, etc. (SZELĄGOWSKA 2004, 69–71).

All of the above directs the analysis towards the issue of German financial assistance (aid) towards Poland's economic transformation. This was first raised by Federal Chancellor Kohl when he addressed the European Parliament on 22 November 1989 concerning the "[…] hour of European solidarity" (KOHL 1989, 1134) towards the countries of eastern and central Europe. 'International aid' is a transfer of resources on the international stage which is not a consequence of market forces. It is a donation made by governments or by international organisations (KOŁODZIEJCZYK-MIECIEK 2002, 235). The structure of German assistance for the Polish reform process reflected a strategic German assumption that aid provided can only be a "help for self-help" (Weißbuch 1994, 33). Germany was unwilling to go beyond the standard level, which was usually agreed on a multilateral basis, and in the performance of the 'aid' great attention was paid to the interests of German industry (export promotion). Therefore, the solution to the problem of Polish debt and the extent of its reduction and restructuring, as well as the guarantees from the Federal Government for export credits played a significant role.

Table 1.

German support for the reform process in Poland, 1990–1998 (in million DM)

Guarantees from the Federal Government for export credits (Hermes)	3,882.8
Untied financial loans	422
Guarantee for investments	1,302.1
Credit Guarantee on the basis of the Agreement of 25 March 1992	4,534.5
Agreement on Jumbo loan	1,364.4
Debt relief in the Paris Club	4,534.5
Interest rate subsidies	137.6
Humanitarian aid	21.4
Technical aid	481.7
Transferrable balance with the interest expenses	2,886
German share of EU benefits	2,379
Total	**21,946**

Source: KOŁODZIEJCZYK-MIECIEK 2002, 255.

The successful development of economic relations would not be possible without a solid legal basis. Since 1989, Poland and Germany have signed numerous bilateral agreements regulating economic relations. The most important two are:

A. Agreement between the Polish People's Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany on the promotion and mutual protection of investments from 10 November 1989 (Umowa między Polską Rzecząpospolitą Ludową a Republiką Federalną Niemiec w sprawie popierania i wzajemnej ochrony inwestycji z 10 listopada 1989 roku 1991);
B. Agreement between the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany on the avoidance of double taxation in respect of income tax and assets from 14 May 2003 (Umowa między Rzecząpospolitą Polską a Republiką Federalną Niemiec w sprawie unikania podwójnego opodatkowania w zakresie podatku od dochodów i od majątku z 14 maja 2003 roku 2004).

An issue that was critically important for the successful development of Polish–German economic relations was the successful implementation of economic reforms. At the end of 1989, the 'Balcerowicz program' (named after Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz) was adopted and came into force on 1 January 1990. This 'shock therapy' (Balcerowicz 1994) foresaw an immediate and complete shift of the economic system towards a market economy. Although the program of reforms included strong neoliberal elements, the model of a social market economy, was seen as a reference point for the Polish reforms (Kleer 2002).

Apart from bilateral steps to develop economic relations, the international aspect has to be factored in as well. The process of European integration was an important catalyst for the development of Polish–German economic relations. The first decisions were taken by the European Economic Community in November 1989. Cooperation under the PHARE program was initiated, Poland was included in the Generalised System of Preferences, and quantitative restrictions on imports from Poland were abolished starting on 1 January 1990. The Europe Agreement of 16 December 1991 provided a basis for comprehensive cooperation between Poland and the EC. It set a trend. Within ten years, it established a free trade area for industrial products between the EC and Poland. This was set up during two consecutive five-year phases. The opening up of the market was asymmetric – first the EC–EU opened up its own market, followed by Poland later. Over the next few years, more agreements were signed that liberalised trade for unprocessed and processed agricultural and fishery products (Kawecka-Wyżykowska – Synowiec 2004). On 1 May 2004, Poland became an EU Member State and therefore also a member of the common market. EU accession was the next step in the economic integration of the two states (Olszyński 2009).

German–Polish economic relations took on a more European dimension during the 1990s and the early 21st century. The bilateral component today is very restricted. German business circles assisted the Federal Government in its efforts to promote the eastward enlargement of the EU. They pointed to "Germany's high self-interest in the EU accession of the CEECs" (Internationale Politik 1998).

The analysis of the bilateral economic relations data will be based on two factors: firstly trade and secondly foreign direct investments (FDI). In contrast to trade, FDI between Poland and Germany are highly unbalanced. This is due to the lack of capital in Poland, especially during the first years of reform in the 1990s.

Table 2.
Number of foreign and German companies registered in Poland in selected years

Year	Total	From Germany
1993	7,935	2,943
2004	15,816	5,543
2015	25,961	5,837

Source: GUS 2004, 136; GUS 2005a, 32, 35; GUS 2016, 58.

Table 3.
The main countries of origin of (accumulated) investments in Poland (share in %)

Year	1.	Share	2.	Share	3.	Share
1993	Germany	22.92	Italy	19.33	USA	16.44
2004	The Netherlands	31.9	Germany	15.3	France	12.9
2015	The Netherlands	18.6	Germany	17.47	France	14.32

Source: GUS 2004, 171–175; GUS 2005b, 585; GUS 2016, 58.

Since the early 1990s, Germany has been a leading source of foreign investment for Poland. It is the largest source in terms of the number of foreign companies investing in Poland and in second place in terms of the value of investment. The list of German companies investing in Poland covers small, medium and even the largest German companies. The scale of this investment plays an important role in the development of Polish–German trade. Polish investments in Germany are still relatively small, although they have been increasing rapidly in the last decade. Germany is the seventh most significant destination for Polish foreign investments and the country's most important trade partner. Although the role of Germany as an export market is smaller today than in mid-1990s, it is still dominant. Back then, the German market was where Polish companies looked to first. The geographical proximity, traditional trade links and absorptivity of the German market were crucial. On the other hand, Poland is still a foremost trade partner for Germany. The rising standard of living is an engine of growth for the Polish share in German trade. Today, Germany is the most important economic partner of Poland, the same as with other members of the Visegrád Group. In the last twenty-five years, the investment and trade connections developed Poland's economic dependence on Germany (POPŁAWSKI, Konrad 2016).

Table 4.
German foreign investments in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, in million Euro

	Poland	Slovakia	The Czech Republic	Hungary
2007	18,924	6,759	21,629	17,185
2015	28,069	7,468	26,370	14,942

Source: Deutsche Bundesbank 2009, 31; Deutsche Bundesbank 2017, 14–15.

Table 5.

Outward position of Polish direct investment at the end of 2016, in million Euro

Position	Country	Value
1.	Luxembourg	9,996.0
2.	Cyprus	3,385.1
3.	Switzerland	2,055.7
4.	The Czech Republic	1,918.2
5.	The Netherlands	1,840.4
6.	Hungary	1,288.9
7.	Germany	1,235.6

Source: NBP 2016.

Table 6.

Foreign trade turnover of Poland and its major partners

Specification	Value in million USD	First partner		Second partner		Third partner	
		Country	Share in %	Country	Share in %	Country	Share in %
Imports in 1990	9,527.7	Germany	20.1	USSR	19.8	Italy	7.5
Exports in 1990	14,321.6	Germany	25.1	USSR	15.3	The United Kingdom	7.1
Imports in 2000	48,940.2	Germany	23.9	Russia	9.4	Italy	8.3
Exports in 2000	31,651.3	Germany	34.9	Italy	6.3	France	5.2
Imports in 2016	200,672.4	Germany	23.3	China	12	Russia	5.8
Exports in 2016	205,047.7	Germany	27.4	The United Kingdom	6.7	The Czech Republic	6.6

Source: GUS 2017, 43.

Table 7.

Poland's role in German trade (in 1,000 DM for 1990; and in EUR 1,000 and % for 2001 and onwards)

	Import	Export	Poland's share in imports	Poland's share in exports
1990	550,628	642,785	0.94	0.73
2007	772,511	969,049	3.12	3.72
2017	1,034,323	1,279,066	4.93	4.65

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt 1991, 21, 24; Statistisches Bundesamt 2008, 36, 39; Statistisches Bundesamt 2018, 26, 45. The shares have been calculated by the author.

4. Relations with Russia and Energy Security

As presented above, there has been a positive development in German–Polish relations in the last quarter of the century. One of the few areas where both countries have constantly clashed are their relations with Russia and the very closely related issue of energy security. Paradoxically, since 2015 Polish–German relations have deteriorated as a result of Polish opposition towards Germany's migration policy and German opposition towards the judiciary reforms introduced in Poland, while the Polish and the German positions toward Russia have converged (SIDDI 2016).

During the 1990s and early 2000s, German politicians strongly believed that it was possible to develop positive relations with Russia. President Boris Yeltsin, and then President Putin, were approached with great hopes (RAHR 2010). Despite Poland's accession to the EU and NATO, for Germany relations with Russia took priority over its relations with Poland. Russia's status as a great power, and above all its potential as a vast market and its huge reserves of natural resources, (especially natural gas and crude oil), ensured that Russia remained very attractive for the German political and economic elites (SZABO 2014). The Polish Government, on the other hand, saw Russia mainly as a threat – both in military and economic terms. That is why all successive Polish governments worked in favour of Polish accession to NATO and the EU. Upset by the expansion of the EU (to Poland and nine other CEE countries), Russia put an embargo on Polish meat in October 2005, provoking a trade conflict that constricted negotiations on the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Russia (MAASS 2017, 120–123).

After the end of the first decade of the 21st century, EU–Russian relations began to deteriorate (HAUKKALA 2015). This change was provoked by the growing assertiveness of Russian foreign policy. Russian policy towards Georgia, Ukraine and Syria has reduced the number of German politicians who consider themselves optimistic about the common future of Europe and Russia. This group is commonly known as Russlandversteher, which can be translated as "people understanding Russia", but in fact, it means "people finding an explanation for Russian activities and who are friends of Russia". Politicians of the SPD have traditionally argued in favour of close cooperation with Russia, due to the Willy Brandt's tradition of Ostpolitik of the 1970s. Today, the current Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier is probably the most prominent representative of this group. But even in the SPD, opposition towards Russia is growing. A symbol of this change is the current Foreign Minister, Heiko Maas, who has been surprisingly critical of Russia's current policy and has clearly expressed his hope that it will change (BOTA et al. 2018). He joined Chancellor Angela Merkel, who took a clear position towards Russia in the aftermath of its intervention in Ukraine, coordinated EU policy towards Russia, and supported sanctions. In this sense, the stance of the German Government overlaps with that of the Polish Government. One of the elements limiting Germany's ability to act against Russia is its dependence on Russian energy resources, which has increased since the 1970s (DYSON 2016).

The change in the German rhetoric has had no impact on its energy relations with Russia. Poland and Germany face substantially different challenges for their energy security, and they have developed different energy policies. Polish governments have focused mainly on improving the security and competitiveness of the gas supply to Poland. They see Polish dependence on Russian gas in a negative light. For decades, Polish imports of natural gas

were almost completely dependent on Gazprom. The country's lack of technical capability to import gas from other suppliers resulted in Poles paying much higher gas prices than those paid by Germans. Occasionally, the gas supply was even cut off, particularly as Russian–Ukrainian conflicts over transit fees evolved into a traditional ritual during the winter months. As a result, numerous conceptions arose for developing Poland's infrastructure to achieve a better connection to the global gas market. Apart from the interconnector linking the Polish gas network with those of Germany or the Czech Republic, the most important investment has been the LNG terminal in Świnoujście in the northwest of the country, which allows Poland to import liquefied natural gas. Although the LNG terminal has not enabled Poland to completely refrain from supplies from Russia, it has opened up a new chapter in the history of the gas industry in Poland, integrating the country into the global market (Szulecki et al. 2016).

In contrast, the German Government has long emphasised the role of renewables, and has invested heavily in an energy partnership with Russia. The issue of energy security was neglected by German governments for decades. It was seen as a part of economic policy, and successive governments emphasised the role of markets. Only when Ukrainian–Russian conflicts over fees for gas transport became "normal" did the security dimension of energy start to be taken into account. The most visible example of the German–Russian energy partnership is the Nord Stream Pipeline project which begun in 2005. It connects the Russian gas pipeline network with Germany directly, bypassing countries such as Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, thereby making it possible for Russia to cut supply to those countries without disrupting its supply to Western Europe. The project has been highly criticised in the CEE, but is equally strongly supported by German business groups and the government. The effect of the Nord Stream will be to transform Germany into a trading hub for Russian gas in Europe (Götz 2006). Although the project was initiated on the German side by Gerhard Schröder, it has been implemented and expanded (Nord Stream 2) during the chancellorship of Angela Merkel. The constant refrain of her governments has been that the project is purely "economic" in nature. Only in April 2018 did Angela Merkel admit that the Nord Stream Pipeline also has a "political" and "strategic" dimension (Rettman 2018). But that admission changed nothing in Germany's strategic position towards Russia. The fact that the supply of energy from the Soviet Union was not stopped even in the most difficult moments of the Cold War serves as a key argument in favour of building long-term relations between Germany and Russia in the energy sector, as well as in other areas (Siddi 2016). And today, German politicians are simply not interested in putting their mutually beneficial cooperation with Russia in the energy sector at risk (Stulberg 2015).

5. Conclusions

Germany became Poland's most important political and economic partner in the early 1990s. It was a crucial partner during the latter's efforts to join the EU and NATO. The closeness of both countries' interests allowed Poland to quickly realise its foreign policy goals. In this, Germany proved to be an effective leader and that leadership was welcomed by Poland. In the mid-1990s, Germany was the final destination for over 38% of Polish exports, and the country accounted for a quarter of all imports. At the time, Germany was also the most

important source of FDI for Poland, both in terms of the number of German companies present in Poland as well as in terms of the value of their investment. 'Bandwagoning' is the best term to describe Polish policy towards Germany during this period. It was an advantageous foreign policy strategy for the country.

However, by the early 2000s the 'community of interests' had not been achieved. Despite the general commitment of both countries to the EU and NATO, Poland and Germany have clashed on numerous occasions over critical issues in international relations, including the Iraq conflict, a new EU treaty and especially the issue of EU energy security. On specific occasions, the political goals of both countries have differed. Although recently politicians of both countries have made more efforts to improve relations, and a pragmatic cooperation was developed, the eruption of the migration crisis has once more contributed to the deterioration of bilateral relations. The German government's support of mandatory quotas, along with its radical change in migration policy, did not bring about an improvement in bilateral relations.

Although on many occasions German politicians expressed themselves disappointed with the lack of Polish support for Germany, both countries have not managed to develop an effective consultation instrument that allows the achievement of compromise. In the past two decades, Poland has not blindly followed German policy. It has sometimes opposed Germany and on numerous occasion it participated in coalitions trying to balance German power. Bandwagoning in Polish–German relations is now a part of history.

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