CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

If the nineteenth century belonged to Europe, the twentieth century to the USA, who will the twenty-first century belong to? There are many contenders for the slot – the USA once again, the People’s Republic of China, the European Union and Germany (as of July 2004, the Federal Republic of Germany or the FRG calls itself ‘Germany’). This thesis attempts to examine whether the twenty-first century will indeed belong to Germany by looking at the role of united Germany in the post-Cold War world. The present chapter introduces the central hypotheses and questions.

HYPOTHESES AND QUESTIONS

- Since 1871, Germany, as a modern nation, seemed to have difficulties in finding a safe and comfortable identity unlike other major European nations like Britain or France. Frequently, this phenomenon rose from its changing boundaries, its geographical situation in the heart of Europe, as well as its history, particularly the period of the Third Reich.

- The search for Identity has assumed new dimensions since unification in 1990.

- This thesis will investigate the prospects for a rise in German militarism, despite its reduced armed forces, especially in the light of Out-of-Area (OOA) operations of the Bundeswehr (its armed forces).

- Germany is going through a unique process of integrating the command economy of the ex-GDR into the social market economy of Germany.

- Germany is trying to establish a new Identity as a civilian power in order to impress upon the world that it is no longer a warmonger.
How is the German search for Identity viewed by others, especially the USA, the UK, Russia and France?

Given its economic and political influence, will Germany strive to become a world power? How will these affect the European balance of power? These hypotheses and questions will be examined in the following chapters.

Chapter II has focused on the economic unification of Germany following its unification in 1990. For the first time, the world is witnessing a unique experiment of accommodating and converting a command economy of the former GDR into a market economy of Germany. The stresses and strains faced by Germany in this process have been examined.

Chapter III has looked into the idea of Germany projecting itself as a civilian power. What the concept entails, how it differs from the concept of a civil society and how it impinges on Berlin’s role in the world have been analyzed. Germany’s attempt to reassure the rest of the world that it has no intention of reopening the concept of a Grossdeutschland has been emphasized.

Chapter IV has dealt with a contrasting feature – the participation of the German armed forces in Out-of-Area (OOA) operations and the general debate in Germany itself on OOA.

Chapter V has examined the opinions of the USA, the UK, France, and Russia (the arbiters of post-War Germany) on German unification. It has also tried to focus on the current relations between them and Germany.
The concluding chapter, Chapter VI, has analyzed the hypotheses and summarized the conclusions drawn.

Germany is situated in the heart of Europe amidst nine neighbours – Denmark in the North, Belgium, Luxembourg and France in the West, Switzerland and Austria in the South, the Czech Republic as well as Poland in the East (see Map 1). The location of Germany has become very significant since its unification on 3rd October, 1990. It has become a link between not only the East and the West, but also between Scandinavia and the Mediterranean. Being an active member of the European Union (the EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (the NATO), Germany also acts as a channel between Central and Eastern Europe.

Germany has a population of approximately 82.5 million (including 7.3 million foreigners who constitute 8.85% of the population) and is one of the most densely populated countries in Europe (231 people per square km). The Western part of Germany is more densely populated than its Eastern part where less than one fifth of the population lives on roughly 30% of the national territory.¹ The constitution of Germany or the Basic Law ties the legislative process to the constitutional order and binds the state administration to uphold the Law. Section 1 of the Basic Law is of particular relevance. It stipulates that respect for human dignity is the most important aspect of the constitution: “Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority.” Among other things, the other basic rights guarantee the freedom to act within the law, equality before the law, freedom of the press and media, freedom of association and protection of the family etc. in Germany.

To establish that it is the people who exercise power through special bodies, the Basic Law lays down representative democracy as the form of governance. Furthermore, it determines that in Germany the constitution is supreme and hence, all state authorities are subject to judicial control. Another principle of the constitution is that Germany is a Federal State. In other words, authority is divided between the centre and the states that constitute the federation. In conclusion, the Basic Law defines Germany as a Welfare State. The Welfare State requires the political system to take precautions like guaranteeing people a decent standard of material well-being in case of unemployment, disability or illness and in old age. One particular feature of the Basic Law is the so-called “eternal character” of these governing constitutional principles. It means that subsequent alterations to the Basic Law or a completely new constitution cannot encroach on the basic rights, the democratization of sovereignty, the Federal State and the Welfare State.

According to the Basic Law, it is the task of the political parties to participate in the formulation of political will by the people. As such, putting forward candidates for political office and the organization of election campaigns enjoy a constitutional status. For this reason, the parties are reimbursed the costs they incur in their respective election campaign. The Reimbursement of Election Costs, a feature Germany was the first country to introduce, is now commonplace in most democracies. According to the Basic Law, a political party’s internal organization must conform to democratic principles. All parties are expected to acknowledge the values and structure of the democratic state.

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2 This is the part of the financing received by the political parties, which are made up of contributions by party members, income from assets the party holds, donations and state subsidies. The parties each receive a lump sum from the state towards their election campaign costs. Its size depends on the number of votes polled by the parties in the last elections and the size of their donations and contributions.
Any party that does not do so can be banned from participation in the country’s political life. However, such a ban is not automatic. Should the Federal Government consider a ban to be appropriate, because such parties pose a threat to the democratic system, it can only petition for such a ban. Any such ban may only be enacted by the Federal Constitutional Court after duly considering the individual case. The idea is to prevent the ruling parties from simply banning those parties that might pose a problem in the fight for votes. The parties in government prefer to combat undemocratic parties in the regular political arena through political debate on the issues at hand. In the history of the Federal Republic, there have been few banning processes and even fewer parties have actually been banned.

The German party system is quite transparent. Until 1983, the Bundestag was composed of only those parties who had sat in Parliament since the very first elections when the Bundestag was first convened in 1949. They are: the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the Free Democratic Party (FDP). With the exception of Bavaria, throughout Germany, the Union parties stand as the Christian Democratic Union. The CDU itself declines to stand in Bavaria, preferring to leave the region to the Christian Social Union, with which it is closely allied. In the Bundestag, the members of Parliament of both parties have joined forces to create a permanent parliamentary party.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany is the other major force in the German party system. It belongs to the European group of Social Democratic and democratic socialist parties. CDU/CSU and SPD are considered to be the “popular” parties i.e., in the past, they successfully managed to
secure the support of a broad cross-section of the electorate. In principle, both parties are in favour of a Welfare State with its guaranteed support for the elderly, sick, disabled and unemployed. Whereas the CDU/CSU attracts the self-employed, businessmen and entrepreneurs, the SPD has close links to the unions.

The Free Democratic Party belongs to the European group of liberal parties. Its political creed is that of the state being involved as little as possible in the economy.

The Alliance 90/The Greens referred to in short as “The Greens”, was founded in 1980 and was the first party founded post-1949 to enjoy long-term success. The Greens belong to the European group of green and ecological parties. The characteristic feature of their program is the combination of market economy and decrees pertaining to nature and environment protection that must be monitored by the state. They, too, represent higher-income voters with an above-average standard of education.

Following unification, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) entered the political arena in the Federal Republic of Germany. It emerged in 1989 as the successor to the SED, the state socialist party of the former German Democratic Republic. The PDS has transformed itself into a democratic party. Initially, it succeeded only in the five eastern states of the Federal Republic, which until 1990 had formed the GDR. The 2005 general elections saw candidates contesting from the newly founded party Wahlalternative Arbeit & Soziale Gerechtigkeit (WASG, Electoral Alternative Labour and Social Justice), which until then had only taken part in a state election and whose members were included on the PDS list. The party renamed itself The Left Party.
The German electoral system makes it very difficult for any one party to form a government on its own. An alliance of parties is the general rule. The parties issue coalition statements before embarking on the election campaign. By voting for a particular party, citizens thus express, on the one hand, a preference for a specific party alliance, and on the other, determine the balance of power between the desired future partners in government.

The German Federal State is a complex entity. It consists of a Central Federal Government and sixteen Federal States. The Basic Law lays out, in great detail, the issues which fall within the ambit of the Federal Government and those which devolve to the Federal States. As such, the Federal system in Germany is similar to that of other Federal systems of the world. Public life in Germany is predominantly based on central laws. However, in accordance with the Principle of Subsidiarity, citizens, on the other hand, deal almost exclusively with state and local authorities who act on behalf of the Federal States. The reason for this is that the Basic Law aims to combine the advantages of a unified state with those of a Federal State.

Economic and social policies are regulated by central laws. To this extent the German Federal State resembles a centralized state. Nonetheless, it is the Federal States that control the major part of pan-state administration. This means that Federalist elements dominate the state administrative systems. First, as is typical of a Federal State, its own administrative system enforces the laws that apply in that particular state. In addition, they also execute most central laws, which is untypical of Federal State systems. Hence, the German Federalism is often characterized as “Unitarian”.

3 By this, the smallest unit of the social community capable of handling problems shall bear responsibility and take decision: it begins from the individual and goes upwards to the family, associations, local authorities, states, nation, the EU and the UN.
There are three pan-state functions that the individual Federal States exercise on their own: schooling (to a large extent tertiary education as well), internal security (including policing) as well as the organization of Local Self Government. Thanks to the wide-ranging rights pertaining to guaranteed participation they enjoy in the Bundesrat, the Federal States receive a form of compensation for the fact that central government is the primary body determining legislation.

The Bundesrat which represents the Federal States is the Second Chamber of the bicameral German Parliament. It is obliged to deliberate on each Federal law. As the chamber of the Federal States, the Bundesrat has the same function as the Second Chambers in other Federal States. The Bundesrat is made up exclusively of representatives of the Federal State governments. The number of votes each state holds is aligned to the size of its population.

The Bundesrat plays an important role in federal legislation. Here, it differs from the Second Chamber of other Federal States. The Basic Law envisages two forms of participation. Central laws that cause the Federal States additional administrative costs or replace existing central laws require the approval of the Bundesrat. The latter is required to endorse laws passed by the Bundestag for these to become legally binding. In this regard, the Bundesrat enjoys the same rights as the Bundestag in terms of being a legislative organ. Thus, more than fifty percent of all laws passed require the approval of the Bundesrat. This makes legislation cumbersome, and this is the reason why reforming the Federal system has become a necessity. Since Federal laws are, in principle, enforced by the administrative bodies of the Federal States, the most important and most costly laws involve the administrative sovereignty of the Federal States. A difference should be made
between these approval laws and the appeal laws. Though the Bundesrat can reject the latter, the Bundestag can overrule the objection with the same majority as in the Bundesrat – a simple, an absolute or a two-thirds majority.

If one considers the fact that the activities of the Bundesrat are spread across the shoulders of the sixteen state governments, it becomes clear that the Federal State governments are important players in the nationwide political arena. For this reason the State Prime Ministers, being the heads of the Federal State governments, are known far beyond the borders of their own individual states. In 2006, a reform of the Federal Government that is designed to reorganize the respective scope of Central Government and of the individual Federal States has been brought about. As part of the Grand Coalition negotiations, both sides involved agreed to restructure the relationship between Central Government and the Federal States.

The Bundestag is the elected chamber of the German people. Technically speaking, half the 598 seats in the Bundestag are allocated by means of the parties’ state lists (the second vote) and the other half by the direct election of candidates in the 299 constituencies (the first vote). This division changes nothing with regard to the key role of the parties in the electoral system. Only those candidates who belong to a party have any chance of success. The party to which members of the Bundestag belong is meant to reflect the distribution of votes. In order to prevent complications in the formation of majorities by the presence of small and very small parties as well as to prevent extremist parties from entering the Bundestag, a five percent threshold has been designed (1953). By this, political parties can only enter parliament if they gain at least 5% of the second votes cast or win three directly elected seats.
It must be noted that elections to the Bundestag are based on a system of combining proportional system with that of majority voting. Voters cast two votes called the first and second votes. First Votes determine which candidate will be directly elected in a particular constituency. The Second Votes are cast in favor of a political party; this determines how many members of each party are in the Bundestag. First and Second Votes are counted differently. One candidate is elected in each constituency on the basis of a relative majority of the First Votes. The First and Second Votes are calculated to ensure that the composition of the Bundestag corresponds exactly to the distribution of votes for the individual parties. If a party wins more seats directly in the constituency than it would be entitled to on the basis of its overall share of the votes, it is allowed to keep the additional overhanging seats.

The Bundestag is the German Parliament in the same way the House of Commons is designated as the British Parliament. Its elected representatives are organized in parliamentary parties and select a President from among them. It is the function of the Bundestag to elect the Federal Chancellor and keep him in office through support for his policies. The members of the Parliament can relieve the Chancellor of his duties by denying him their confidence, as do other Parliaments. It does not make any great difference that in Germany the Chancellor is elected; whereas, in Great Britain and other parliamentary democracies, he is appointed by the head of state.

The second major function of the elected representatives in the Bundestag is to pass legislation. Most drafts are tabled by the Federal Government. A small number are introduced by the Bundesrat. Here, again, the Bundestag is similar to parliaments in other parliamentary democracies
in that it, for the most part, enacts bills proposed by the Federal Government. The Bundestag, however, is less like the debating chamber typified by British parliamentary culture and corresponds more closely to a working parliament. The Bundestag’s expert Parliamentary Committees discuss the bills introduced in Parliament in great detail. Here, the activities of the Bundestag resemble, to some extent, those of the Congress in the USA, which is said to be the prototype of a working parliament.

The third major function of the Bundestag is to keep a check on the government’s work. It is the opposition that fulfills the function of monitoring the work of government in a manner visible to the general public. A less evident, but no less effective, form of control is carried out by the elected representatives of the governing parties who, behind closed doors, ask the government representatives critical questions.

The Federal President is the head of state of the Federal Republic of Germany. He represents the country in its dealings with other countries and appoints government members, judges and high-ranking civil servants. With his signature, acts become legally binding. He can dismiss the government and, in exceptional cases, dissolve parliament before its term of office is completed. The Basic Law does not accord the Federal President a right of veto such as is held by the President of the United States and other State Presidents. Though the Federal President confirms parliamentary decisions and government proposals with regard to ministers, he only checks whether they have come about by the due procedure in accordance with the Basic Law.
The Federal President remains in office for a period of five years; he can be re-elected only once. He is elected by the Federal Convention, which is made up of members of the Bundestag, on the one hand, and by an equal number of members selected by parliaments of the sixteen Federal States, on the other.

The Federal Chancellor is the only member of the Federal Government to be elected. The constitution empowers him to personally choose his ministers who head the most important political authorities. Moreover, it is the Chancellor who determines the number of ministries and their responsibilities. It is he who lays down the guidelines of government policy. These outline the Chancellor’s right to stipulate binding government activities. This authority gives the Federal Chancellor a whole array of instruments of leadership that easily stands up to a comparison with the power of the President in a presidential system of government.

The Parliamentary Council, which in 1949 resolved the Basic Law, took as its role model for the Federal Chancellor the position of the Prime Minister in Great Britain. The Prime Minister possesses exactly the same means of power as that of Chancellor, though the latter’s power is actually far less than that of the British premier. In the British parliamentary system, only one party is ever in power because the first-past-the-post system there favors the strongest party. As a rule, in the Bundestag no one party has a clear majority. For this reason, a coalition which is an alliance of various parties is normally necessary to be able to elect a Chancellor. The election of the Chancellor is preceded by extensive negotiations between those parties that plan to govern together. These address specific topics such as how the ministries are to be divided up between the parties, which ministries are to be maintained and which newly created. The strongest party in the alliance
is accorded the right to propose the Federal Chancellor. In addition, the parties agree on the policies they intend to tackle in the next few years. The results of these coalition negotiations are enshrined in the coalition treaty. Only when these steps have been completed is the Chancellor elected. Negotiations between the government parties prepare the decisions taken by the Federal Government and accompany them afterwards. Should there no longer be political consensus between the parties before general elections for a new Bundestag are due, removing the Chancellor from office becomes an alternative. Should a constructive vote of no confidence result in the current Chancellor indeed being removed from office, a new Chancellor must be elected at the same time. This repeal of parliamentary confidence forces the parties represented in the Bundestag to form a new, functioning government majority before they bring down the Chancellor. There have only been two previous attempts to bring down the Chancellor. Only one of these succeeded when a vote of no confidence was passed against the then Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (SPD), who was replaced by Helmut Kohl (CDU) in 1982.

However, at any time, the Federal Chancellor himself can also propose a vote of no confidence in the Bundestag to test whether he still enjoys the unlimited support of the governing parties. The Chancellor losing the vote indicates that parts of the government majority are drifting away from the Chancellor leaving the Federal President to decide whether the Bundestag should be dissolved and a general election held. The Federal President can also request the parties represented in the Bundestag to try and form a new government.

In the history of the Federal Republic, there has never been a genuine defeat in a vote of no confidence. There have, on three occasions, been previously arranged defeats – the elected
representatives of the government parties or the ministers abstained in order to bring down the government in 1972, 1982 and 2005. This course of action was taken in order to prematurely dissolve the Bundestag, which, according to the constitution, is otherwise not possible. It can only be taken with the approval of the Federal President and is not uncontroversial. As early as 1983, the Constitutional Court stressed that this was a questionable process not in keeping with the intentions of Constitution. In 2005, an appeal was again made to the Supreme Court but in this case the constitutional judges rejected the petition again.

The Federal Constitutional Court is a characteristic institution of post-War German democracy. The Basic Law accorded it the right to repeal legislation passed as part of the legitimate democratic process in a situation where it came to the conclusion that such legislation contravenes the Basic Law. The Constitutional Court only acts in response to petitions. Those entitled to lodge a complaint include the Federal President, Bundestag, Bundesrat, Federal Government and their constituent parts – elected representatives or parliamentary parties – as well as Federal State Governments. In “constitution-related” disputes, the Constitutional Court acts to protect the division of powers guaranteed in the Basic Law and the Federal State. In order to enable parliamentary minorities to be able to appeal to the Constitutional Court, one third of the elected representatives of the Bundestag are sufficient to submit a complaint against a valid law (“abstract judicial review”).

Furthermore, the Basic Law empowers individual citizens to launch a “constitutional complaint” should they feel that the state has infringed on their basic rights. Year after year, thousands of citizens register a complaint against the constitution revealing the presence of a vibrant civil society
in Germany. However, the Court reserves the right to select from the mass of petitions submitted. Only those that can be expected to result in verdicts that do not violate the validity of basic rights are selected. Ultimately, every German court is obliged to submit a petition for actual assessment of the normative basis to the Constitutional Court should it consider a law to be un-constitutional. The Federal Constitutional Court holds a monopoly on interpretation of the constitution with regard to all jurisdictions.\textsuperscript{4}

This brief review of the political system in Germany reveals the continuity it practices internally since the end of the Second World War. Unification has not brought about any changes in that it continues to identify itself as a Federal state based on the principles of democracy and a social market economy. Having examined the structure of the political system in Germany, one needs to look into the formation of the nation in Germany and the problems thereof.

The German nation essentially grew out of a number of German tribes such as the Franks, Saxons and Bavarians. These tribes have more or less lost their historical significance but their traditions and dialects live in the region dominated by them. It must be remembered that these ethnic regions are not identical to the present States or \textit{Länder}, most of which were formed after the Second World War. In addition, the influx of refugees, massive onslaught of immigrants and the effects of industrialization and modernization together with the developments in the European Union (particularly the Maastricht Treaty, 1990 which allows for the free flow of goods, capital and people into the member states of the EU)\textsuperscript{5} have changed the colour of German society blurring

\textsuperscript{4} For a diagrammatic representation of the German Political system see Appendix IX
\textsuperscript{5} www.europa.eu.int.
these ethnic divisions. As mentioned earlier, around 8.85% of the population in Germany consists of foreigners.\(^6\)

This brings one to the question “Who is a German?” In other words, the idea of a German Identity comes into being. To understand this, a brief study of various texts and papers dealing with this concept is helpful – especially, when attempting to link it to its present role in the post-Cold War world. Whether German Identity is a factor in determining Germany’s current role in the world is an interesting speculation.

Stuart Parkes feels that it is extremely difficult to speak of a distinct German Identity rooted in unbroken and accepted traditions of the kind that exist in other nations. The British, for example, can identify with the monarchy and the long parliamentary tradition, the French with the values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and the Americans with the democratic ideals of the constitution. Germany, on the other hand, has very few factors that contribute to a settled identity. “While 4\(^{th}\) July in the USA and 14\(^{th}\) July in France stand for the beginning of a positive national tradition, there is no comparable date in Germany until, 3 October, 1990”\(^7\) (Unification of Germany).

Ethnically speaking, the Germans are the descendents of the Germanic peoples who settled in the north-central plains of Europe sometime around the end of the sixth century B.C. The Romans, who first encountered the Germanic tribes in their conquest of Gaul, called the people of the area the Germans after certain tribes in Belgium and the Rhineland. Although the Germanic people

\(^6\) www.destatis.de (Federal Statistics Office) last accessed on 22/10/07 at 1500hrs IST (Indian Standard Time; all time mentioned is IST unless otherwise specified)

comprise many tribal groups, the name ‘German’ has come to describe the people who remained in central Europe.\(^8\)

These Germanic people were originally organized into numerous small tribes that gradually united into larger groups in order to increase their political and military power as they spread across and conquered much of Europe. Many of these were the forefathers of the present day European populations. The Franks and the Burgundians are believed to be the ancestors of the French; the Lombards conquered northern Italy, while the Saxons and Danes moved into England and Denmark. Other members of the Saxon tribe like the Bavarians and the Thuringians along with others settled in the northern plains and began to extend eastwards along the Elbe and Oder rivers.\(^9\)

Walter Schmidt points out that the German people were formed as a qualitatively new ethnic and social unit through the integration and assimilation of ethnically distinguishable and older population groups – the Germanic tribes, Celts, Slavs etc. This happened during the early Middle Ages in historical struggles lasting for centuries. From the ninth century onwards, *German* in Latin *theodiscus* was repeatedly used to mark off the large tribes in the empire of the Eastern Franks from the Romanic and Slavic language groups and, after A.D.1000, became generally used.\(^10\)

He continues to say that the national question in Germany is one of the most complicated and highly dissipated problems. Some reasons for this are found in the historical context. Historical

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developments in the German speaking part of Europe were contradictory and anything but linear. They did not lead to a congruence of ethnic, linguistic, governmental and national factors. On the contrary, during the transition from feudalism to modern bourgeois society, there were deep rooted governmental and social differences which, in extreme cases (Luxemburg and the Netherlands), led to the formation of independent nations. Also, on the edges of the German speaking areas, the German speaking segments of the population like the Alsatians were even integrated into another nation state. At the same time, a centralized government was not existent well into the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{11}

One tends to agree with Karlfried Knapp that there are various factors that contribute to the concept of German Identity. He begins with religion and feels it is historically the first and by far the most influential factor in shaping German Identity i.e. the impact of the Reformation, particularly of Lutheran Protestantism.\textsuperscript{12} The Reformation exerted an important influence on many European cultures. However, its results were different according to whether it was the Lutheran or the Calvinist version. This is because there are fundamental differences between these two. These differences explain many cultural distinctions, especially between Anglo-Saxon and the German culture.

In Calvinist Protestantism, the individual is expected to participate in the shaping of the social world around him. In Lutheran Protestantism, there is a separation of public administration and the church from the individual’s private inwardness and spirituality. While Calvinist communities put up religious freedom as part of political rule, Luther legitimized political rule as God-given and

\begin{footnotes}
12 Knapp Karlfried, \textit{What is German? Remarks on German Identity}, http://webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/edoc/ia/eese/articles/Knapp, accessed on 11/06/03 at 1700 hrs.
\end{footnotes}
hence not to be questioned by any subject. This is because Calvin, as a citizen of Geneva, exerted an active influence on the development of his community while the monk Luther sought refuge with his sovereign against the persecution of the Pope. Luther made a distinction between the two dominions that an individual is subjected to – the political, which is a matter of the state, and the spiritual, which is reserved for God. For Luther, in the political dominion, the rule of the sovereign was set up by God to control and overcome human frailties by the force of the state. Hence, subjects owed their gratitude and obedience to their sovereign. Only where worldly authority offended God’s commandments were subjects allowed to withdraw their allegiance. Therefore, the idea of an independent citizen acting on his own responsibility as well as on behalf of a political community (union of free individuals) could never develop. Political legislation remained the task of the sovereign or of the state.

Knapp links this to the Lutheran concept of work or profession. It was performance of one’s duty and obedience to the existing norms of the professional environment and to the laws of the state. “It is a small step from here to what became known later as Prussian discipline and subservience.” 13 This corresponds to Luther’s concept of inwardness, which Knapp feels is equally important in shaping German Identity. To Luther, an individual does not realize himself in external doings or by acting in the social sphere but an inner attitude that directs his way to God. This spiritual identity has to have priority over mundane achievements. Personal identity is thus separated from society and the individual is “neither responsible for society, nor for his position in the social context.” 14 Against this background, it can be understood why the average German participates in politics more as a matter of duty than of personal involvement.

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
Similarly, Roepke points out that “civilizing Christianity” came much later to Germany (as late as the twelfth century A.D.) in Mecklenburg. Also, it is believed that Lutheran Reformation changed German character; a Catholic or even a Calvinist Germany would have been different. Lutheran Protestantism allied with absolutism and feudalism to the extent that Luther himself recommended beating rebellious peasants to death “like mad dogs” by princes and nobles. German proclivity to nature, romanticism and primitivism lie deep in German national character. Hence, worship of Hitler, Nazi ideology etc. go back to these primitive instincts. The “he-man” pose loved by the Nazis enthused the Germans. Durer’s painting, Melancholy, depicts a woman gazing into the unfathomable world reflecting the German collective mind – brooding and often dark. This may explain why Germans felt drawn to Prussianism in the latter part of the nineteenth century and even later to Hitler and Nazism.\(^{15}\)


Roepke points out that the imperial dreams of Germany began with Otto I (990 A.D.) and ended with Hitler. German imperial central authority waned as princes and feudal lords asserted their sovereignty over peasants and sundry. The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, from the fifteenth century A.D., fell into chaos. There was no central imperial authority and conflicts arose


among independent enterprises. However, German towns flourished owing charters to the Emperor, resulting in the formation of a middle class. The struggle between the Emperor, territorial princes, feudal lords, towns, peasants etc. did not produce a healthy, liberal state but a weak, disjointed empire and a pitiful collection of absolutist petty principalities, privileged nobles and humbled peasants. The overburdened peasants revolted in 1525 and they were suppressed brutally. Around the same time, there was a decline in the culture of the German towns. These two disasters confirmed the Lutheran Reformation and the Thirty Years War that resulted from it.\(^\text{17}\)

The backbone of the German peasantry and townsmen was completely broken resulting in a setback to progress by a century in all areas – political, economic, social and intellectual. A complete subordination of ‘subject’ to authority became the rule. The extent to which the Lutheran church fostered servility to authority is seen in this example where a tailor put up a sign in his house when the ruling prince came visiting his town: “Under thy sway, I can iron away”! Under the Third Reich, similar signs were put up to please the Fuhrer.\(^\text{18}\) “Germans tended towards conformity, servility and obedience leaving political issues to authorities having no tradition of democratic self government and sought refuge in abstract and lofty ideas and philosophy. Lutheran Protestantism lit in them another outlet – work mania – thorough, meticulous, conscientious work, taking work very seriously even to the extent of pedantry.”\(^\text{19}\)

One can always argue that Christianity came even later to Finland and Scandinavia. The fact that both Finland as well as the Baltic states turned Lutheran without facing the same crisis as Germany did can be explained through German Idealism. This is the second element that Knapp looks into

\(^{17}\) Ibid. p. 121.  
\(^{18}\) Ibid. pp. 124, 125.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid. p. 124.
when analyzing the concept of German Identity. “The influence of Lutheran Protestantism would not have been that pervasive had it not been secularized by the German intellectual reaction to the enlightenment, especially in the form of German Idealism”.\textsuperscript{20} This is especially true when looking at the relationship between the individual and the State from the Idealist perspective. Idealists like Kant and Hegel justified the state as being an institution of higher moral status than a mere collection of individual beings. The state thus had an outstanding moral status, a concept very different from the Anglo Saxon thinking, and the individual did not have to be protected against any encroachments by the state as his welfare was implied in the general legislation.\textsuperscript{21}

The special position attributed to the state is also evident in the views idealist thinkers had on education. In 1772, Johann Gottfried Herder, in his work “On The Origin of Language”, exposed the idea that a language expresses the collective experiences of a group of its speakers, “thus breaking the way for German Romantic linguistic Nationalism”.\textsuperscript{22} Roepke also concurs: “In his language, the German seems to be untiringly occupied in pushing forward into the uttermost region of the expressible... he plunges into the sphere of that which can no longer be made comprehensible by words... the sphere of lyricism, of metaphysics... Here lies for him supreme opportunities but at the same time the gravest dangers.” He also identifies a unique juxtaposition of zenith and nadir that the German is always in danger of going too far, and of pursuing any thought or enterprise, whether good or bad, “to the uttermost conceivable conclusion.”\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{20} Knapp, Op.Cit.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
Roepke points out that the depth and the unnatural element embedded in the German language is unmatched by either English or French. These are pointers to a deep irrationalism residing in the depths of German national character.\textsuperscript{24}

On a similar vein, David Marsh states that Germany is marked by a classic dualism. Its turbulent history has been both the cause and effect of remarkable creativity, but the strengths and defects lie very close together. Only a thin line separates idealism from escapism, pride from arrogance and discipline from servility. Many Germans feel that constant, wearisome preoccupation with the past is blocking the view to the future.\textsuperscript{25}

The beginnings of a collective German National Identity can be traced back to the Middle Ages and the Holy Roman Empire. As far back as 1203 A.D., there were attempts to define where exactly Germany was. Walther von der Vogelweide in his book \textit{Deutschlandlied} defines Germany as stretching from the Elbe to the Rhine and down to Hungary.\textsuperscript{26} Similarly, Stuart Parkes points out that the word ‘Germany’ can be traced to the work of the Roman historian Tacitus, \textit{‘De origine et situ Germanorum’}, usually referred to as Germania. Hoffmann von Fallersleben located the frontiers of Germany at the Belt (Baltic Sea around Denmark) in the North and at the Rivers Adige (now Italy), Maas (now Holland, Belgium and France) and Memel (now Lithuania) in the South, West and East, respectively. Only at the time of Hitler did most of this area belong to Germany (except South Tirol which was ceded to Mussolini). After the defeat of Hitler, the Potsdam Agreement (1945) established the Rivers Oder and Neisse as the borders between Germany and Poland and this was also accepted by Chancellor Kohl at the time of unification in 1990. However

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{The Beginning}, www.pgamuszko.freeuk.com (author Unknown) accessed on 10/06/03 at 1800 hrs..
there is no clear agreement as to what constituted Germany; so much so, it is still a matter of
dispute whether the astronomer Copernicus is a German or a Pole. Even Goethe expressed his
inability to find Germany as a geographic entity.27

While this relates to geographical identity, questions were also asked as to what constitutes the
German nation. Parkes again feels that the idea of the German nation is contained in the term ‘The
Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation’.28 It is hard to explain what exactly the Holy Roman
Empire was. Simply put, it was a collection of German States united under an Emperor elected by
the various German States. There was a great deal of diversity due to its structure and differing
interests, resulting in the existence of small states, imperial cities etc. within the Empire. Unity was
forged by the German language and, connected to this, literature, culture and a shared history of the
German speaking people. Thus, from the structure and the common language, there developed a
sense of identity during this period.29

Yet another aspect of German Identity is related to the Napoleonic wars and the reaction to French
imperialism, which Knapp feels are in tune with the Lutheran world view and Idealism (in short, a
strong state). German intellectuals felt that in the competition among the emerging European
nations, a strong Germany was necessary.30

Friedrich Sieburg is of the opinion that Napoleon’s conquests and ideals influenced many German
princes like those of the states of Bavaria, Hesse, Würtemberg, etc. (who later deserted him with his

28 Ibid.
29 German Cultural History From 1860 To The Present Day, Nyphenburger Verlagsbuchhandlung GmbH, Munich,
1983, (no author).
decline in 1813) to join the Rhine Federation. Interestingly, Prussia opposed and in 1806, Napoleon defeated Prussia and “the puzzle of Germany began, first confusing the Germans and then the rest of the world.”

Napoleon’s retreat from Russia encouraged German students, the Prussian King and intellectuals to revolt. The Prussian King’s famous address on 17th March, 1813, ‘To my People’, asking Germans to unite had a pan-German resonance. At the same time came the paradox through German thinkers like Fichte, Hegel, Clausewitz, etc. who admired Napoleon for his ideas. They adopted his tactic of rousing the nation for a cause, which, in turn, contributed to a National Identity. In resenting Napoleon, there came up a Lutzow Korps whose colours were adopted as the colours of the German national flag (which are the same even today – black, red and gold implying ‘through night and blood to light’).

Napoleon, by ruffling several nations, had unwittingly contributed to rouse their national consciousness and pride including that of Germany. In the case of Germany, there developed a massive support for the idea of the Volk (Nation) and the Vaterland (Fatherland), fuelled as much by politicians as by writers like Fichte. Interestingly, this was not a nationalistic patriotism but a state patriotism; the former came much later, after the defeat of France in 1871, and the formation of a new Reich.

The practical aspects of this development were certain reforms with the aim of enhancing governmental effectiveness by introducing codified laws, rules and objective procedures for the functioning of an efficient and all pervasive bureaucracy. This, Knapp feels, was the first step towards modernization and, in tune with this, the state itself was the most important driving force behind the industrialization of Germany. Once again, a consequence of the Lutheran worldview that the active shaping of the world is the responsibility of those put in positions of power and not that


*Ibid*, p. 278.
of the subjects (whose task it is to obey!) was laws introducing social security that were not a result of class struggle but ‘courtesy a paternalistic Bismarck’\textsuperscript{33}. One wonders whether this is why the 1848 Revolution failed and whether this is why the social democratic reforms of Lassalle prevailed over the revolutionary socialism of Marx. At the same time, modernization and industrialization dissolved the traditional structure of German society leading to a tension between the Protestant inwardness on the one hand and the perspectives based on modern, social and technical rationality on the other. In the social sphere, there was an increasing preference for the community (\textit{Gemeinschaft}) and not the society (\textit{Gesellschaft}), as the former was considered more “warm and personal” than the latter.\textsuperscript{34}

There was a revival of a high degree of nationalism in Europe – Italy was unified in 1871 – and it proved impossible to prevent ideas of national integration from crossing the frontiers into Germany. Bismarck, too, wanted a Reich limited to people of German nationality. However, when Unification finally came under Bismarck in 1871 (see Map 2), it failed to deliver the desired nation. While Germany was definitely united, it was not done the way the nationalists desired (Austria had been excluded). The \textit{Reichstag} (German Parliament) was seen as a place where real decisions were not made. This led to the creation of a group called the \textit{Volkische Opposition}, which wanted a new German Reich that would have many overseas colonies. Soon, a right wing group fuelled by imperialistic ambitions emerged.\textsuperscript{35}

The events of the First World War, seen by many as a creation of this imperialistic ambition, resulted in the Weimer Republic, which was regarded by many as temporary. The Communists saw

\textsuperscript{33} Knapp, \textit{Op.Cit.}
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Ibid.}
this as a prelude to their Revolution, the Conservatives as a chance to restore Monarchy, while the Nazis saw this as an opportunity to achieve the dreams of their forerunners (of uniting Germans and saving the German race) in the *Volkische Opposition*. Hitler had been able to capitalize on the German feeling that they had not achieved their place in the world by promising to change this using the fear of communism as well as by taking advantage of the general economic instability that existed at that time (inflation in the early 1920s, and the Wall Street crash).³⁶

The fear of communism in Germany can be traced back to the publication of the Communist Manifesto and its ideology, which fostered the fear of a society ruled by the working classes and the mob. Several works of fiction also refer to society being in chaos as a result of communist activity. In fact, Bismarck also pursued an active policy of persecuting the communists calling them *Reichsfeinde* (enemies of the Reich). Even the Jews came to be associated with them; this could be because Karl Marx himself was a Jew. After the collapse of Germany in the First World War, the communists were blamed for undermining the German state. This gave rise to the idea of Communism being an evil force. This was later used by the Nazis to popularize the idea of a strong nationalist party that would save the Germans. Could this be the reason for Adenauer’s strong inclination towards the West rather than to the East in the heydays of the Cold War? Of course, facts point out that the then FRG did not have much of a choice (caught, as it was, in the cross fire of the Cold War).

Therefore, nineteenth century Germany was in decay for the nationalists. Politically, this was indicated by the growth of Communism. Many writers like Nietzsche and Fichte wrote about the world being at a crisis point, being threatened with the eradication of all creative forces due to the

rationalism and science of the day. Nietzsche, in fact, wrote about the purification of the people as they had become decadent. This was interpreted by many as a purification of race. H.S. Chamberlain wrote about all cultural achievements as being that of the Teutons and the idea that some races are superior to others. All non-Teutons were identified as enemies (the Catholic Church and the Jews, for example) and he advocated social laws to preserve the race. List imagined the existence of a Golden Age ruled by an Aryan group (the Armanenschaft meaning the heirs of the Sun King) that had been destroyed by the Catholic Church. He called for the revival of the new order which would save the German race and found a new German empire. He proclaimed the German race as the chosen people, the highest form of life to have developed in the universe, who had yet to fulfill their mission. A number of religious orders resurfaced – those that had earlier been regarded as repressive were now seen as protectors of Germany. The idea of new orders also brought with it the idea of the Grail and the search for and protecting the Grail was as important as purifying the race.37

This was exactly what the Nazis had in mind when they created the SS, a new order, and the expansion towards the East in search of the Grail. Hence, a new identity was forged. Earlier, the German had been happy to co-exist; now he wanted to conquer the world. A new German Empire would be created which would allow no racial diversity but would be made up of a single pure race. All Germans have a right to belong together, have the right to expand and have the right to take other people’s lands, as they are the chosen ones. This, in turn, called for a strong leader who would found this order, a Fuhrer, who emerged in the form of Hitler.

37 Ibid.
In the words of Adolf Bach, the Nazis wanted to separate the original Germanic elements in German culture and reject foreign elements. Herein lay the original, blood-related racial elements as saplings for future Germanic growth. “This racist ‘original’, ‘pure’ Germanic mania is dangerous.”  

Roepke felt that Bismarck and his contemporaries sowed the seeds of Nazism. Nazism, in his words, is an expression of German pedantry, “thoroughness” and lack of moderation. All things in the South (Italy) were amateurish or had an operatic quality and were put through in Germany with the utmost seriousness and carried out to the bitter end. Reservations and modifications permitted in Italy were rejected in Germany. In Italy ‘Blut und Boden’ or ‘blood and soil’ meant Virgil, Augustus and the Renaissance; in Germany, they meant primeval forests and heathen barbarism. It is in consonance with this that the race mania of Nazism cannot be simply termed anti-Semitism.  

All the means by which the Reich had to be kept alive corresponded with its violent origin and so did the whole resulting atmosphere. The defeat of Germany in the Second World War definitely cast a doubt on the idea of a continuous and uninterrupted German Identity and opened up Germany to other influences.

Heinrich August Winkler divides the development of nationalism in Germany into three phases. The first period he dates as preceding the March Revolution of 1848 to late 1870s; the second, from late 1870s to World War II; and the third after World War II. In the first phase, nationalism was an expression of bürgerliche emancipation, directed against the land owning aristocracy. In contrast,

38 Bach, Adolf, Deutsche Volkskunde, Quelle and Meyer, Heidelberg, 1960, p. 89.
the bürgertum (aristocracy) saw itself as the social embodiment of unity. They believed that the creation of the German nation state would help it to overcome economic backwardness. Thus, nationalism was seen as an ideology of modernization. In the second phase, nationalism was seen as an instrument of the rightist forces against the left wingers. In the third phase, nationalism no longer played the role of a unifying ideology. It had been compromised by National Socialism; also, there were fundamental changes in the international political scenario as well as a new set of economic circumstances resulting in nationalism losing its fundamental raison d’être in the Western world.40 The then FRG responded to this last diligently under the given circumstances.

Germany was divided into East Germany and West Germany after the end of the Second World War (see Map 3). Each aligned itself to its respective blocs due to the Cold War politics of that time. This opened up new vistas in the concept of German Identity. Did the creation of two German States result in two separate identities? Was there a so-called West German Identity and an East German Identity? An attempt to analyze this aspect requires an examination of available data in this regard.

The evolution of a national policy on German Identity in East Germany can be roughly divided into three periods. The first period was from 1949-1961 when the GDR was strongly committed to unification with the then FRG on the basis of “commonalities”. At the same time, Ulbricht, First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, tried to keep East Germany isolated as a means to force East Germans to look inwards, towards internal social development, and promote the idea that there were two Germanies due to different socio-economic systems being adopted. The second

phase was from 1961 (construction of the Berlin Wall) to 1971 (replacement of Ulbricht by Honecker as Party chief). Officials started speaking of two separate states within one nation. East German citizenship was established in 1967 and a new constitution came into being in 1968. East Germany became a “socialist state of the German nation” (Art.1), which would strive towards “a step by step rapprochement of the two German States until the time of their unification”. The third phase was from 1972 (signing of the Basic Treaty) to the unification in 1990. While the détente between the two states progressed, East German officials launched a policy of Abgrenzung (demarcation), which, on a practical level, meant a form of internal vigilance against influences from the West and, on an abstract level, meant efforts towards a distinct East German Identity.41 This would take various forms. It could be in the form of a separate GDR state consciousness, a goal fostered especially after 1971 or in the effort of the early 1980s to anchor the GDR in a broader German historical tradition.42

The regime targeted three areas of change. First, it attempted to alter the basis of shared historical experiences through a selective interpretation of German history. Second, it encouraged the development of linguistic differences in the standard language and third, it tried to develop a new socialist personality.

Markus Wolf, the chief of the former GDR intelligence (Stasi), said that Eric Honecker, who followed Ulbricht, warned during the twentieth anniversary of the MfS (Ministerium für Sicherheitstaat) that the change of government in Bonn meant only a change in Bonn’s tactics to penetrate the Socialist countries (this attitude ultimately led to the carving out of the GDR’s

socialist identity). Wolf says that even while taking a sun bath, the vacationing Stasi staff constantly spoke about the dangers posed by Brandt. GDR’s existence would be threatened if it allowed itself to be influenced by Brandt’s policies.

The Honecker regime tried to create a separate sense of National Identity through inventing a separate historical tradition in the regions it occupied. Hence, Martin Luther, Bismarck, Fredrick the Great were identified as East Germans as they lived in the areas which subsequently became East Germany. But this identity ran skin deep as East Germans constantly migrated to the West.

Werner Stiller, former member of Stasi who later defected to West German Intelligence, pointed out that Mrs. Margot Honecker, Education Minister, complained of the weaknesses of educating children in the GDR in class consciousness. She, thereby, struck a chord among the party leaders who had become wary of the general East-West détente environment. The GDR leaders felt that such an environment could make the people forget the dangers posed by the “enemy” (the West, in general, and West Germany, in particular). It must be made clear to the people that the word ‘détente’ served to ease the process of interacting with “the class enemy” while the socialist goals remained intact.

According to official sources, East Germany embodied all that is progressive and positive in the German past, while West Germany embodied all that is reactionary. Hence, Nazi atrocities fall into the West German lot, while the socialist resistance against the Nazi Regime to that of the East

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43 Wolf, Markus *Spionagechef Im Geheimen Krieg*, 1998, Munich, pp. 248, 249.
Germans. The Weimer Republic is seen as a natural predecessor of the GDR and select socialist and military figures from the past were honoured. Officials have also encouraged the growth of a standard language that can be distinguished from the one spoken in Germany. With respect to a socialist personality, it is seen that except for its ideological content, many of its characteristic traits and values are those admired by Germans traditionally. Hence, respect for authority, discipline, hard work as well as efficiency were seen as part of a socialist personality (Prussian values). There is very little information available on the idea of a separate East German Identity. Putting together various pieces of information, one sees that there was an attempt to develop an East German Identity. Knapp feels that, unlike Germany, the people of the GDR tended to define themselves as members of a German Nation as there were very little contacts with the rest of the world and that the GDR was far superior to the rest of the states in the COMECON (economically as well as in terms of technology).47

In West Germany, there was also a deliberate attempt to create a new Identity – that of breaking away from the Nazi past and developing a close alliance with the West. The re-education programmes of the Allies contributed to the West Germans being alienated from all things national. Any form of nationalism tended to be regarded with a lot of suspicion. Slowly the concept of Society replaced that of the Community. In fact, one can distinguish two phases of German Identity in West Germany during the Cold War period. Konrad Adenaeuer developed the first Identity. He used the integration with the West as a shield to develop an Identity of a Democratic Liberal Power. In fact, the FRG embarked on its own Abgrenzung against communism.48 The second Identity was

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47 Knapp, Ibid.
nurtured by Willy Brandt, through his Ostpolitik, (Eastern policy). In this case, the Identity of Reconciliation with the East was emphasized.\textsuperscript{49}

Jane Kramer points out that Germans on either side of the Cold War divide were still busy claiming the few fragile remaining virtues of Germanness for their own and placing the considerably more durable vices of Germanness squarely within the other system. East Germans had appropriated the myth of a German resistance located in the GDR. In East Germany, the official history described Nazism as a ‘capitalist’s’ adventure, something that the other side invented. They inherited a topsy-turvy war in which the East Germans were the liberators and the West Germans were the fascists. East Germans had learned in school that their parents and grandparents were never Nazis.\textsuperscript{50}

Hagen Schulze sums up German history succinctly. He says earlier generations of Germans were in no doubt about what their history was. It began with Hermann of Cherusci who defeated the legions of Quinctilius Varus in the battle in the Teutoburg Forest in the year 9 A.D. Then, there was Theoderic, the King of Goths and Charlemagne, who is credited with transforming the Empire of the Romans into a German one. Then, Frederick Barbarossa and his grandson Frederick II followed by Martin Luther King, King Charles V and Frederick the Great emerged. Later, Baron Vom Stein, Blücher and finally Bismarck, who forged a new German Reich, provided an imposing gallery of ancestral portraits in which the Germans took great pride.\textsuperscript{51}

However, there happened what historian Friedrich Meinecke called *the German Catastrophe* or Hitler and his Third Reich, followed by the Second World War. This left the German State divided and occupied. For a long time the West Germans were quite content to repress all thoughts of their history and enjoy the present – characterized by high rates of industrial growth. In fact, they seemed to show a desire to be *left alone*. In the GDR, they were served up their own history by the Communist Party. This stage of comfortable domestic prosperity and blessed lack of responsibility for foreign affairs vanished overnight when the Wall came down and a new German Nation State came into being. This created a need to explain for the Germans, both to its citizens and to the rest of the world, what kind of a country it sees itself as being.\(^{52}\) Herein lay the present search for Identity.

While focusing on the idea of a separate East German and West German Identity, one must mention the work of Mary Fulbrook, *‘German National Identity After The Holocaust’*. In this, she looks into the theoretical aspects of the concept of National Identity and tends to agree to a large extent with the earlier analysis. She identifies two schools of thought on nations and National Identity that she calls the Essentialists and the Constructionalists. The former views nations as natural entities and the same of ‘Identity’. It presupposes a continuity of an essence over time with certain underlying and enduring characteristics, ways of reacting, good and bad attributes, qualities and capacities irrespective of changing appearances over time and environmental influences on behaviour, performance and achievement. Werner Weidenfeld and Karl Rudolf Karte belong here.\(^{53}\) The latter treats nations as historically emergent constructions rather than natural entities. However, there are diverse opinions with respect to which quality of a group provides the identity or what factors are

\(^{52}\) *Ibid.*  
responsible for a sense of identity to emerge at a specific time. Several like Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and Anthony Smith focus on changing conditions of modernity which would result in the emergence of a National Identity.\textsuperscript{54}

She also adds that a question of National Identity is better viewed in terms of analyzing processes of formation and reformation of collective identity, which are claimed to be national under particular historical circumstances. A sense of collective identity will be stronger if there is a \textit{legacy or the shared myth of a common past} – a notion of a shared history, common ‘collective memory’, common myths, traditions, a common historical picture (\textit{Geschichtsbild}) and historical consciousness (\textit{Geschichtsbewusstsein}). A sense of collective identity will also be stronger if there exists a sense of \textit{destiny or a community of a common fate or shared positive/negative values} i.e. shared view of a common enemy (\textit{Feindbild}), a sense of a common fate or perceived future. Thus, if there is a widespread sense of a shared historical legacy, a shared fate and destiny, there is more likely to be a shared sense of a common collective identity. Further, there has to be some sense of the continuing existence of that community as a coherent entity over time and there has to be some sense of the importance of communal identification in the present with certain common values, interests and clearly defined boundaries between this particular collective identity and others.\textsuperscript{55}

In order to understand the idea of National Identity in the German context, two factors unique to this country must be kept in mind – first, its Nazi past which made the term ‘nationalism’ totally unacceptable and second, the creation of two German states by the forcible division of a defeated state. Each of the new states became engaged in a process of defining its own new identity, in

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 12, 13.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid}, pp. 15, 7.
opposition not only to the common past but also to each other.\textsuperscript{56} Both the German states were founded as conscious attempts to create new different forms of society and politics on the basis of a discredited and discarded past.\textsuperscript{57}

Prior to Willy Brandt’s \textit{Ostpolitik}, the GDR preferred an identity of attributing the Nazi past to capitalism as has been mentioned earlier. Post-\textit{Ostpolitik}, it is seen that a new notion of a nation, viz. ‘socialist state of workers and peasants’ or nation being defined in class terms, came into being. Also, the GDR started to lay claim to entire German history paying attention to neglected figures of history like Frederick the Great. At the same time, it took pride in its separate identity as an anti-fascist state and continued its attempt to develop its own identity in the form of not only two German States but also two German Nations. However, the Iron Curtain did not succeed in separating the East from the West as the Germans in the GDR did evince a lot of interest in their counterpart. In the then FRG, there emerged strands of identity in the form of ‘Deutschmark Nationalism’, ‘patriotism of the constitution’ etc. Post-\textit{Ostpolitik}, there was no major change in the official line of ‘two German States within one German Nation’. What this \textit{German Nation} was, was never clarified. Official German policy remained committed to unification as well as to an ethnic definition of citizenship and the hallmark of Germany’s political culture was collective shame for being German.\textsuperscript{58} In practice, the two Germanies did grow apart. As they participated in different international currents, their different social, political and economic structures rendered a different set of identities.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 19.
In another work, she reiterates, that for over half a century, the division of Germany appeared to ensure some form of stability during the Cold War. The division of Germany became more and more institutionalized and accepted to such an extent that by the late 1980s it was generally recognized that reunification was restricted to the FRG’s preamble to the constitution.\(^{59}\)

Anthony D. Smith, in his work *Nationalism, Theory, Ideology, History* provides a few theoretical clarifications of the term *national identity*. He feels that the term has replaced earlier terms like national character, national consciousness etc. that were widely used in the eighteenth, nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. This could be in tune with a broader trend where the individual feels anxious and alienated in an increasingly fragmented world. Hence, he states what he calls a working definition of the term or *the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations and the identification of individuals with that pattern and heritage and with its cultural elements.*\(^{60}\)

But, which pattern of values, symbols, memories, traditions, heritage would the Germans like to identify themselves is the question the whole world and the Germans themselves are asking.

Manuel Castells in his work, *The Power of Identity*, feels that from a sociological perspective, all identities are constructed. This is done by using building materials from history, geography, biology, collective memory, personal fantasies, power apparatuses and religious revelations. Individuals, groups and societies, process this and rearrange their meanings according to social determinations and cultural projects rooted in their respective social structure and in their time framework. He identifies three types of Identity:

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• **Legitimizing Identity**: This is introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination vis-à-vis the social actors.

• **Resistance Identity**: This is generated by those actors that are in a stigmatized position or condition. The aim is to survive on the basis of building principles different from those that brought about stigmatization.

• **Project Identity**: This happens when social actors build a new identity on whatever material is available to them.\(^{61}\)

In Germany, after 1945, Identity began as Resistance Identity and then went on to become Project Identity. After the Second World War, Germany was in a position of stigma. Hence, the first Chancellor, Adenauer, concentrated on building up an identity of the then FRG closely tied up with the West. An identity that was radically different from that of the Third Reich. Post Unification, Germany, on the basis of its past and present i.e. its history and the strains of Unification, is trying to project itself as a **civilian power**.

Henry R. Nau clearly believes that **national identity measures the nation in non material terms**. He identifies two sets of identities – **Internal and External Identity**. The former, defines the **rules of citizenship, legislation, law etc. on the basis of common culture, religion, race, a set of ideas or ideology. These sources may overlap or even conflict**. The latter may be governed by **rules of international identity. It also depends on rules that other countries follow at home and the gap between the rules followed by one country and another. This difference in the internal identity of**

countries affects the way states behave towards one another in the international environment\textsuperscript{62}. Putting the two together; he then identifies three levels of identity:

- How states independently perceive themselves and others
- How other states perceive them and how the first state in turn responds to the other’s perception
- A distillation of interactions among separate national identities that constitute the culture of the international community\textsuperscript{63}

This author proposes to identify the first as *Autonomous Identity*, the second as *Perceived Identity* and the third as *Transnational Identity*. This thesis proposes to look at the German search for identity from the first two perspectives.

Henry Kissinger feels that Germany, the last major European State to be unified, became a nation not as a result of a popular movement. This was attributable to the princes of the various German principalities who proclaimed the state in 1871, following the lead of a Prussia, which had defeated them militarily five years ago. In Germany, nationalism and democracy evolved on separate, often conflicting, tracks for the better part of the century. As a result, German nationalism frequently had about it an abstract, emotional and romantic quality. Above all, it lacked a sense of proportion. This turned the strategic problems produced by Germany’s central geographic location into a permanent source of instability for Europe. Before unification in 1871, Germany’s division into dozens of small states enabled its neighbors to contest the European balance of power on German soil. After


\textsuperscript{63} Ibid. p.26.
unification, Germany moved to the other extreme, seeking to ensure security against all its neighbours simultaneously.\textsuperscript{64}

Germany has been, for centuries, either too weak or too strong for the peace of Europe. This problem has been solved only twice in German history. The first was by Bismarck through his policy of security via diplomatic dexterity. The second was by Adenauer, who played second fiddle to the USA in the NATO and France in Europe.\textsuperscript{65} The collapse of the Soviet Union has diminished Germany’s willingness to accept a subordinate status in both the NATO and Europe. (Perceived Identity).

Richard Evans says that National Identity is not simply a feeling of ethnicity. Different variants of German nationalism have existed side by side and came to the fore at various junctures. They have overlapped but have never been identical. Cultural nationalism, economic nationalism and political nationalism have interacted. Political nationalism, in turn, has found many competing forms, varying from ultra liberal to extreme reactionary.\textsuperscript{66}

In Germany, the events of 1989-1990 led to a great deal of soul searching. Reunification challenged the sense of identity that had been so carefully built up in West Germany over the decades since 1949. The Right had seen anti-communism as the defining element in this identity. The Left had seen the country’s division as part of the price that had to be paid for the crimes of the Third Reich.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
Both were faced with the task of having to rethink these definitions of German Identity in the light of the end of Germany’s division.\textsuperscript{67}

The history of Germans, to quote A.J.P. Taylor, ‘is a history of extremes’. It contains everything except moderation and, in course of history, the Germans have experienced everything except morality. To substantiate his point further he goes on to say that the Germans have dominated Europe and they have been the helpless victims of the domination of others. They have enjoyed liberties unparalleled in Europe and fell victims to despotism equally without parallel. They have produced the most transcendental philosophers, musicians and poets. (They have also produced Hitler.)\textsuperscript{68}

A.J.P. Taylor identifies four factors that have influenced German history:

**Geographic Position:** The Germans are the peoples of the North European plain without a defined natural frontier. The Great Plain historically intersected by four rivers (Rhine, Elbe, Oder and Vistula) caused sharp divisions amongst the German people themselves. This was, however, not rigid enough to confine them within settled frontiers. Hence, there is no determined point for German expansion or contraction. At times, Germany has been confined within the Rhine and the Elbe; at times, it has expanded to the Pyrenees and the Caucasus. Every German frontier is artificial and, therefore, impermanent and this is the permanence of German geography.

**Ethnographic Position:** Here, too, the Germans have been the people of the middle; always they have had two neighbours. The Slavs, whom the Germans saw as barbarians, were to the East and

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, Preface, viii.
\textsuperscript{68} Brackets added.
the Caucasians, to whom the Germans have always appeared as barbarians, were to the West. The Germans were viewed as the most civilized of barbarians – eager to learn, anxious to imitate. The record of German civilization is, therefore, a story of sedulous and exaggerated imitation of the established order of the West – an imitation that began with Charlemagne’s imitation of Caesar and ended with Hitler’s imitation of Napoleon.

**The German People:** The German national State is relatively new but the consciousness of German national existence is old. There has been a German national character for more than a thousand years, a character not strictly identifiable but recognizable all the same. Constant surroundings helped shape a German national character strong enough to withstand the increasing changes in social circumstances which occurred in Germany in modern times.

**German Political Form:** For a thousand years, the Germans had a political form – the Reich. Since the moment Charlemagne founded the Reich in 800 A.D., there has never been a time when the Germans were without the framework of political organization. For, even when the Reich was dissolved in 1806, its place was first taken by the confederation in 1815. The continuity of the Reich is obscured by a twofold paradox. Firstly, at no time before 1933 did the political energies of the German people find their sole outlet in the Reich. More political energy went into maintaining German states independent of the Reich or even hostile to it rather than into the Reich itself. Secondly, at no time did the Reich coincide with the national existence of the German people; it has always either carried its frontiers far beyond the German national area or failed to include all Germans within its limits.⁶⁹ The geographical position of Germany was firmly re-established in the

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Two-plus-Four settlement of September 12, 1990. Article 1 of the agreement says that *united Germany shall comprise the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic and the whole of Berlin. Its external borders shall be the borders of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic and shall be definitive from the date on which the present treaty comes into force*. Clause 2 of the same article adds *the united Germany and the Republic of Poland shall confirm the existing border between them in a treaty that is binding under international law*.\(^7^0\) In his statement on the signing of the Two-plus-Four Agreement, the then acting foreign minister and Prime Minister of the former GDR, Lothar de Maiziere says ‘*…united Germany recognizes her post-War frontiers definitively and without reservations and raises no territorial claim vis-à-vis her neighbours*.’\(^7^1\)

Hence, united Germany’s geographical position and its frontiers are permanent. This is despite the fact that ethnic Germans live well beyond these frontiers. Laying claim to that territory merely on the basis of ethnicity in today’s conditions seems too far-fetched given Germany’s attempt to maintain a low profile as a civilian power. Chancellor Kohl, addressing the German *Bundestag*, clearly said ‘*...to many Germans, the areas to the East of the Oder and the Neisse are still home...given the 700 year history and culture of German National heritage...united Germany wishes to be a good neighbour to Poland as well as a reliable partner on the path towards Europe*.’\(^7^2\) The question of the geographical expanse of Germany seems to have been settled once and for all.


\(^7^1\) *Statement of the then Prime Minister and acting Foreign Minister of the GDR L. Maziere on the occasion of the signing of the Two Plus Four Treaty, 12th Sept. 1990, Moscow, Ibid*, p. 107.

\(^7^2\) *Policy Statement in the German Parliament by Chancellor Kohl on the treaty of 18th May, 1990 on the external aspects of German unity and on German-Polish relations, Bonn, 21st June, 1990, Ibid*, pp. 50, 51.
The imitation factor seemed to work particularly after the division of Germany following the end of the Second World War, when each state decided to adopt the economic and political structure of its mentor, thus maintaining its separate identity. Post Unification, followed by the collapse of the USSR and also of communism, united Germany decided to continue Bonn’s course as before i.e. a social market economy and a liberal democratic political structure. To sum up, therefore, on the basis of a study of the above-mentioned works on the question of German Identity (which is by no means exhaustive), one understands a few ideas. First, the idea of German Identity has fascinated Germans and the non-Germans alike. Second, that there exists an idea of an identity for the Germans separate from other national identities (French, British etc.) becomes apparent. Finally, that this identity has taken on different forms at different times of this nation’s history, influenced by several factors, is very clearly established. This thesis proposes to delve into the idea of German Identity after unification, pulling together several strands, unraveling several knots in the process. Is there a common legacy/collective memory/destiny/collective identity which characterizes the Germans post unification? This will be examined in the thesis from the perspective of *Autonomous Identity and Perceived Identity* with respect to Germany.

A few years before unification, Germany was called a *post national society* where local, regional identity and a general feeling of being European had superseded the National Identity of the past. In literature, culture and the arts, the idea of German National Identity moves freely across national political boundaries. What kind of National Identity are the Germans seeking and forging for themselves today? Radical pan-German nationalism is now confined to a few fringe groups of the
far right. The majority support a form of liberal nationalism linked to ideas of freedom, civil rights and democracy.73

The German search begins in the reference to *Unification* and not *Reunification* of Germany making it clear that this State is shaking off the burdens of its past while painstakingly putting all at ease by stating that it has no territorial ambitions. George Bush, former US President, categorically states the terms *Unification* and *Reunification* are weighted with different implications and content. *Reunification*, implies the joining together of territories that made up much of pre-World War II Germany. The term, in this sense, had overtones of restoration of a previously existing political entity, which raised questions about German borders. *Unification* implies that the two post-War German states would create a new Germany with a new and distinct identity. This underscores strong emotions and beliefs about continuity with the German past, closure for the time being of the Third Reich and World War II, their places in history and the conviction that modern Germany is politically and socially distinct from its predecessor.74 Is this an attempt to deny the concept of a shared legacy?

The attempt to unite the command economy of the East with that of the market economy of the West is another way of reiterating the idea of ‘one German State, one German Nation’. The roots of this go back to another strand of identity – economic nationalism. It can be traced back to the nineteenth century, when the emerging middle classes saw economic unification as the foundation of industrial growth and prosperity (*Zollverein* or the Customs Union). Later, the German and Austrian governments saw economic unification as a way towards economic revival (1931) and the

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French and Germans sought to pool their coal and steel resources for the same reason (1950). Post unification, the problems faced in this regard have, as of this date, fuelled a great deal of resentment resulting in sub-national identities of the Ossies and the Wessies. Will this be overcome resulting in a pan-German Identity? Is this the common destiny identified by the Germans?

Moving from the domestic to the international arena, what kind of Identity is Germany seeking in the world order? What role does it intend to play in the post-Cold War world? Civilian Power versus Militaristic Power is no longer the focal issue for Germany, as more than once it has expressed its desire to remain the former. The issue is ‘will it be a committed or an isolated civilian power?’ This query has assumed greater importance after its Out-of-Area operations. Is it a disguised search for the Grail? The stability of the new Identity will depend significantly on several factors – the role the new Germany wants to play in Europe and the world, the role that is expected of it by its allies, neighbours and the expanded EU etc. (Autonomous Identity versus Perceived Identity).

The answer to these questions is attempted in this thesis. The thesis has been cast into six chapters, each examining a facet of united Germany and finally linking it to two concepts – its quest for Identity and its role in the post-Cold War world.