

Apologies and Threat Reduction in Postwar Europe

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Over the past fifty years, Germany has made numerous efforts to atone for its World War II aggression and atrocities. German apologies, reparations, and education about its past actions are praised as a model for other states. Today Europe appears to be in a state of deep peace; great-power war among European states appears nearly inconceivable. Scholars and journalists have argued that German apologies have helped reduce perception of a German threat in Europe.¹ In striking contrast, Japan has avoided discussion of its past; apologies by Japanese leaders are often vague and contradictory, and Tokyo has avoided paying official reparations. Japan's relations with its neighbors remain tense, and many observers attribute this tension to Japan's failure to apologize adequately for its past misdeeds.²

Although many analysts have argued that apologies influence the extent to which Germany and Japan look threatening to their neighbors, the connection between apologies and threat perception has never been tested systematically. Drawn from a larger study, this paper tests whether German apologies have affected French perception of threat since World War II.³ Building on balance of threat theory, it outlines and tests an "apology theory" that posits that apologies and other acts of contrition reduce perception of threat by conveying benign intentions.

The study of apologies contributes to theoretical and policy debates. First, international relations scholars have debated whether states assess each other's

¹ Kristof 1998; Kydd 1997; Van Evera 1993; Van Evera 1997b

² Christensen 1999; Dujarric 1998; Friedberg 1996; Funabashi 1998; Ienaga 1996; Kristof 1998; Kydd 1997

³ The larger study also tests the effect of Japanese apologies and denials on South Korean perception of threat since World War II. Lind (forthcoming) 2003

intentions in threat perception.⁴ They have also debated how a state might credibly signal that its intentions are benign, thus reducing how threatening it appears to others.⁵ This study informs this debate by testing empirically whether and how one indicator of intentions—apologies—factors into threat perception. Second, understanding whether apologies reduce perception of threat has important policy implications. It enables us to predict where perception of threat—and thus tensions—will be higher: between states that have not issued and received apologies for past wrongs. If apologies and other acts of contrition do reduce tensions between former adversaries, they should be included along with other more traditional confidence building measures in peace settlements.

This paper yields two major findings. First, the French clearly cared about German remembrance. When France had the power to influence German policies of remembrance, it did so (through policies of re-education during the occupation). Later, West German remembrance was monitored and factored into French threat assessments. Second, this analysis shows that factors *other* than remembrance often dominated French threat perception. Although Germany had apologized a great deal by 1990, the French were unwilling to accept German unification without German renunciation of territorial claims and weapons of mass destruction, and without German assurances to deepen European integration. This finding suggests that

⁴ Structural realism and offensive realism posit that states perceive threats from power, and intentions are not a factor. Mearsheimer 2001; Waltz 1979. Walt (1989) argues that states consider both power and intentions in threat perception. On costly signals see Glaser 1994/95; Glaser 1997; Kydd 1997; Sartori 1998.

⁵ Defensive realists argue that states can send credible signals about their intentions by sending “costly signals.” Glaser 1994/95; Glaser 1997; Kydd 1997. Constructivist theorists argue that signals need not necessarily be costly in order to affect threat perception; they argue that norms or symbolic acts can also credibly signal benign intentions. Hopf 1998; Risse-Kappen 1996; Wendt 1992; Wendt 1999.

although apologies are an important CBM, CBMs addressing traditional “realist” factors (i.e. power, territory) must also be included in the creation of a stable peace.

This paper proceeds as follows. In Section II, I outline the apology theory, define variables, and discuss the methods I use to test the theory. Section III codes German apologies and remembrance since World War II. Section IV measures French threat perception of Germany over that period and tests the predictions of the apology theory. Section V concludes.

II. THEORY AND METHODS

The Apology Theory

The apology theory of threat perception builds upon Stephen Walt’s balance of threat theory, which posits that states examine factors related to power and intentions as they assess the threat posed by another state. Walt argues that states evaluate three factors related to a state’s ability to project power (aggregate power, offensive power, and geographic proximity), in addition to evaluating the other state’s intentions.⁶ However, Walt did not discuss how states measure each other’s intentions: which indicators they examine, and how they interact with power factors. This project addresses these issues.

The apology theory posits that in threat assessment, a state will evaluate a number of indicators related to another state’s power and intentions. One indicator is how a state remembers and represents its past, which is observable in apologies and other policies of remembrance. The apology theory posits that apologies reduce perception of threat. Conversely, absence of apologies increases perception of threat. States that admit and express remorse for past offenses will appear to have benign

⁶ Walt 1989

intentions. States that glorify, deny, or remain silent about past offenses will appear to have malign intentions. Perception of intentions is factored into overall threat perception with other considerations (other indicators of intent, and indicators of power).

The apology theory makes two general predictions. First, it predicts that as apologies increase, threat perception should decrease; that is, as a state's apologies increase, threat perception of that state in the eyes of another country should decrease. Second, observers in the other country should discuss policies of remembrance, and should say that they influence their threat perception.

Dependent Variable: Perception of Threat

In the apology theory, the dependent variable is perception of threat. I measure perception of threat in two ways. First I assess perception of threat in **opinion** (both public and elite). I measure public opinion through polls and media coverage about the other country. For elite opinion, I rely upon secondary sources, memoirs, government publications, archival documents, and interviews for the present day. Second, I measure threat perception in state **policy**: diplomacy and military posture.

The values that the dependent variable can take are grouped into three groups: LOW, MODERATE, and HIGH perception of threat. For example, in a situation of LOW threat perception, opinion of the other country is neutral or benign. The public and elites voice no concern about a military conflict with the other country. If any disputes exist, people expect them to be resolved through diplomatic means. The people do not fear economic or military gains by the other country. Second, state policy is similarly neutral or benign. The state's military is not configured to repel a threat

against the other country. The state does not respond to military buildups in the other country with military buildups of its own. The state has not formed alliances against the other country; diplomacy with third parties reflects neutrality or support for the other country. In sum, I measure the level of threat perception in a state by evaluating opinion and state policies.

Independent Variable: Apologies and Policies of Remembrance

Scholars and commentators have argued that apologies are important because they convey information about how a state views its past. However states can convey this information through a variety of policies. In addition to official *statements* (such as apologies), states reveal their views about their past actions through *reparations*, *legal trials*, *public education* (textbooks), and *commemoration* (monuments, museums, and commemoration). Thus this dissertation studies the effect of not only apologies, but of “policies of remembrance” more broadly.⁷

In its policies of remembrance, a state’s view of its past may be situated on a continuum between apologetic and unapologetic. A state on the apologetic side of the continuum might pay reparations and issue apologies, demonstrating regret for its past actions. However, on the other side of the continuum, a state might glorify its past by honoring conquerors as national heroes. A state might deny its past (deny that the aggression or atrocities ever happened, or that it committed them). A state might justify the past (it may say that moral standards were different then, or that the policies were necessary given the situation at the time). Or, the state may simply choose not to

⁷ States may also display their views about the past through social movements, literature, film, and the fine arts. However this project only focuses on *official* policies of remembrance. Official government policy is the most transparent signal of how states view their pasts.

remember those events, focusing on other—less controversial and more flattering—aspects of its history.

Thus in this project I measure policies of remembrance on a continuum that ranges from *apologetic* to *unapologetic*. In between the two opposites is *amnesia*. I define “apologetic” remembrance as policies of remembrance that demonstrate *admission* and *remorse* about past events. I derive this definition from the psychology literature on apologies between individuals, which argues that core components of apologies are admitting misdeeds, and expressing remorse for them.⁸ Apologetic policies include: official apologies, reparations to victims, legal trials of perpetrators, commemoration honoring (foreign) victims, and education about past crimes. Conversely, “unapologetic” remembrance is that which does not admit or does not regret past actions. Examples of unapologetic remembrance include: statements denying, glorifying, or justifying past actions; compensation paid to perpetrators rather than victims; commemoration that remembers past events positively; and history education that praises or justifies past events.

In between apologetic and unapologetic remembrance is *amnesia*. States demonstrating amnesia are trying to forget the past; their policies reflect an absence of remembrance. Their leaders rarely refer to the event in statements or speeches; the state does not pay reparations to victims. The state conducts no legal trials of perpetrators of the event. Museums, memorials, or days of commemoration about the event do not exist, and history textbooks do not mention the event.

⁸ Lazare 1995; O'Neill 1999; Tavuchis 1991

Methods and Case Selection

To test the apology theory, I use a qualitative, case study method, relying upon multiple within-case observations over time.⁹ First, I test for **congruence** of the independent and dependent variables. To perform this test I measure the independent variable (policies of remembrance), by coding remembrance as discussed above. I then measure the dependent variable (threat perception) as previously discussed, to see if it co-varies with remembrance in the other state. Second, I evaluate **reasoning** within debates about threat assessment. In their evaluations, observers should be talking about the importance of remembrance. They should say they feel reassured by apologies, and should express concern about the state's intentions when they observe "unapologies" (denials, justifications, or glorification of the past).

While testing for co-variance of apologies and threat perception, I consider alternate explanations for the change (or lack of change) in the dependent variable. Therefore I track other variables that are likely to affect threat perception. The variables I track (along with policies of remembrance) include the following: military power, regime type (i.e. democracy vs. non-democracy), membership in international institutions, and territorial claims.

Drawing from a larger study, this article reports the results of the case of West Germany (unified Germany after 1990) and France. I focus on this dyad for several reasons. Germany is the classic case invoked by people who argue for the power of apologies and remembrance in international relations. Because France and Germany are historic enemies, threat perception in France is always highly attuned to changes in German security policy. As a state invaded and occupied by Germany during World

⁹ George and McKeown 1985; Van Evera 1997a

War II, France has bitter memories of that period and is likely to be very concerned about how the Germans remember it. Furthermore, because the Franco-German dyad is strategically important, understanding relations between these nations has important implications for European security, and for U.S. foreign and military policy.

III. GERMAN REMEMBRANCE SINCE WORLD WAR II

I code German¹⁰ policies of remembrance over three time periods since World War II: the Early Phase (1945-50s), the Middle Phase (1960s-80s) and the Late Phase (1990s and 00s). In the Early Phase, I code German remembrance as reflecting *Amnesia*. This changed in the Middle Phase, which I code as *Apologetic*. Finally, I code German remembrance of the Late Phase as *Apologetic*.

Early Phase, 1945–50s

Under the conservative leadership of West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer, West German policies of remembrance during the early years after World War II reflect **amnesia**. West Germans focused on their own suffering, struggled with the devastation of war, and were uninterested in the suffering of Nazi Germany's victims.

Statements of West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer reflect amnesia in several ways. First, Adenauer objected to postwar policies of justice and denazification, making what scholars have called “embarrassing appeals” for the release of war criminals from imprisonment by the Allies.¹¹ Adenauer said, “The government

¹⁰ East Germany pursued much less extensive policies of remembrance during this period; it paid no reparations, offered no apologies, and pursued policies of hostility toward Israel. Because united Germany is the successor state of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), this chapter is focused on West German remembrance. Memory in the GDR is examined extensively in Herf 1997.

¹¹ Kansteiner 1999, 88. Adenauer argued that it would be wrong to divide Germans into “two classes...those without political blemishes and those with such blemishes.” Herf 1997, 271

of the Federal Republic, in the belief that many have subjectively atoned for a guilt that was not heavy, is determined where it appears acceptable to do so to put the past behind us....”¹² Second, Adenauer’s statements were preoccupied with *German* suffering, rather than the suffering of Nazi Germany’s victims.¹³ Third, in his speech announcing German restitution to Israel, Adenauer acknowledged German crimes, yet emphasized not the crimes but German resistance during the Nazi era, and German ignorance of Hitler’s genocidal policies.¹⁴ In sum, Adenauer’s statements of this period reflect amnesia rather than apology.

Justice during this period reflects amnesia. West Germans opposed Allied policies of de-nazification and trials of war criminals.¹⁵ When the Germans regained sovereign control of the FRG, they did not make efforts to bring Nazi perpetrators to justice.¹⁶

Reparations. More so than other policies of this era, West German policies of reparations were apologetic. First, on September 10, 1952, Bonn signed the Luxembourg Agreement in which it agreed to pay 3.5 billion DM to the state of Israel

¹² Herf 1997, 271

¹³ For example, nine million German POWs were in Soviet camps at the end of the war; Adenauer argued that assuming each POW had two concerned relatives, “18 million Germans” were paying the costs of Nazi aggression. Herf 1997, 223.

¹⁴ Adenauer said in the speech in which he announced reparations to Israel: “In an overwhelming majority, the German people abhorred the crimes committed against the Jews and did not participate in them. During the period of National Socialism, there were many Germans...who at their own risk were willing to assist their Jewish fellow citizens. In the name of the German people, however, unspeakable crimes were committed which require moral and material restitution.....” Herf 1997, 282

¹⁵ Frei 2002

¹⁶ In 1951, when West German courts were first allowed to conduct their own trials, only 21 sentences were pronounced. West German “legal attempts to deal with the legacy of the [Nazi] past were sluggish in this period and soon came to a halt.” Knischewski and Spittler 1997, 241 Although the Allies had advocated a thorough purging of government officials, “a remarkable continuity of personnel marked the Adenauer era in the area of jurisprudence, in parts of the government bureaucracy, and in the country’s educational institutions.” Probst 1993, 24

and various Jewish organizations.¹⁷ Second, the FRG passed the “BEG” laws.¹⁸ These laws compensated individuals who were persecuted by the Nazis because of their race, religion, nationality, or ideology.¹⁹ Third, in 1957 West Germany passed the “BRüG” legislation on claims from victims who had lost property during the war and Holocaust.²⁰ West German policies of reparations reflect apology as they admitted German crimes and made efforts to atone by compensating victims.

West German *commemoration* policy during the early postwar period reflects amnesia. First, West German commemoration honored German victims. West Germans commemorated July 20 in honor of German resistance to Hitler.²¹ Also, starting in 1952 West Germans commemorated a “national day of mourning,” honoring “those who lost their lives as victims of National Socialism on the field [of battle] or at home.”²² Official ceremonies commemorating the surrender (May 8, 1945) did not take place during the first decade after the war. Second, concentration camp sites, and other sites of Nazi atrocities within Germany, were not initially preserved as memorials. One

¹⁷ On the diplomatic history of the Luxembourg Agreement, see Marcuse 2001; Romberg and Lichtenstein 1995; Schwartz 1991

¹⁸ In German, *Bundesentschädigungsgesetz*. The “Supplementary Federal Law for the Compensation of the Victims of National Socialist Persecution” was passed October 1, 1953. Source: German Information Office website, <http://www.germany-info.org>.

¹⁹ These reparations (amounting to 78 billion DM by 1998) have been paid out to over 4 million claimants within Germany, Israel, and other countries. Hofhansel 1999, 104

²⁰ This law, called the Federal Restitution Law (*Bundesrückerstattungsgesetz*, or BRüG), passed in the National Assembly on July 19, 1957. (As of 1987 over 700,000 claims were settled in the amount of DM 3.9 billion, with a small number of claims pending.)

²¹ On July 20, 1944 a group of German Army officers had attempted to assassinate Hitler. The Plötzensee prison (where conspirators had been housed and then executed) was turned into a memorial for them and other members of the German resistance. Knischewski and Spittler 1997, 243

²² Herf 1997, 224 The day of mourning (*Volkstrauertag*) honors victims of *both* world wars: including the victims of the Holocaust and others victimized by Nazi Germany, and also commemorates the German victims of the GDR regime. Jeffrey Herf writes, “The institutionalization in West Germany of a national day of mourning in 1952 went hand-in-hand with obliterating distinctions between perpetrators, bystanders, and victims.” Herf 1999, 15

scholar writes, “Places in which [Nazi] atrocities had been committed were either used for different purposes...or they were even razed to the ground, as was the case in Dachau.”²³ Thus during this period, West German commemoration did not remember or honor Germany’s victims.

West German *education policy* during this time period also reflects amnesia. In school textbooks, contemporary political history was glossed over; German cultural or social histories were emphasized. Alfred Grosser writes that West German children were being taught a “distorted” picture of their country and its place in the world. Textbooks “present a romantic and rural Germany, still unsullied by noisy towns and factory chimneys--a land of forest and heath where war and its ruins are unknown...The child’s mind is constantly steeped in a dream-world.”²⁴ Richard Evans writes, “Very little was said about Nazism. Next to nothing was taught in the schools....Critical enquiry into the German past was discouraged.”²⁵ Thus West German education of the early period avoided the recent past.

In sum, in this early period it is important to note that Germans did not deny their past crimes, and that some important acts of contrition were evident (particularly reparations to Israel in 1952). However for the most part, early West German policies of remembrance reflect amnesia.

²³ Knischewski and Spittler 1997, 242. Harold Marcuse writes, “for decades local and regional officials tried to make the former Dachau camp difficult to find.” Marcuse 2001, 5. Marcuse notes that locals in the village of Dachau in 1955 wanted to tear down the camp remains in order to discourage visitors.

²⁴ Grosser 1955, 166-167

²⁵ Evans 1989, 11

Middle Phase, 1960s--80s

West German remembrance in the middle period was influenced by two important political transitions. In the late 1960s the Left gradually gained power and ruled until 1982 in what was called the social-liberal era.²⁶ Policies of remembrance during the social-liberal were increasingly apologetic. Next, in 1982, the conservatives regained power, and under their leadership policies of remembrance reflected less emphasis on Nazi crimes; more and more people argued that Germans should move forward from their past. However despite increasing controversy about the past, West Germans continued to admit and regret Nazi crimes.

Statements of German leaders during this period increasingly reflect a more apologetic approach to the past. However, some leaders (particularly in the 1980s) encouraged people to move forward, and argued against collective guilt. First, many West German leaders issued apologies and calls for remembrance of past crimes. In 1978 Chancellor Helmut Schmidt said *Kristallnacht* and the complaisance of ordinary Germans in persecuting Jews was “a cause of bitterness and shame.” Schmidt emphasized that Germans had to reflect on this past.²⁷ Starting in 1970 and continuing thereafter, many West German political leaders gave important speeches on May 8 anniversaries of the surrender: Federal President Gustave Heinmann, President Walter Scheel in 1975,²⁸ and Federal President Richard Von Weizsäcker on the 40th anniversary

²⁶ Also during this time was the powerful “1968” student and social movement.

²⁷ He noted that most Germans alive then were “individually free from blame,” but that they “can become guilty, too, if they fail to recognize the responsibility for what happens today and tomorrow deriving from what happened then.” Quoted in Herf 1997, 347.

²⁸ Scheel argued that “all words of a national dignity, of self-respect, remain hollow if we do not take on ourselves the entire...pressing weight of our history.” Olick 1999, 389

of the surrender in 1985.²⁹ On the 40th anniversary of Bergen-Belsen's liberation, Chancellor Kohl gave a speech in which he enumerated Nazi crimes and singled out the Jewish people as the most victimized.³⁰ He rejected the "we didn't know" defense,³¹ and exhorted Germans to remember their past.³² Finally, in April 1987 West German leaders offered apologies to Israeli President Chaim Herzog upon his visit to Bonn.³³ Thus statements of German leaders exhibited great admission and remorse during the middle period.

On the other hand, during the 1980s West German elites began to advocate less remembrance rather than more. First, many West German leaders were calling for a *Schlußtrict*, or, "drawing a line under the past." Gustave Heinmann argued in an

²⁹ Von Weizsäcker's speech is celebrated for several reasons. He detailed Nazi crimes and focused on the suffering of victims rather than German suffering. He identified victims who had previously been overlooked (Sinti/Roma, the handicapped, the mentally ill, and homosexuals). Von Weizsäcker noted German apathy at the time, saying that the German response to Nazi persecution of the Jews had ranged "from plain apathy and hidden intolerance to outright hatred." He proclaimed the unique importance of the Holocaust and charged Germans to remember it. "We need and we have the strength to look truth straight in the eye—without embellishment and without distortion." Text of speech can be found in Hartmann 1986, 262-273.

³⁰ Kohl said, "we are gathered here in memory of the many innocent people who were tortured, humiliated, and driven to their deaths at Bergen-Belsen, as in other camps." He said the Jews "were deprived of their rights and driven out of their country." Then "the regime officially declared them 'subhumans' and condemned them to the 'final solution.'" Kohl noted the "demonic official dogma that certain lives are not worth living" that led to the euthanasia program and medical experiments by Mengele and others." Hartmann, 1986, 244

³¹ Kohl said, "The decisive question is...why so many people remained apathetic, did not listen properly, closed their eyes to the realities when the despots-to-be solicited support for their inhumane programme, first in back rooms and then openly out in the streets."

³² Kohl noted, "One of our country's paramount tasks is to inform people of those occurrences and keep alive an awareness of the full extent of this historical burden." Hartmann 1986, 250

³³ Von Weizsäcker said, "We cannot and must not fade out any particular chapters of that history or see them in absolute terms. Our task is rather to accept the entire legacy, which carries over to successive generations the responsibility for its consequences for the future....History never permits us to draw a line under the past...." Quoted in Bark and Gress 1989, 446. Chancellor Kohl said that the Nazi "genocide in its cold, inhuman planning and deathly efficiency was unique in the history of mankind....We never want to forget the Nazi crimes. We shall also resist every attempt to suppress or play them down." Quoted in Evans 1989, 17.

otherwise contrite 1970 statement that Germany should move on.³⁴ Chancellor Helmut Schmidt said in 1975 that Germans should focus on the FRG's achievements since the end of the war; he said they should not feel perpetual guilt.³⁵ After a visit to Israel in 1981, Schmidt said that "German foreign policy can and will no longer be overshadowed by Auschwitz."³⁶ Several other similar statements were heard in West German politics.³⁷

Second, politicians made notorious gaffes in this period. In 1984 during a trip to Israel, Chancellor Kohl commented that he and his generation enjoyed a "grace of late birth" (*die Gnade der späten Geburt*). The comment triggered rebukes from both inside and outside the FRG.³⁸ Later, Bundestag President Philip Jenninger gave a speech commemorating the *Kristallnacht* anti-Jewish pogrom. Jenninger admitted and condemned the pogrom, but the speech was written and delivered so awkwardly that it

³⁴ He said, "We know today that it does not lead forward to mourn what is lost and that it is now above all a matter of bringing the task of reconciliation also with the East to completion." Olick 1999, 389

³⁵ "We Germans," Schmidt said, "do not need to go around in hair shirts in perpetuity." He noted that "the great majority of the Germans living to day were born only after 1933; they can in no way be burdened with guilt." Olick 1999, 392

³⁶ Quoted in Kattago 1998, 96

³⁷ Franz-Josef Strauss said that Germans had to get off their knees and learn to "walk tall" again. Germany must "emerge from the shadow of the Third Reich" and "become a normal nation again." Evans 1989, 19 Former FRG president Karl Carstens commented that the younger generation that had fought for greater memory in the social-liberal era was unaware "that many of the National Socialist regime's terrible deeds were not known to the majority of Germans at that time." (Ibid) In 1982, CDU politician Alfred Dregger urged Germans "to come out of Hitler's shadow—we must become normal." Dregger argued that the German Army hadn't committed war crimes; "responsibility for the crimes of the Third Reich lay with Hitler and the Nazi leadership. Most German soldiers, he said, knew little or nothing of the crimes of National Socialism Evans 1989, 55

³⁸ The SPD said Kohl "wanted to acquit his cohort and everybody younger of German guilt." Bark and Gress 1989, 424; Kattago 1998, 96; Olick 1999, 392

made listeners think he was justifying it. Parliamentarians and others reacted to the speech with indignation and Jenniger quickly resigned.³⁹

Third, in 1986 an academic debate between historians prompted strong debate within the West German political community. In the *Historikerstreit*, or “historian’s debate,” historians debated Germany’s reasons for starting the war, its conduct of the war, and the uniqueness of the Holocaust. Led by Jürgen Habermas, liberal historians deplored what they saw as a revisionist trend in West German historiography, focusing on the works of Ernst Nolte, Michael Sturmer, and Andreas Hillgruber.⁴⁰

In sum, in this period West German leaders began to offer apologies displaying a high level of admission and remorse. During the 1980s, however, calls were also heard for moving forward from the past.

Justice. Judicial proceedings during the middle period both reflected and created greater interest in the past. First, in the 1960s important trials were conducted of death camp and execution squad personnel. In Frankfurt, Nazi personnel from Auschwitz-Birkenau were conducted from December 1963 to August 1965. These trials produced “spectacular and horrifying testimony” that riveted the West German population.⁴¹ Trials of former members of the *Einsatzgruppen* death squads were also conducted.

³⁹ See Knischewski and Spittler 1997, 248; Marcuse 2001, 367-68; Olick 1999, 397. Interestingly, “People began to read the speech’s text and—to their surprise—did not find much wrong with it.” Jenniger’s style was deemed the most objectionable. Domansky 1992, 67-68

⁴⁰ Revisionist historians argued that Hitler’s war was a preventive war against a looming Bolshevik threat; furthermore, Ernst Nolte wrote that genocide was an “Asiatic deed” that had first been undertaken by the Soviets. On the *Historikerstreit*, see Bark and Gress 1989, Chapter 5; Bosworth 1993, Chapter 4; Maier 1988; Marcuse 2001, 365

⁴¹ “The trial itself spawned not only some of the most important historiographical works on the systematic nature of Nazi criminality...it sparked a number of essayistic and literary reflections and its relationship to the Nazi past as well.” Marcuse 2001, 214

Second, four Bundestag debates about prosecuting of crimes of murder both reflected greater West German interest in justice, and created greater public knowledge and awareness of Germany's past crimes. Between 1960 and 1979, the Bundestag debated whether to extend the statute of limitations on crimes of murder. Leaders from the Left (and gradually also from the CDU) spoke about the horror of Nazi crimes and the need for justice.⁴² In sum, West German justice of the middle period increasingly reflects apologetic remembrance of the Nazi past.

Reparations. During the Middle Phase, the FRG expanded its compensation policies for victims of the Nazis. The BRüG legislation was expanded in four supplementary laws, concluding in 1969. As for the BEG laws, in 1979 the Bundestag supplemented these with an additional 400 million DM for Jewish individuals whose health had been harmed by the Nazi regime, and had not previously obtained restitution. Soon thereafter the Bundestag added 100 million DM for non-Jewish victims in similar circumstances.

Commemoration. West German commemoration of the middle period reflects a substantial change over the amnesia of the 1950s. Increasingly, the victims of Nazism were honored. Concentration camps were established as memorials and educational exhibitions were constructed there.⁴³ While conducting *Ostpolitik*, West German politicians made important commemorative gestures toward Poland. Perhaps the most famous act of contrition in world history then or since was Chancellor Willy Brandt's falling to his knees before the Warsaw Ghetto memorial in 1970. Chancellor Helmut

⁴² Herf 1997, 338

⁴³ In 1965 a large plaque naming concentration camps was installed in West Berlin. Exhibitions opened at Neuengamme and Bergen-Belsen in the mid-1960s; Dachau opened "a more realistic and critical exhibit" in 1965 that showed "how the 'murderous system' of mass killing developed." Koshar 1998, 246. Touched

Schmidt, the first West German leader to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, made a contrite speech upon his visit.⁴⁴

On the other hand, West German commemoration undertaken with its NATO allies during the 1980s reflects a diminished focus on Nazi era, and a blurring of distinctions between victim and oppressor. First, at the World War I cemetery of Verdun, French President François Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl were memorably photographed holding hands, with a field of white crosses as a backdrop. Rather than emphasize Nazi crimes and German guilt, this ceremony sent the message that two countries that had fought wars were now reconciled and allied.⁴⁵ Second, the United States and West Germany conducted a similar ceremony at Bitburg cemetery in 1985. Shortly before the visit it was made public that the cemetery included dozens of graves of the *Waffen SS*, an elite army unit used for “cleansing” operations. As a result controversy erupted in both the United States and Germany.⁴⁶ Despite the controversy, U.S. President Reagan and Kohl went through with the Bitburg ceremony as planned.⁴⁷

off by the “Anne Frank wave” in the mid-1950s, school field trips to Dachau and other camp sites increased rapidly. For the effect of the book and play *The Diary of Anne Frank*, see Sagan 1995.

⁴⁴ Schmidt said that “the crime of Nazi fascism and the guilt of the German Reich under Hitler’s leadership are the basis of our responsibility. We Germans of today...must bear the political legacy of those who were guilty. That is our responsibility.” Herf 1997, 346

⁴⁵ The Franco-German joint declaration at Verdun proclaimed, “France and the German Federal Republic have drawn the lessons of history. Europe is our common fatherland. We make a historic gesture today to show that our two peoples have irreversibly taken the path of peace, reason, and friendly cooperation.” Quoted in Paris AFP wire service, 22 September 1984.

⁴⁶ The chairman of the board of the Central Council of Jews in Germany stated that “This planned gesture of reconciliation...overlooks the suffering of millions of Jews in the German concentration camps.” See FBIS Western Europe, FRG, 3 May 1985, “Jewish Council Chairman’s Remarks on Bitburg Visit.” On April 19, the U.S. Senate voted 82 to 0 against Reagan’s visit. 257 U.S. Representatives sent letters to Kohl asking him to withdraw the invitation, and 53 U.S. senators wrote to Reagan urging him to cancel the meeting.

⁴⁷ Reagan commented of the *Waffen-SS*: “those young men were victims of Nazism also...They were victims, just as surely as the victims in the concentration camps.” Quoted in Olick 1999, 394. Olick notes that “Despite all the years of denial, defense and construction of Germans as victims in the German

Thus West Germany's commemoration with its NATO allies led to decreased focus on the Nazi past during the 1980s. Otherwise, German commemoration of the middle period reflects a higher level of apology over the previous era of amnesia.

Education. West German education policy of the middle period reflects increasingly apologetic remembrance. Facing domestic and international criticism for failing to educate students about the recent past, educators and state officials implemented education reforms.⁴⁸ They commissioned several academic studies on education and proposals for teaching more about the past.⁴⁹ The FRG government sponsored West German participation in multilateral UNESCO textbook commissions.⁵⁰ As a result of such activities, the FRG published school textbooks that included greater detail about the Nazi period.⁵¹ Thus West German education policy in this period reflects apologetic remembrance of Nazi crimes.

In sum, during the middle period, West Germans displayed an increasingly apologetic remembrance of their past in a variety of policies. A 1980s conservative trend away from remembrance was rebuked by politicians and intellectuals.

discourse, such a bald elision of distinctions was something that would have never been dared by a West German leader, whatever the sentiments...." Olick 1999, 395

⁴⁸The impetus for this increased attention to West German history education is frequently attributed to the horrified reaction of West Germans to anti-Semitic vandalism that occurred across the country in the late 1950s. Synagogues and Jewish cemeteries were desecrated. See Marcuse 2001, 210; Olick 1999, 388; Rabinbach 1990.

⁴⁹ Leichtfuss 1961, 142-144

⁵⁰ German historian Georg Eckert, a member of such a commission, commented that "I fully share the opinion of my British colleagues that the analysis of those historical events cannot be left to the discretion of the teacher but must be included in the text books." Stahl 1961, 117

⁵¹ Hannah Vogt's *The Burden of Guilt: A Short History of Germany, 1914-1945* was the first West German text to deal openly with the Nazi period, and was distributed widely. Marcuse 2001

Late Phase, 1990s and 00s

German remembrance in the Late Phase—following German unification—has been very *apologetic*. Unified Germany continued in the West German tradition of remembering and atoning for the past.

Statements of German leaders during this period reflect a high level of apology. First, at the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, a statement by Chancellor Kohl was read, which said that “the darkest and most horrible chapter of German history was written in Auschwitz,” and that “one of our priority tasks is to pass on this knowledge to future generations so that the horrible experiences of the past will never be repeated.”⁵² Second, on the 50th anniversary of the surrender (May 8, 1995), German President Herzog recalled German victimhood, but did so in context with Germany’s initiation of the war, and the victimhood of Europeans.⁵³

Although most discussion of the past was apologetic (and none denied Nazi crimes), debates did persist between people committed to mourning the past, and those who wanted to move forward. First, 300 German elites signed a petition that ran as a newspaper advertisement (known as the *Aufruf*) at the time of the 50th anniversary

⁵² Quoted in Marcuse 2001, 379. Marcuse comments, “This unequivocal statement of acceptance of Germany’s brown-collar past was a far cry from Kohl’s homage to German victimhood at Bitburg a decade earlier.” (Ibid)

⁵³ Herzog said: “Germany had unleashed a war that was more terrible than anything that had taken place until then and it suffered the most terrible defeat that one can imagine. Europe was in ruins, from the Atlantic to the Urals and from the Arctic circle to the Mediterranean coast. Millions of members of all European peoples, including the German one, were dead, fallen, torn to shreds in bomb attacks, starved to death in camps, and frozen on the roads during their flight, and other millions—in particular Jews, Romanies, and Sinti, Poles, and Russians, Czechs and Slovaks—fell victim to the largest operations of eradication that human minds had ever conceived. Millions had lost their relatives, their friends, and their homes, or were in the process of losing them. Millions came from prisoners-of-war camps or were on their way to them. Millions had been maimed. Hundreds of thousands of women had been raped. The stink of the crematories and the smoldering ruins was heavy over Europe.” Source: “Herzog Addresses 8 May Ceremony in Berlin,” Munich ARD Television, 8 May 1995. FBIS Germany, 8 May 1995.

commemorations.⁵⁴ In the statement, conservatives condemned the media's "one-sided" presentation of the German surrender; they argued that May 8 should be seen as the "beginning of the expulsion, terror, and new oppression in the East and the division of our nation."⁵⁵ These conservatives, however, were sharply rebuked, and failed to gain politically from this effort.⁵⁶ Thus, elites both issued apologies and led debates about how much memory was appropriate for Germany.

Reparations. During the later period, unified Germany further expanded its already extensive policy of reparations. First, restitution was extended to victims living within the former East Germany.⁵⁷ Second, Germany made numerous bilateral agreements that supplemented restitution paid out under the earlier BEG and BRüG laws. This included the Czech-German fund⁵⁸; a Friendship Agreement with Poland⁵⁹;

⁵⁴ Known as "*Aufruf gegen das Vergessen*," or "Against Forgetting." The *Aufruf* was drafted by neoconservatives Rainer Zitelmann, Karlheinz Weissmann, and Heimo Schwilk. Heilbrunn 1996

⁵⁵ Quoted in Heilbrunn 1996, 91. For more on this conservative movement see Wilds 2000, 94; Muller 2000, 15.

⁵⁶ One scholar writes, "the response to the *Aufruf* at party-political and government level...represented a decisive rebuttal of the thrust of the [New Right]. Whilst one might well have expected left-liberal and critical thinkers to attack the sentiment of the New Right, it was perhaps surprising to note the concerted criticism which emerged from within the *conservative* spectrum." Wilds 2000, 94 Josef Joffe concludes that the most interesting thing about the *Aufruf* episode "was the German reaction to the 're-education' shenanigans of Zitelmann, Weissmann, et al. If this was a cancer, the German body politic soon unleashed powerful antibodies." Joffe 1997

⁵⁷ The Bundestag passed a new law in 1992, the "Law on Compensation for Victims of National Socialism in the Regions Acceding to the Federal Republic." This law recognized that persons had been denied compensation by the GDR, and invited them to submit new applications to the unified German government. German Information Office, <http://www.germany-info.org>

⁵⁸ Nazi Germany invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia during the war. After the war, the Czech government ethnically cleansed Germans from its territory, leading to a massive refugee crisis; over one million Germans died in expulsions from Czechoslovakia and other Eastern European nations. In the 1996 agreement, Germany contributed DM 140 million, while the Czech government provided DM 25 million (\$93 and \$17 million in 1996 \$U.S., respectively). Accompanying the establishment of the fund was a joint declaration in which both states acknowledged responsibility for past crimes, and agreed to move their relations forward.

⁵⁹This treaty established the "Foundation for German-Polish Reconciliation." The German government paid DM 500 million toward this foundation. Those receiving compensation were 40,000 former concentration camp inmates, 30,000 victims who as children had been imprisoned or had served as forced

agreements with successor states to the Soviet Union (Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine); and the extension of new benefits to Holocaust survivors living in the United States and Israel. In 1996 the Bundestag also agreed to set aside funds for foundations yet to be negotiated with several other Eastern European nations.⁶⁰ Third, in March 2000, a group of German companies and the German government concluded a \$5 billion reparations agreement for forced laborers of the Third Reich. The settlement included an apology and established an educational foundation.⁶¹

Education. German education in the later period reflects a high level of apology. German textbooks teach candidly about the crimes of the Third Reich. Yasemin Soysal writes that German textbooks “reflect a condemnation of the Nazi past,” and provide “extensive and negative coverage of the Nazi history as a time of violence, persecution, death, and destruction.”⁶² In striking comparison to the textbooks of immediate postwar era, “contemporary history in German textbooks is given a more prominent place. Ancient and medieval history is relatively marginalized in comparison with coverage of the Weimar Republic, the Nazi period, and the Cold War.”⁶³ Thus the

laborers, and about 500,000 former forced laborers Hofhansel 1999, 111. Another issue between Germany and Poland was Poland’s insistence that Germany recognize the finality of Poland’s border with Germany (after World War II Poland had received chunks of German territory, which Germany had never officially recognized as legitimate). The two nations signed a border treaty as well as this friendship treaty in 1991.

⁶⁰ Hofhansel 1999, 118

⁶¹ At a private ceremony honoring victims of forced labor, German President Johannes Rau said, “I pay tribute to all those who were subjected to slave and forced labor under German rule, and, in the name of the German people, beg forgiveness.” Quoted in Roger Cohen, “Wiesel Urges Germany to Ask Forgiveness,” *New York Times*, 28 January 2000, p. A3.

⁶² Soysal 1998, 57

⁶³ *Ibid*, 56

aggression and atrocities of the Third Reich receives extensive coverage in German textbooks.⁶⁴

German *commemoration* reflects an extraordinarily high level of apology about the German past. As James Young writes, “Berlin and its environs are rich with excellent museums and permanent exhibitions on the Holocaust...from the Wannsee villa to the Topographie des Terrors, from the new Jewish museum on Lindenstrasse and the Spielberg video archives it will house, to the insightful exhibitions at Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen.”⁶⁵ Other notable memorials include the Memorial to the Bookburning at Bebelplatz, and Street Signs in the Bavarian Quarter.⁶⁶ Perhaps the most important Berlin memorial is still under construction: the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.⁶⁷ In June 1999 the Germans voted to erect this memorial in a huge plot of land near the Brandenburg Gate. The scope of this memorial—not to mention the lengthy internal debate it produced—reflects a high level of apology within Germany.⁶⁸

Furthermore, German days of commemoration established in the late period reflect a high level of apology. Since 1995 the Germans have celebrated Holocaust

⁶⁴ In teaching the lessons of the past, German textbooks link such lessons to current problems facing Germany, such as integration and multiculturalism. Texts prepare German students to be citizens of Europe and a globalized world. Mark Selden and Laura Hein argue, “German leaders have adopted a ‘tamed’ national identity that celebrates both regional diversity within Germany and integration—political, military, economic, and cultural—within the European Union.” Hein and Selden 2000, 13

⁶⁵ Young 1999, 55

⁶⁶ Another famous memorial in Berlin, the Neue Wache, was rededicated in 1995 as the “Central Memorial of the Federal Republic of Germany for the Victims of War and Tyranny.” The rededication of this memorial inspired controversy among those who objected to lumping together victims and perpetrators. On this memorial see Kattago 1998.

⁶⁷ On the memorial see Young 1999. Also see Omar Sacirbey, “Berlin Struggles to Pick A Memorial to Holocaust,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 January 1998, electronic version; Roger Cohen, “Berlin Holocaust Memorial Approved,” *New York Times*, June 26, 1999; John Grimond, “The Burden of Normality,” *The Economist*, February 6, 1999, p. S3; Roger Cohen, “Wiesel Urges Germany to Ask Forgiveness,” *New York Times*, 28 January 2000, p. A3.

Remembrance Day on January 27 (the day Auschwitz was liberated). Also, although the Berlin wall fell on November 9, the German government chose to commemorate unification on October 3 (the official first day of unification). November 9 is also the anniversary of the first night of *Kristallnacht*; although they might have chosen to blot out this memory in favor of a happier one, the Germans chose not to. In sum, German policies of remembrance in the later period reflects a very high level of apology in statements, reparations, education, and commemoration.

West Germany and then unified Germany have pursued very apologetic policies of remembrance. This was not immediately the case; during the 1950s amnesia was the norm, as reflected in a variety of policies. However during the 1960s West Germany began a process of remembering the crimes of the Third Reich, and since then has displayed a level of apology for its past actions that is unprecedented in the world.

IV. TESTING THE APOLOGY THEORY: FRENCH THREAT PERCEPTION OF GERMANY SINCE WORLD WAR II

Based on the above coding of German remembrance, the apology theory makes two predictions for French threat perception of Germany. First, as German apologies increased from the Early to the Middle Phase, the theory predicts a drop in French threat perception of the FRG. Second, the theory predicts that the French should discuss German remembrance in threat assessments. In this section I code French threat perception of Germany, across the same three periods of time, to test these predictions.

⁶⁸ The massive memorial consists of over two thousand stones of irregular height, resembling tombstones, over an awkwardly sloping field. It will also have an information center on the Holocaust.

Early Phase (Occupation and the Early '50s)

This period covers the period of German occupation, followed by the first years of the existence of a sovereign West German state. During this time France and her allies were implementing reforms in West Germany and debating German rearmament. French threat perception of Germany during this phase was HIGH.

Opinion. During the French occupation of Germany and the first years of a sovereign West German state, French opinion reflects HIGH threat perception. Poll data from September 1944 and 1945 revealed that “The harshest treatment for Germany, any solution leaving her in a state of inferiority, was approved by the great majority....any measure seemed acceptable as long as it was radical and severe.”⁶⁹ In a 1950 poll that asked respondents to rank various nations in order of preference, “the the Germans came last, in a position of clear enmity—and, it should be pointed out, after the Russians. The recollections of evil had not been wiped out.”⁷⁰ Thus French opinion reflects that fears of Germany were still high in the immediate aftermath of the war.

During the first years of the new West German state (as reflected in debates over German rearmament) French opinion reflects high threat perception of Germany. Jean Stoetzel notes, “The threat from the East does not appear so blinding as to obliterate the dangers run in the recent past from Germany.”⁷¹ The French reaction to German rearmament was compared to that of a bank president asked to place a notorious thief

⁶⁹ Stoetzel 1957, 73

⁷⁰ Stoetzel 1957, 74

⁷¹ Stoetzel 1957, 78. Poll data from France reflects that the French people were as likely to pick Germany as France’s greatest enemy as they were to pick the USSR. (Ibid)

in charge of the vault.”⁷² Thus during the occupation and early years of the FRG, French opinion reflected HIGH threat perception.

Policies. French policies during the occupation and early 1950s also reveal a HIGH level of threat perception. First, during the 1940s the French negotiated alliances with several countries aimed at combating a future German threat.⁷³ Second, French leaders pursued policies of European institutionalization that were aimed at controlling German war-making potential. Third, France (with its allies) sought to reform Germany internally during the occupation.⁷⁴ Fourth, strong French fears of German military power are reflected in the French National Assembly’s rejection of the European Defense Community (EDC). French policies thus reflect high threat perception of Germany.

Reasoning. The factors of greatest concern to the French are reflected in their occupation policies. One important factor is German **policies of remembrance**. The French were not concerned with apologies from Germany, and reparations were simply extracted by occupation authorities rather than offered as contrition. The French were also less interested in de-nazification or war crimes trials. During the occupation, the

⁷² Quoted in McGeehan 1971, 52. In September 1950, as American negotiators sought French approval for German rearmament to balance Soviet military power, “the French cabinet was unanimously hostile not only to immediate German rearmament but even to an immediate declaration accepting in principle eventual German rearmament.” (Ibid, p. 58)

⁷³ The Franco-Soviet alliance of 1944 “comprises a commitment to take to the end of the conflict ‘all necessary measures to eliminate any new menace coming from Germany,’ and to obstruct ‘all initiatives liable to make possible a new attempt of aggression on her part.’” Moch 1965. In the 1948 Brussels pact, signatory nations agreed “to take measures judged as necessary in case of ‘repeated policy of aggression on the part of Germany.’” Quoted in *Le Monde*, 4 November, 1954. Another alliance directed against German resurgence was the 1947 Treaty of Dunkirk with Great Britain.

⁷⁴ Robert Gildea writes, “There was a view in France that having won the war in 1918 they had bungled the peace, and that this must not happen in 1945. The risk of further German aggression must be eliminated once and for all.” Gildea 1996, 11

French were very concerned about the German education system, which they viewed as vital for the success of German democracy.

A pernicious interpretation of history had supported Hitler's rise, and the French were determined to reform German schools and curricula. Helen Liddell notes that French leaders at the time argued that "Books and syllabus must be fundamentally revised, 'not only from the angle of de-Nazification but also from all traces of an aggressive spirit.'" ⁷⁵ One scholar notes that "Of the three Western allies it was the French who approached the 're-education' issue with the greatest precision....policies were adopted somewhat in the spirit of a *mission civilisatrice*, designed in this case to awaken in the Germans a love of freedom and individualism as revealed in French cultural traditions." ⁷⁶

Instilling in Germany an awareness of her recent crimes through re-education was linked to the success of German **democracy**, which was seen as vital for solving the German problem. Alfred Grosser writes, "From the earliest days of the new German democracy, foreigners and Germans alike evaluated that democracy according to the manner in which it interpreted the Nazi past and came to terms with it." ⁷⁷ Jean Solchany agrees: "Critical reflection about...the heavy burden of the Nazi past participated in the democratic consciousness of postwar Germany." ⁷⁸ In sum, the French worried about Germany's interpretation of its Nazi past, and through their

⁷⁵ Helen Liddell, quoting 1947 manuscript by Marek St-Korowicz, "Le Probleme du desarmement moral de l'Allemagne." Liddell 1949 St-Korowicz noted, "All textbooks must be revised and all allusions to war or glory, all biographies of 'men of the sword and of conquest' must be removed as well as all tendentious references to revisionism."

⁷⁶ Hearnden 1974, 37

⁷⁷ Grosser 1970, 210

⁷⁸ Solchany 1997, XIII. This and other translations by the author.

occupation policies sought to democratize West German education as well as instill awareness of past crimes.

French occupation policies also reflect other French concerns with respect to Germany. First, French fears of West German **aggregate** and **military power** led the French to lobby for decentralizing and disarming the FRG during the occupation, and led the French to reject the EDC treaty in 1954. In a 1948 speech Robert Schuman declared, “Any plan which resulted in establishing and authorizing a central power would present to Germany a temptation and to us a permanent and growing threat, first of *revanche* and then of bellicose imperialism.”⁷⁹ Thus the French were very concerned about keeping West German military power low.

This preoccupation with German military power continued into the 1950s and was reflected in the French debate over the ratification of the EDC treaty. The French media of the time was replete with horrified reactions to the prospect of German rearmament.⁸⁰ A *Monde* commentator asked, “Will one pretend that German rearmament of today, whatever the form, no longer offers the dangers that it presented yesterday? All the evidence points to the danger remaining the same.” This story asserted that German remilitarization within NATO was, “pure and simple, the resurrection of the *Wehrmacht*.”⁸¹

⁷⁹ “La Situation en France,” quoted in Furniss 1960, 41. Lacking the power to enforce its demands, and facing pressure from the United States to agree to less punitive policies in Germany, France had to abandon many of its demands. The Allies instituted numerous safeguards against future German power, but fewer than French leaders would have preferred.

⁸⁰ After Dean Acheson first discussed the idea of German rearmament with the Europeans in fall 1950, the communist newspaper *L'Humanité* reported, “The choice is clear, Acheson and the Nazi General Guderian have triumphed: the new *Wehrmacht* is going to be created.” 27 September 1950. *Monde* wondered what precautions EDC member states would take “to prevent the renaissance of Prussian militarism.” 5 October 1950.

⁸¹ 4 November 1954.

The EDC debate within the French National Assembly reflects strong fears of German military power. Supporters of the EDC wanted to contain inevitable German rearmament. Pierre Maillard writes that “the EDC would permit the “tying up” of Germany, to prevent its forces from being utilized for purely national ends, to imprison them within a Western system, both military and political, removing all risks of her returning to her past ambitions.”⁸² Gaullists fought the EDC with slogans such as “EDC revives the German Army and destroys the French Army.”⁸³ Other EDC opponents were afraid that West Germany would be the first to create army units within the EDC framework and then it would “use its relatively superior position for greater advantages.”⁸⁴ In sum, during the occupation and during the early 1950s, France was opposed to any growth in West German military power.

Second, the French were also concerned about Germany’s potential **territorial claims**. Alfred Grosser writes that the French feared that “a rearmed Western Germany is apt to lead the West into war against the East to gain its reunification and to recover the territories beyond the Oder-Neisse.”⁸⁵ French Defense Minister Jules Moch commented to U.S. officials that he “’was not prepared to support a crusade for the recovery of Königsberg,’ which he was sure was every German’s fondest wish.”⁸⁶ Politician Jacques Soustelle argued that “with her territorial ambitions ... [West

⁸² Maillard 1990, 136

⁸³ Aron 1957, 11

⁸⁴ *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 July 1951.

⁸⁵ Grosser 1957, 67

⁸⁶ Large 1996, 92

Germany] would inevitably become the most dynamic and dangerous force within the Western Union.”⁸⁷

Third, French fears of Germany led Paris to draw up plans for European **institutions** aimed at constraining Germany’s use of its resources. The desire to control the raw materials of German military power—in a way that the new West German state would not view as prejudicial—led to the French proposal for the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Jean Monnet wrote in draft of the ECSC plan, “a totally new situation must be created: the Franco-German problem must become a European problem.”⁸⁸ Robert Schuman declared that “the solidarity in production...will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable but materially impossible.”⁸⁹

In sum, French threat perception of the FRG during the early postwar period (1945-early 1950s) was HIGH. (For summary see figure below.) Occupation policies and the EDC debate reflect that France feared German military power. During this period France also worked to construct democracy and international institutions with the goal of promoting peace. As for German remembrance, French occupation policies of re-education reveal a preoccupation with how the FRG was interpreting and representing its past.⁹⁰

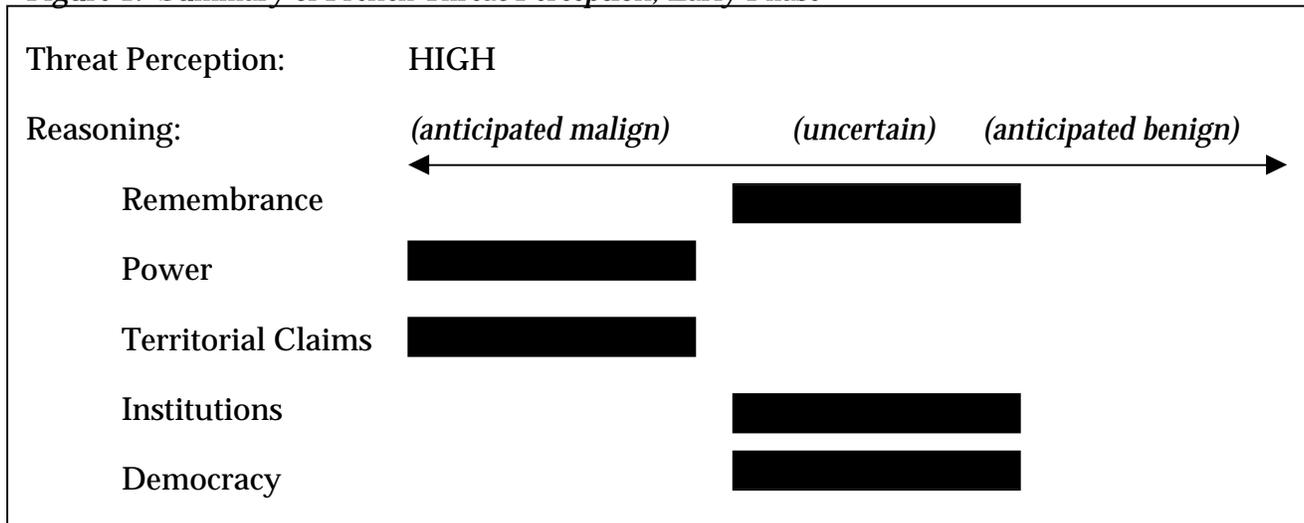
⁸⁷ Quoted in Werth 1956, 706.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Campbell 1989, 61. Campbell writes, “the ECSC proposal was the first European initiative in the creation of an institutional status quo *with* the Germans in which the latter would have a stake....France’s offer to place its own coal and steel industries under the control of an international authority, if West Germany would do the same, was explicitly designed as a first step toward breaking the cycle of past mistrust.” (Ibid, p. 62)

⁸⁹ Robert Schuman, “Declaration, 1950.” Source: Salmon and Nichol 1997, 44.

⁹⁰ France was not concerned with the issue of a German apology (nor was it interested in German apologies to other states; at the time the French showed paid no attention to West German reparations to Israel in 1952).

Figure 1: Summary of French Threat Perception, Early Phase



Summary of Findings for Apology Theory

The early period provides some support for the apology theory in terms of congruence and reasoning. First, French threat perception and German policies of remembrance co-varied as predicted (German remembrance reflected *Amnesia* and French threat perception was HIGH). Second, the importance of German remembrance is supported by evidence from French reasoning. Occupation policies of re-education reflect the French belief that to support German democracy and promote peaceful German behavior, candid history education was essential.

Middle Phase (Late 1950s through 1980s)

As France reconciled itself to the idea of a sovereign West Germany, French threat perception in the middle period dropped to LOW/MODERATE.

Opinion. Public and elite opinion in France both improved dramatically across this period. One opinion analyst comments, “The anti-German attitude of the French

public and elites immediately after World War II seems to have disappeared almost entirely. Public opinion polls...also show a reversal of public attitudes on the suitability of Germany as an alliance partner.”⁹¹ First, the French showed increasing support for German unification throughout this period. The percentage of people saying they supported German unification was 33% in 1960, rising to 62% in 1987.⁹² Second, during in this period, the French began identifying Germany as France’s closest friend. In 1965 Germany received the most votes as “the best friend of France.”⁹³ In 1983 Germany retained this position, chosen by 48% of respondents.⁹⁴ As for elite opinion, although it had also improved dramatically since the EDC debate, the views of French elites were less positive than the public. French elites “tend to be more reserved, to qualify in a number of ways the Franco-German *rapprochement*, to express serious doubts about de Gaulle’s efforts to make the cornerstone of his European policy out of a Franco-German alliance and to fear a revival of German strength.”⁹⁵

Policies. During this period, France was chiefly concerned with the Soviet threat, but remained wary that the FRG would seek reunification through an accommodation with the USSR. To reduce the chance of this, France pursued a strategy of creating a multitude of links binding the FRG to the West. France and its partners moved forward with European integration, such as the 1957 Treaty of Rome (establishing the European

⁹¹ Deutsch et al. 1967, 66

⁹² (*Sondages*, no. 3 (1960), p. 71) For the later poll see “La Reunification Allemande?” *Geopolitique* (1987), pp. 6-9.

⁹³ In 1965, 20% of French identified West Germany as “the best friend of France”; the next-highest countries were Britain (14%), the U.S. (12%), Belgium (11%), followed by several other countries. Poll by Institut Français d’Opinion Publique, published in *France Soir*, 18 March 1965.

⁹⁴ 48% chose West Germany, 38% chose Belgium, 33% chose the United States, 16% chose Britain, 16% chose Italy, among other countries. Poll, “L’image comparée de la France et l’Allemagne de l’Ouest,” SOFRES (mai 1983), p. 1.

Economic Community), the 1962 Common Agricultural Policy, the Luxembourg Treaty of 1970, and the 1986 Single European Act. In the realm of defense cooperation, France and West Germany signed the 1963 Elysée Treaty. Although this established a framework for extensive security consultation and cooperation, these aspects of the agreement stalled until the 1980s.⁹⁶ Franco-German security cooperation deepened after 1982, at which time the two sides decided to activate the security consultations established under the 1963 treaty. During the 1980s France established a rapid reaction force, three of whose divisions were intended for the defense of the West Germany, and engaged those forces in joint military exercises with the FRG.

Reasoning. During this time French threat perception of Germany was influenced by several factors. The French monitored and commented upon German **policies of remembrance**. Political scientist Alfred Grosser participated in the Franco-German youth efforts established in the 1963 Elysée Treaty. He said, “At the first youth meetings I explained to Germans what had been done. The fact that they know what they did was the key to advancement of our relationship.”⁹⁷ Grosser writes that “the mention of Nazi atrocities in schoolbooks and elsewhere was a necessary sign of democratization and moral rehabilitation of postwar Germany.”⁹⁸ He comments, “German politics since the war...are judged with reference to the moral standard that

⁹⁵ Deutsch et al. 1967, 67

⁹⁶ The French pushed for a Franco-German “third force” to balance the U.S.-Soviet conflict. In the early 1960s the Soviets had acquired a second-strike nuclear capability, thus calling into question the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee to its Western European allies. The French effort was accepted by Konrad Adenauer but rejected by the German Bundestag, which voted unanimously to insert a preamble to the treaty reaffirming the FRG’s commitment to NATO.

⁹⁷ Personal Interview, October 2002.

⁹⁸ Grosser 1970, 212

condemns 'what happened'."⁹⁹ Grosser noted that in the FRG, "the extreme right, which barely conceals its admiration for the past, is of negligible importance: there are tiny groups and publications without number, but they have no real influence."¹⁰⁰ After Willy Brandt's gesture at Warsaw, French Foreign Minister François Seydoux wrote, "Brandt infused sentiment into the policy he was pursuing. Kneeling with famous humility before the victims of the Nazis, he gave a burst of generosity. It showed him to be a statesman, for whom the misery and unfairness of war caused repulsion."¹⁰¹

The French also noticed the increased conservatism in West German memory of the 1980s. In reaction to Kohl's "grace of late birth" statement, one article noted, "one can...be worried about this impatience [to forget] that manifests itself in contemporary German society."¹⁰² After the Philip Jenniger speech, one article noted that Jenniger's gaffe was "a scandal of international dimensions that damaged the reputation of his country."¹⁰³ Regarding the Historian's Debate, another article commented,

It would be too easy to...see these historians as Nazis who gauged that finally the moment had come to show their true selves. Real questions need to be posed. First, which Europe do the West Germans want? Second, patriotism is for them a right, a responsibility—but what kind of patriotism is it? Finally, what are relations between German generations, and how are each of them in touch with the Nazi past?¹⁰⁴

The article, though very critical of revisionist historians in West Germany, praised the efforts of German youth who were engaged in researching the Nazi past in their

⁹⁹ Grosser 1970, 2

¹⁰⁰ Grosser 1970, 222

¹⁰¹ Seydoux 1977, 166

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ *Le Monde*, 12 November 1988. Also see Daniel Vernet, *Le Monde*, 14 November 1988.

¹⁰⁴ Jean-Jacques Guinchard, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, July 1987.

neighborhoods and towns. It noted that they were “refusing the banalization of history,” and overall concluded that “frank explanation of your own history is a mark of vibrant democracy.”¹⁰⁵ Thus the French monitored and commented on changes in German remembrance during this period.

Low French threat perception during the middle period also depended on several other important factors. First, the French were concerned with limitations on West German **military power**. The French were firmly opposed to West German nuclear weapons. At the 1958 Franco-German summit at Colombey-les-deux-Eglises, de Gaulle demanded that Germany renounce forever ownership of weapons of mass destruction. The French President commented in his memoirs, “the right to possess or to manufacture atomic weapons...must in no circumstances be granted to her....”¹⁰⁶ De Gaulle commented to Ambassador Hervé Alphand, “We have no intention...of helping Germany to become a nuclear power, and neither of accepting it if she did.”¹⁰⁷ France itself had acquired a nuclear weapons capability, and was committed to preventing the FRG from doing the same.

Second, the French pressed the West Germans to renounce **territorial claims**. At Colombey, De Gaulle “declared that Germany must accept its territorial losses from World War II, and not ‘reopen the question of [its] present frontiers to the west, the east, the north, and south.’”¹⁰⁸ The French also feared a German bid for unification. De

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. Another article noted that the Historian’s Debate reflected “an exceptional civic and pedagogical pugnacity—a new collective reflection, orchestrated by the free media, about the nature of Nazism, and the place of those twelve tragic years within the political life of the outer-Rhine. In this sense, this debate is the pride of the democracy of Bonn.” Joseph Rovin, *Le Monde*, 25 March 1988.

¹⁰⁶ de Gaulle 1971, 173

¹⁰⁷ quoted in Alphand, 445

¹⁰⁸ De Gaulle wrote in his memoirs, “On the all-important question of Germany’s future, my mind was made up. First of all, I believed that it would be unjust and dangerous to revise the de facto frontiers

Gaulle commented, “France was not in a hurry for the reunification of Germany.”¹⁰⁹ At Colombey, the French president demanded of Adenauer, “unremitting patience as regards unification.”¹¹⁰ Although Adenauer gave de Gaulle the assurances he sought, “behind the Franco-German façade of brotherhood always continued to lurk the traditional French sensibility to *les incertitudes allemandes* (in the sense that Germany might be tempted to sacrifice its western orientation for unification).”¹¹¹ Thus during this period the French feared that the FRG would want to revise its postwar borders and reunify.

Third, during the middle period, de Gaulle and his successors sought to expand European **institutions** in the interest of promoting peace. De Gaulle wrote, “As for France, who certainly had the best of reasons for preventing her principal neighbor from becoming warlike again, but also good reasons for cooperating with her, she bowed to the realities and saw to it that Bonn, contained within a sensible European grouping, remained as closely linked to her as possible.”¹¹² De Gaulle’s foreign minister writes,

It was also necessary to have the courage—or the good sense...to know that she was too formidable for us to approach alone ; that always it was necessary that we be sheltered behind others or covered by some international

which the war had imposed on her. This meant that the Oder-Neisse line which separates her from Poland should remain her definitive boundary, that nothing should remain of her former claims in respect of Czechoslovakia, and that a new Anschluss in whatever form must be precluded.” de Gaulle 1971, 173

¹⁰⁹ Giaque 2002, 92 Trachtenberg 1999, 268. De Gaulle’s views were shared by others; a poll of French elites demonstrated that “over two thirds...consider German reunification to be a threat to French security.” Deutsch et al. 1967, 67

¹¹⁰ de Gaulle 1971, 176

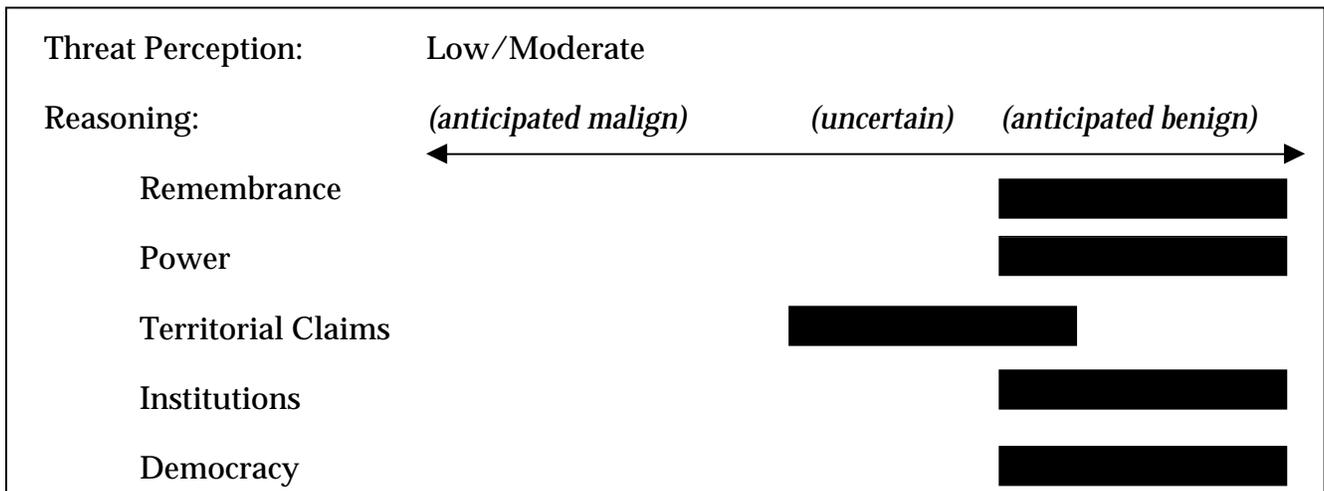
¹¹¹ Van Ham 1999, 4

¹¹² de Gaulle 1971, 227

combination....Going head to head with Germany is the greatest danger that France should avoid at all costs.¹¹³

In sum, during this middle period, French threat perception of West Germany dropped significantly from its initially high level after the war. Earlier French fears were not borne out, and uncertainties were reduced. During this period the lingering issue of German reunification maintained some uncertainty in a time of otherwise low threat perception; I code threat perception of this phase as LOW/MODERATE. (See figure below.)

Figure 2: Summary of French Threat Perception, Middle Phase



Summary of Findings for Apology Theory

The Middle period provides some support for the apology theory in terms of congruence and reasoning. First, as predicted by the theory, French threat perception fell as West German remembrance reached a high level of *apology*. Second, evidence for the apology theory appears in French reasoning. West German remembrance was

¹¹³ Couve de Murville 1971, 236

monitored and commented on by the French. Increased conservatism in West German memory was watched and identified as a worrisome trend.

Late Phase (1990s to present)

The 1990s ushered in momentous change for Europe with the unification of divided Germany, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Suddenly the postwar system that had constrained German power was in doubt. As a result, French threat perception of Germany spiked to MODERATE during unification negotiations. But the French were reassured by Germany's reaffirmation of constraints on its power and autonomy; threat perception dropped to LOW.

French Threat Perception During German Unification

French threat perception spiked during negotiations over German unification in 1990.

Opinion. Public and elite views were divided on the issue of German unification; what the French public supported and perceived as a natural, French elites viewed with more alarm. In November 1989 French polls supported the idea of unification. *Paris Match* reported that 61% of respondents said that German unification would be “a good thing for France.”¹¹⁴ In the French media appeared numerous articles that debated the implications of German unification for France. One article framed the issue succinctly: “France asks herself, what is her future—prey, or ally?”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ *Paris Match*, 23 November 1989. A similar result was found in a Figaro-Louis Harris poll that month (60% in favor). Figaro-Harris poll in *Le Figaro*, 13 November 1989. Two months later, in January 1990 the *Economist* also reported their own poll that 61% of French favored German unification. Source: *Le Monde*, 27 January 1990, p. 34.

¹¹⁵ Bruno Frappant, “Puissants Voisins,” *Le Monde*, 13 Octobre 1990, p. 31

French elites feared the uncertainty surrounding Germany's future after unification. American negotiators commented that in conversations with the French and other European leaders, "it was made clear that all these politicians started from the preservation of the realities of the postwar period, including the existence of two German states. All of them will consider raising the question of the unity of Germany as extremely explosive."¹¹⁶ Stephen Szabo writes that "The French were the most disoriented by changes which began with the opening of the Wall."¹¹⁷

Policies. During unification the French government attempted unsuccessfully to prevent or delay German unification, and sought the British and Soviets as allies toward this goal. Eventually Mitterrand, reconciled to the reality that he could not prevent unification from occurring, sought assurances about future German behavior.

Reasoning. During the unification negotiations, France revealed those factors that concerned it the most about a potential German threat. The French did not talk about German remembrance during this time. First, the French were concerned about **German aggregate and military power**. One article noted, "Unified Germany will be the premier economic and demographic power in the EEC, and this worries Europeans. What role will Germany play from now on?"¹¹⁸ Another commented, "When Germany becomes larger, it is inevitable that this evokes the phantom of a grand Germany whose

¹¹⁶ Zelikow and Rice 1995, 88

¹¹⁷ Szabo 1992, 48 French President François Mitterrand viewed German unification as a frightening prospect. In her memoirs Margaret Thatcher writes, "[Mitterrand] was clearly irked by German attitudes and behaviour....The trouble was that in reality there was no force in Europe which could stop reunification from happening. He agreed with my analysis of the problems but said he was at a loss as to what we could do." Thatcher 1993, 797

¹¹⁸ Jérôme Vaillant, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 1990, p. 1-3

ambition spilled blood in crimes across Europe.”¹¹⁹ During unification negotiations, Mitterrand demanded that unified Germany renounce a nuclear weapons capability.

Second, the French feared that Germany would abandon the constraints of postwar **institutions**. One article comments, “All efforts should be made to maintain with unified Germany the historic miracle that was the ‘marriage’...between the two hereditary enemies. With the growing intimacy of common links, national rivalries will become anachronistic.”¹²⁰ Another article comments, “Will [German] restraint persist? I don’t know. But for the moment the commitment of Germany to European construction can be taken in good faith.”¹²¹ As for negotiations, French elites “aimed at ‘smoking out’ Bonn, at probing and prodding in order to find out whether the constraints of NATO and, above all, the EC, were still acceptable to the Federal Republic, and indeed whether Chancellor Kohl was willing to tighten the bonds to the community....”¹²² Former U.S. President Bush writes that at a meeting in Kennebunkport, “François did emphasize that what happened in Germany must be linked with NATO and the EC...‘Otherwise,’ [Mitterrand] warned, ‘we will be back in 1913 and we could lose everything.’”¹²³

Third, the French feared German **territorial claims**. Kohl had been vague about accepting Germany’s current borders.¹²⁴ Mitterrand thought that “Kohl’s ten-point

¹¹⁹ Bruno Frappant, “Puissants Voisins,” *Le Monde*, 13 October 1990, p. 31

¹²⁰ Andre Fontaine, “Plus Fort que Bismarck,” *Le Monde*, 3 October 1990, p. 1

¹²¹ “L’Allemagne au Singulier,” *Le Monde*, 12 October 1990, p. 1

¹²² Hoffmann 1993, 135

¹²³ Bush and Scowcroft 1998, 201

¹²⁴ The large population of ethnic Germans who had been expelled from Eastern Europe and settled in West Germany after the war was a powerful force in the CDU and particularly the CSU.

statement...should have included a pledge to respect the Oder-Neisse line and expressed genuine alarm at the flap over the border question.”¹²⁵ Only after “the settlement of the Polish border issue that the French President turned toward a more constructive policy” toward German unification.¹²⁶

In sum, French threat perception of Germany jumped to MODERATE during negotiations over German unification. The increase was chiefly due to the rise in German aggregate (and potentially military) power, and to uncertainty about German territorial claims and future membership in European institutions.

French Threat Perception After Unification

French threat perception of Germany declined to a very LOW level in the 1990s and 00s.

Opinion. Both the public and elites have a very benign view of unified Germany. Poll data reveals that Germany is considered one of the most loyal allies of France (receiving the highest number of votes at 56% of respondents).¹²⁷ In another poll, 61% called Germany “the principal ally of France.”¹²⁸ When asked “is France correct in fearing Germany?” 59% of respondents said no, and 32% agreed.¹²⁹

French elites do not identify Germany as a security threat. A representative view of French security is as follows: “Major threats to France are global terrorism and

¹²⁵ Merkl 1993, 315

¹²⁶ Szabo 1992, 50. On Mitterrand’s stance on the border question see FBIS Western Europe, June 15, 1990; April 24, 1990.

¹²⁷ Taken from a 1993 poll. This had risen since 1989 when 44% of respondents gave this answer for West Germany. Other results in the 1993 poll: USA at 42%, Belgium at 38%, Britain at 35%, and Switzerland at 22%. Source: *Le Monde*, 23 January 1993, p. 7.

¹²⁸ : *L’Evenement du Jeudi*, no. 639 (30 January 1997), pp. 446

¹²⁹ 9% undecided. Source: *Ibid*, pp. 446.

weapons of mass destruction; we need to figure out how best to preserve the Atlantic community, and how France can be a major actor in the world of new threats.”¹³⁰

Regarding Germany, the vast majority of French elites report that the “German problem” has been solved; any concerns France has about Germany are about its influence within the EU, rather than Germany as a military threat. One scholar commented, “Germany is no longer a threat, it’s a partner. The German problem belongs to the past. Germany no longer wants to dominate Europe by military means.”¹³¹

Policies. In the years following unification, France continued to pursue close political, economic, and military cooperation with Germany. First, German unification prompted the governments of France and Germany to reinvigorate European integration.¹³² The Treaty on European Union was negotiated at Maastricht in 1991 and came into force a year later. Second, France continued close security relations with Germany. The two nations activated the Franco-German brigade, which has served as a nucleus for a larger European rapid reaction force under the auspices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) framework. German military participation has been increasing; German pilots flew sorties over Kosovo during the 1999 war against Serbia, and Germany provided support in the “out-of-area” mission of Afghanistan. The French are supporting this expansion of Germany’s military roles.¹³³

¹³⁰ Personal Interview 2, Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), October 2002.

¹³¹ Personal Interview 2, IFRI, October 2002.

¹³² In 1990 they said in a joint statement, “we consider necessary to accelerate the political construction of the Europe of the Twelve. We think that this is the right moment to transform the whole of the relationships among the member States into an European Union and to endow it of the necessary means of action.” Source: <http://www.historiasiglo20.org/europe/acta.htm>

¹³³ A defense analyst notes that the French government “always tried to help Germany toward military normalization. We view Schroeder’s position on Iraq as a step backward. We welcome progress such as

Reasoning. Low French threat perception of Germany is influenced by several factors. The French media comment on German **policies of remembrance** and their reassuring effects. First, many French observers had been wary of a revival of German nationalism and expressed relief after unification celebrations passed without nationalistic displays. “German society, from officials to the man on the street, celebrated this event with much sobriety and restraint.”¹³⁴ Second, during this period the French have admired how the Germans have remembered their past. One article notes, “Within the major parties, left as well as right, there is no question about accepting, clearly and entirely, the German responsibility for Nazi past crimes.”¹³⁵ Another story comments, “Unification gave rise to the fear of one dominant Germany (economically if not politically) within Europe.” But “educated in the lessons of the past...the Germans reveal astonishing restraint in their international affairs.”¹³⁶ In reaction to the *Aufruf*, an article discusses efforts of German revisionists, but dismisses them, saying that in Germany, “If one believes the polls, their call was barely heard.”¹³⁷

Scholars also comment on the importance of German remembrance. A think-tank analyst notes, “As a member of the younger generation, I don’t emotionally feel the need for German apologies and such, but intellectually I see the need for it.”¹³⁸ Another scholar comments, “We were concerned when Schroeder succeeded Kohl; he is

German participation in Kosovo and in counter-terrorism.” Personal Interview, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, October 2002.

¹³⁴ *Le Monde*, 12 October, 1990. Also see Daniel Vernet, *Le Monde*, 9 January 1991; Bruno Frappant, *Le Monde*, 13 October 1990.

¹³⁵ Marc Semo, *Libération*, 26 September 1998.

¹³⁶ Daniel Vernet, *Le Monde*, 9 January 1991, p. 1

¹³⁷ The *Aufruf* was the protest by German conservatives about self-critical observances of the 50th anniversary of the surrender. Quote from *Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 1995, p. 20

less concerned about the past. He doesn't think he needs to be constrained by Germany's past." The scholar notes that "as a result there was a revival of concern about Germany, that it would behave badly in the future. Not through the use of military force, but in attempts to dominate through their influence."¹³⁹ Another scholar compares German remembrance and its political effects with the situation in Japan.

It's very positive how Germany has dealt with its history; they haven't always dealt with it well, but they've constantly dealt with it. It's the one country in the world that has done a good job of this. This process has strengthened German democracy—Germany is a strong democracy because of the way it has confronted its past. It also makes relations between France and Germany much easier. There's nothing standing in our way. With Japan, it's clear that the past is an obstacle.¹⁴⁰

In sum, the French observe German remembrance and view German apologies as a signal of the strength of German democracy and a signal of benign German intentions.

Several other factors are important in French threat perception of Germany. First, a major factor is the perception of low German **military power**. One scholar noted that since unification "Germany has had falling defense budgets, and is very weak." He commented that "All the nightmare post-unification scenarios did not come true. Germany hasn't become an economic or political giant. There is still a balance of military power between France and Germany."¹⁴¹ Another analyst echoed the sentiments of many of his colleagues when he said, "We're not trying to keep Germany down; it's the reverse. We're trying to get them to do more, to increase their defense

¹³⁸ Personal Interview 3, IFRI, October 2002.

¹³⁹ Personal Interview, Sorbonne, October 2002.

¹⁴⁰ Personal Interview, Centre Marc Bloch, October 2002.

¹⁴¹ Personal Interview 5, IFRI, October 2002.

budget.”¹⁴² He noted, “Germany is no longer a threat because its military capabilities are low.” Scholars also comment that French fears of German military power have been erased by France’s nuclear arsenal, and by Germany’s renunciation of these weapons. One analyst notes, “With French security ultimately guaranteed by nuclear weapons, the ‘German question’ moved from one of ‘security’ to ‘influence’—that is, the realm of competition moved from questions about how much *military power* Germany had to how much *influence* Germany had within the EU.”¹⁴³

Second, low French threat perception is driven by Germany’s continued participation in European **institutions**. One scholar comments, “The main process of threat reduction in France was due to Europeanization: the Rome Treaty in 1957, the Elysée Treaty in 1963, et cetera. Foundations laid by de Gaulle and Adenauer explain the reduction of threat in both countries.”¹⁴⁴ Another analyst comments, “Germany’s pro-Europe stance has been key in making it look unthreatening to France.”¹⁴⁵ Saying that “the EU has changed everything,” another scholar comments that “No one can think of a military conflict between France and Germany.”¹⁴⁶

Third, low French threat perception is caused by German **democracy**. One article comments, “[Germany] is a state of democratic rights...which distinguishes it

¹⁴² Personal Interview 4, IFRI, October 2002.

¹⁴³ Personal Interview 1, IFRI, October 2002.

¹⁴⁴ Personal Interview, Sorbonne, October 2002.

¹⁴⁵ Personal Interview 5, IFRI, October 2002.

¹⁴⁶ Personal Interview, Centre d’Études et de Recherches Internationales (CERI), October 2002. Asserting that French acceptance of German unification was largely contingent on Germany’s acceptance of continued European integration, the scholar notes, “Imagine the shock of German unification without the EU.”

fundamentally from other united German states in history from 1870 to 1945.”¹⁴⁷ A scholar notes, “it’s clear that Germany has changed a great deal—it’s a democratic nation that we can work with. It suffered a terrible defeat, and was totally destroyed. The German people won’t forget that.”¹⁴⁸ German political culture (such as anti-missile demonstrations and the strength of the Greens), are also viewed as reassuring.

In sum, in the late period, French threat perception of Germany spiked to MODERATE during unification negotiations, and then fell to LOW thereafter. The proposed unification of Germany created uncertainty about the future of German defense policy, the behavior of unified Germany toward European institutions, German acceptance of its territorial losses of World War II, and German nationalism. (See gray bars in Figure 3, below). Mitterrand was not mollified until the Germans confirmed they would continue to accept postwar constraints on their behavior.

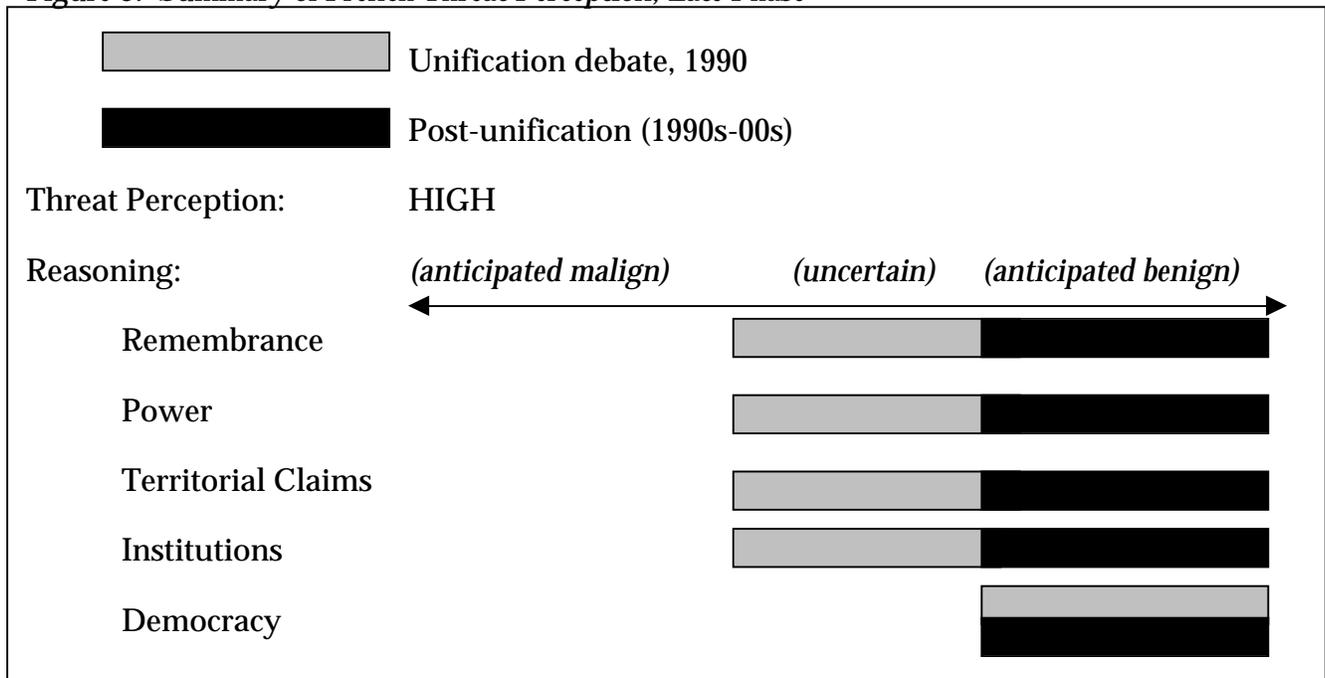
German promises in the unification treaty, the quiet celebration of German unity, and German behavior over the next decade allayed French fears. German contrition expanded to a level that prompted Alfred Grosser to call Germany “normal to excess.”¹⁴⁹ German defense spending sank; in the Maastricht Treaty she pursued deepening integration with her neighbors. (See black bars in Figure 3, below.) As a result, French threat perception of Germany during the late period has been at its lowest level since World War II.

¹⁴⁷ Jérôme Vaillant, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Oct 1990, p. 1-3

¹⁴⁸ Personal Interview 2, IFRI, October 2002.

¹⁴⁹ Grosser 1970, 330

Figure 3: Summary of French Threat Perception, Late Phase



Summary of Findings for Apology Theory

Debates in the Late period show both the limitations and importance of apologies in threat perception. First, despite very apologetic remembrance in 1990, French threat perception spiked to MODERATE during unification debates. Facing a major power shift, and uncertainties about the future of the postwar system, France feared the Germans despite their efforts to come to terms with their past. Thus during the unification process, apologetic German remembrance does not co-vary as predicted with French threat perception. However, after German unification, the very high level of German apology corresponds as predicted to LOW French threat perception.

Evidence from French reasoning is also mixed. During unification debates the French were most concerned about factors other than remembrance. The French did not talk about the benign effects of apologies during this time. However, after unification, the French noticed and admired German policies of remembrance. Apologies are seen as one of the many confidence-building measures the Germans had

pursued to signal their benign intentions. As one French scholar put it, “They’ve told us in all practical terms that they would never wage war against us.”¹⁵⁰

V. CONCLUSIONS

This analysis yields two major findings. First, it is clear that the French have been concerned about German remembrance. When France had the power to influence German policies of remembrance, it did so (through policies of re-education during the occupation). Since World War II, the French monitored German remembrance and factored it into their threat assessments.

This finding has both policy and theoretical implications. Apologies and other policies of remembrance can serve as confidence-building measures (CBMs) between former adversaries, and thus should be included in peace settlements. As for international relations theory, this finding substantiates theories of threat perception that incorporate intentions as well as power; it also supports constructivist arguments that incorporate symbolic and identity factors in threat perception.¹⁵¹

Second, factors *other* than remembrance often dominated French threat perception. Although Germany had apologized a great deal by 1990, the French were alarmed by the prospect of German unification. The French were unwilling to accept a unified German state without German renunciation of territorial claims and weapons of mass destruction, and without German assurances to deepen European integration.

This finding suggests that although apologies are an important CBM, CBMs addressing traditional “realist” factors (i.e. power, territory) must also be included in

¹⁵⁰ Personal Interview, IFRI, October 2002.

the creation of a stable peace. Evidence from this case also supports the claims of liberal institutionalist scholars who argue that institutions can play an effective role in reducing threat perception among members.¹⁵² This case also supports theories of the “democratic peace.”¹⁵³ The Franco-German case since World War II suggests that the most effective post-conflict settlements will include constraints on power, cooperation within institutions, and symbolic gestures of reconciliation such as apologies.

¹⁵¹ Hopf 1998; Walt 1989

¹⁵² Keohane and Martin 1995; Wallander 1999

¹⁵³ Doyle 1996; Owen 1996; Risse-Kappen 1996; Russett 1996a; Russett 1996b

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