

University of Missouri, St. Louis

IRL @ UMSL

---

UMSL Global

---

1-1-1986

## The Search for Identity or the Will to Power The German Question As An Independent Variable In Atlantic Alliance Relations

Joyce Marie Mushaben  
mushaben@umsl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/cis>



Part of the [International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Mushaben, Joyce Marie, "The Search for Identity or the Will to Power The German Question As An Independent Variable In Atlantic Alliance Relations" (1986). *UMSL Global*. 130.  
Available at: <https://irl.umsl.edu/cis/130>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by IRL @ UMSL. It has been accepted for inclusion in UMSL Global by an authorized administrator of IRL @ UMSL. For more information, please contact [marvinh@umsl.edu](mailto:marvinh@umsl.edu).

Occasional Papers

The Center for International Studies of the University of Missouri-St. Louis issues Occasional Papers at irregular intervals from ongoing research projects, thereby providing a viable means for communicating tentative results. Such "informal" publications reduce somewhat the delay between research and publication, offering an opportunity for the investigator to obtain reactions while still engaged in the research. Comments on these papers, therefore, are particularly welcome. Occasional Papers should not be reproduced or quoted at length without the consent of the author or of the Center for International Studies.

The Search for Identity or The  
"Will To Power"? The "German Question"  
As An Independent Variable In  
Atlantic Alliance Relations

by

Joyce Marie Mushaben

The Search for Identity or the  
"Will To Power"? The "German Question"  
As An Independent Variable In  
Atlantic Alliance Relations

Joyce Marie Mushaben  
Assistant Professor of Political Science, and  
Fellow, Center for International Studies  
University of Missouri-St. Louis  
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499

Review Article

THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY OR THE "WILL TO POWER"?  
THE "GERMAN QUESTION" AS AN INDEPENDENT VARIABLE  
IN ATLANTIC ALLIANCE RELATIONS

By Joyce Marie Mushaben

James A. Cooney, Gordon A. Craig, Hans-Peter Schwarz and Fritz Stern, eds., The Federal Republic of Germany and the United States - Changing Political, Social and Economic Relations. Boulder, London: Westview Press, 1984, 253 pp.

Gregory Flynn and Hans Rattinger, eds., The Public and Atlantic Defense. Totowa, N.J., London: Rowman and Allanheld, 1985, 398 pp.

Eberhard Schulz and Peter Danylow, Bewegung in der deutschen Frage? Die ausländischen Besorgnisse über die Entwicklung in den beiden deutschen Staaten. Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, 1984, 166 pp.

Hans-Peter Schwarz, Die gezähmten Deutschen. Von der Machtbesessenheit zur Machtvergessenheit. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1985, 191 pp.

Werner Weidenfeld, ed., Die Identität der Deutschen. München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1983, 355 pp.

As 1985's "Man of the Year," Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker observed in conjunction with the fortieth anniversary of the collapse of the Third Reich, "a question does not simply cease to exist because no one has an answer for it, especially when the state of affairs is such that it keeps raising the question anew."<sup>1</sup> The intensity with which politicians in the Federal Republic have debated such issues as the NATO deployments, the Bitburg visit, Chancellor Kohl's participation in the Silesian refugees' reunion, and the "open" or "closed" nature of the Oder-Neisse borders over the last two years leads but to one conclusion: The German Question is still very much alive, still unanswered and still capable of sending new waves of anxiety washing across the states of Eastern and Western Europe. The passage of time alone has not provided a definitive solution to the conundrum of German national identity and European security.

The resurgence of interest in the German Question seems to have taken many foreign observers by surprise, especially the extent to which the idea of a German "national consciousness" has become salonfähig in leftist intellectual and peace movement circles. The reaction from outside can be more accurately described as one of surprise and discomfiture, mixed perhaps with a bit of embarrassment over (a rare display of) historical "indiscretion" on the part of prominent German politicians, e.g. Kohl's blunt questioning of Andropov in July, 1983, as to whether he, as a Soviet patriot, would be happy living in a divided Moscow in a divided Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> The discomfiture experienced by neighbors to both the East and West does not derive from the perception that the two German states are suddenly in a position to do something to effect their actual reunification. More important is the ever-present if amorphous concern that after four decades of compliance and complacency, the two states might once again engage in unpredictable, aberrant

behavior that is somehow inherent to the "German national character."<sup>3</sup>

Surprise and embarrassment provide a convenient smokescreen for what this author judges to be the real reaction to this born-again German Question on the part of allies and adversaries alike, namely, one of conscious ambivalence. The most "obvious" answer to the German Question, viz., reunification, is perceived to pose a most ominous threat to the balance of European and superpower forces that has evolved since 1945. Against the backdrop of two world wars, outside powers would prefer to live with "the problem" rather than take on the risks associated with "the solution."

But what, exactly, constitutes the core of the German problem? The countries of Europe, including the two Germanies, have managed to eschew the ravages of war for four decades. The Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic have both come to assume positions of political and economic preeminence within their respective blocs. As separate entities, they have cultivated a degree of social security and solidarity never before witnessed in German history. Other industrial states look to German economic and technological achievements in the postwar era with a mixture of respect, envy and -- inevitably -- trepidation. Does the problem of a resurgent furor teutonicus capable of reinflicting its insatiable quest for power and Lebensraum on the weaker states of Europe exist primarily in the minds of the beholders? Does the current constellation of political, economic and military forces dictate that what was and is conceivably good for the Germans necessarily is and will remain bad for everyone else?

The "conscious ambivalence" posture manifested by members of both the Eastern and Western camps, at least since the early 1980's, owes in part to the general uncertainty as to what it is "the Germans" really want, either in the short term or in the long run. Not that this uncertainty precludes other

international actors from making many assumptions about what citizens in the two states should and could aspire to after forty years of division. Neither the uncertainty nor the corresponding assumptions, this author postulates, reflect the extent to which the German Question has been transformed over the last decade and a half, largely as a result of Ostpolitik developments initiated by then-Chancellor Willy Brandt. But the very success of earlier Ostpolitik and Deutschlandpolitik initiatives in reducing the tensions between the FRG and the GDR has given birth to internal demands for a "pacification" of the two Germanies that external balance-of-power advocates find equally unsettling. Improvements in FRG-GDR relations have moreover given birth to a set of political paradoxes that compel the German states themselves to adopt a posture of conscious ambivalence regarding their common "future perspectives."

## II.

The German Question has been transformed into a number of German Questions, the answers to which entail a variety of mutually exclusive prerequisites. The analyses presented by Cooney et al., Flynn and Rattinger, Schulz and Danylow, Schwarz and Weidenfeld are representative of the different paradoxes that emerge, depending on which German Questions are posed and which are accorded priority by forces inside and outside Germany-divided. For simplicity's sake, I will ascribe a single paradox to each one of four of the works cited above; this is not to deny, however, the extent to which overlapping arguments and interactive effects constitute "the stuff" of which Realpolitik is made. They will bear the following labels: 1) the Nation/State Identity Paradox; 2) the Reunification/Integration Paradox; 3) the Stability/Security Paradox; and 4) the "Lessons of History"/Normalcy Paradox. In each case, the discussion will focus on the question "What do the Germans want?" as posed by the individual works cited above. An assessment of

the overall significance of the German Question thus transformed, and possible reverberations for the Atlantic Alliance -- as depicted in the fifth text -- will be reserved for the concluding section of the essay.

Insofar as this essay rests on the premise that the transformation of the German Question is largely the result of dramatic changes that have occurred in the domestic and global, political-economic and geo-strategic environments since the war's end, the author feels compelled to summarize the more important changes before undertaking to describe each paradox. What factors or developments are responsible for a renaissance of interest in a not-yet-clearly-defined-but-nonetheless-hotly-debated pan-Germanism? Considering first the dramatic changes that have not come to pass since 1945, we observe, from the Germans' perspective: First, the failure of "the Six," then "the Nine" (and most probably "the Twelve"), to bring about the permanent, supranational integration of Europe foreseen by the founding fathers of the Common Market. Especially among the younger generations, the European community is sooner perceived as a bureaucratic monolith in its own right, rather than as an alternative to the regulation, hierarchy and the ineffective use of resources found within the national boundaries. Secondly, deterrence strategies and protracted arms control negotiations have moreover failed to treat the sources of antipathy and distrust between nations. Recent NATO and Warsaw Pact modernizations have failed to provide the ultimate clients of their respective alliance systems with a sense of more, rather than less security.

In addition to these non-developments, we can cite five changes that have occurred which also appear to have contributed to a renewed interest in the German question. First, under the labels of interdependence and



post-industrialism, the nation-state has lost many of its traditional functions -- only to acquire new ones often more difficult to balance and fulfill.<sup>4</sup> The 1970's witnessed a reemphasis on the importance of "national interests" in the wake of resource shortages and rapid fluctuations in the international climate. No state wishes to render its own ability to survive completely dependent upon the good will of the collective, especially in the event of a serious deterioration in East-West or superpower relations. Secondly, by the end of the 1970's one begins to find traces of a growing consciousness (and dissatisfaction) regarding the lack of symmetry between the reality of West German economic strength and influence and the artificiality of limitations upon the FRG's exercise of political power in regional and international affairs. This rejection of a long-standing "political dwarf, economic giant" characterization goes hand in hand with West Germans' evolving interest in wielding greater influence abroad -- both can be interpreted as a sign of normalization, of the FRG's "coming of political age" under a set of firmly established liberal-democratic institutions. Third, after forty years of unquestioning loyalty to the alliance, the West Germans have begun to give voice to an expectation that they have earned a more sympathetic hearing and more active support for their efforts to alleviate the "human costs" associated with the ongoing division of Europe not entirely of their own making. They would prefer to be appreciated, rather than feared, in light of the disproportionately heavy risks now consciously associated with the collective security requirements to which they "voluntarily" ascribe. Fourth, a generationally-linked "value change" is making itself evident among the younger, better educated segments of the population no longer inclined towards an uncritical acceptance of American dominance in European affairs. The American image in Europe has changed, linked in part to changes in attitudes

of the Americans toward Europe, and in part to Europeans' changing assessment of themselves and their capacity for independent diplomatic action. Changing perceptions of the US, in particular, have precipitated a crisis of confidence among the Western allies, bolstered by military-technological developments that render a decoupling of American and European/German security interests possible if not probable. Finally, popular acceptance of Ostpolitik and Verhandlungspolitik, geared toward improving relations with "the other Germany" seem to be irreversibly entrenched in the FRG, constituting an important plank in the platform of all four parliamentary parties. Treaties, accords and negotiations between the two Germanies have acquired a dynamic of their own, the concrete gains of which will not be traded lightly for abstract promises by alliance partners. Public support for rapprochement has remained stable through "good" and "bad weather" periods in East-West relations.<sup>5</sup>

All of the developments, and non-developments, cited above offer only partial explanations at best as to why the German Question has been transformed and why it is making its way back on to the European political agenda. More important for our purposes is how the German Questions have been modified and how they relate to each other.

### III.

For those bold -- or brash -- enough to enter the philosophically dense, historically dark thicket of German nationalism, Werner Weidenfeld's edited volume provides a multi-dimensional, politically provocative and critically self-reflective overview of the many paths to be taken in search of "the German identity." The definition of identity applied throughout this collection of essays by prominent (and predominantly) German academics derives from Erikson's concept of a reciprocal relationship between a permanent, self-contained consciousness and a continuous, if partial, participation in a

collective, group-specific orientation (p. 18). The array of topics covered in fifteen chapters by individual contributors is consistent with Weidenfeld's threefold aim to: treat the past and the present more or less equally as constituent elements of the German identity; to balance the negative against the positive aspects of the German character in its various developmental phases; and to allow for the interplay of three potentially competitive identities, rooted in the Federal Republic, the German Democratic Republic and the all-German nation, respectively.

The specific German Question addressed in this work can be broken down into three points of inquiry. The first -- what do the Germans "really want?" -- is easily answered in the form of a generally accepted proposition: The Germans are searching for a new identity that will liberate them from the pre-1945 profile of the "guilty Nazi" and the postwar image of "vassals" in an occupied state.<sup>6</sup> The second and third queries, namely, "which identity do they mean, and what shall comprise its substance?" along with "why do they need it, and what will they do with it?" find no definitive answer either among these authors or within the Federal Republic at large. Constitutional imperatives introduced in 1949, when juxtaposed against the political realities of the 1970's and 1980's, give rise to the Nation/State Identity Paradox that renders these questions unanswerable in either the short or the long run.

The parameters of the Nation/State Identity Paradox are specified by the Preamble to the West German Grundgesetz ("Basic Law") which is to serve as the provisional constitution until that day when it shall be replaced by one "freely decided upon" by all Germans, not just those residing in the Western zones [Article 146/GG]. As Eberhard Schulz has noted, however, the imperative contained in the Preamble to the Basic Law is in fact addressed to das

specify the eventual creation of a unified set of state institutions. The emphasis falls not on unity per se but on "unity in freedom."<sup>7</sup> Looking to the once-and-future nation, the Federal Republic is not free to cultivate an identification with itself in the form of a self-contained Staatsbewusstsein (that is, a "state consciousness" that would sit more deeply than mere system-affect), for fear of overriding or excluding the prospects for a new Nationalbewusstsein. Yet, Willy Brandt's January, 1970 formula for the "two states in one nation," when coupled with Egon Bahr's 1963 prescription for Wandel durch Annäherung (a "moving closer" to East Germany intended to produce the internal changes necessary in the GDR to allow for the free determination of a new, shared constitution) implies that FRG citizens would have to identify first with their own state as a stepping stone to an eventual identification with the other state and, hence, with the nation-reunified.

The GDR has avoided the Nation/State Identity Paradox by assuming a more positive orientation towards its own nation-ness, having largely disassociated itself from the fascist past. In a concerted effort to legitimize its own existence internally by elevating its status in the court of other nation-states, the GDR dropped its 1968 title of "socialist state of the German nation" and redesignated itself "the socialist German nation-state" in 1974. The last ten years have witnessed a conscious attempt on the part of the SED leadership to "de-Germanize" its half of the former Reich, e.g. by replacing the adjective "German" with the label "GDR-national" in the names of various organizations and publications.<sup>8</sup> Constitutional and statutory revisions undertaken in 1974 were part of a bold campaign to confront the "national" problem head-on with the formula "citizenship: GDR, nationality: German." While the leadership may have escaped the identity paradox at the official level, it is nonetheless a long way from resolving the "split image,"

"double life" and non-identification problems witnessed at the grassroots level, as illustrated in the chapters by Rudolph and Grunenberg.

But wait! Perhaps national reunification need not be structured in terms of "blood and iron," a shared set of governing institutions, mutually binding political processes and policies. Its longstanding "demarcation" (Abgrenzung) policy notwithstanding, the East German leadership is suddenly rediscovering a common history, rehabilitating the likes of Luther, Bismarck and even Friedrich der Grosse. Is there a new, constitutionally permissible German identity waiting to be forged within the framework of a Kulturnation, as opposed to a Staatsnation? The crystal-ball image of a new German nation becomes no clearer with this distinction. As the historical treatments by von Thadden, Bussmann, Stürmer, von Bredow and Rovon demonstrate, das deutsche Volk needs to know where it has come from in order to determine where it is going. But the return to a common historical foundation provides no guarantee that a people-divided will either interpret this history in the same light or derive the same lessons for the future. "For the Germans of the GDR," von Thadden notes, the Reformation took place in Wittenberg, for the Germans of the FRG in Worms; [it is] only unfortunate that in both cities it was the same Luther" (p.57). Reliance on the Kulturnation alone results in "commonality without identity" (p. 84).

The Federal Republic is thus left to its own devices. Rausch, von Krockow and Mommsen ascertain that the West German identity is in flux -- or at least the political consciousness and social values seem to be. But are these not the core elements of a new BRD-national identity Schweigler discerned a decade ago?<sup>9</sup> What becomes of the two-states-in-one-nation minus one state (the GDR)? Are we left with one state plus one nation, or do we get two nations in the longer run? Weidenfeld's prognosis is that the Germans

will learn to live with an identity of many layers, that separate FRG- and GDR- "state consciousnesses" will move into the foreground; the desire for self-determination will persist, as will the diffuse, psychological support for the reunification mandate found in the Basis Law. The Preamble functions as a Bekenntnis ohne Bedürfnis, a profession of faith, not a call to action.<sup>10</sup> The national consciousness will consist of a "passionless" but nonetheless stable acceptance of democratic values and institutions. The new Heimatgefühl will be more social than nationalistic.

In summary, the Nation/State Identity Paradox requires no immediate action -- the passage of time will provide the ultimate resolution. The Federal Republic is less of a Provisorium than the rhetoric of politicians infers. Those who would argue that reunification remains the charge for later generations no longer find a positive echo among the public, for "the FRG is accepted by her citizens as their state."<sup>11</sup> What the population in reality perceives as open is not the all-German but rather the inter-German question: "How is the relationship of the Germans in the two German states to each other to be shaped, this is the question that currently and intensely moves these human beings, not the question of a new state formation."<sup>12</sup>

The Federal Republic is unable and unwilling to pursue alone "the special German way" against which Hättich, Hassner and Sontheimer would caution. The possibility that the two Germanies together might embark upon a special course, in search of neutralism, for example, is fraught with even more contradictions and qualifications, against which the complexity of the nation/state paradox begins to pale. After all, the German Question "is not the property of the Germans" (p. 84ff).

## IV.

The German Question is and, in fact, always has been a European Question. Both became an American Responsibility as a matter of military necessity, not by virtue of political choice. Emerging relatively unscathed from the inferno of World War II, the United States "in a splendid act of practical, self-serving idealism," established the Marshall Plan and related assistance mechanisms to secure the rapid economic reconstruction of a liberal-democratic Europe.<sup>13</sup> American support for moves towards the creation of a United States of Europe was grounded in the twofold belief that, first, a Germany thus integrated would be a German democratized and demilitarized; and, secondly, that a recovered Europe would assume ever more responsibility for its own defense while providing a growing, cooperative market for the disposition of American exports. What the United States acquired instead was a Europe that has remained militarily dependent while becoming economically ever more competitive.

The study of FRG-US relations in the larger context of European-American relations offered by Cooney et al. is a story of mutual disappointment and cultural estrangement. This particular collection of essays summarizes the deliberations of some 40 social theorists and political practitioners invited by the Woodrow Wilson Center in 1983 to examine the growing divergencies in economic policies and security preferences as a function of value changes that have begun to occur on both sides of the Atlantic. A sense of undefined urgency underlies the collective appeal for a search for policy alternatives to sustain and strengthen the "special relationship" seen to exist between the FRG and the US.

As Craig argues, what is special about this relationship is not only the fact that it has lasted some 300 years. Historically, Germans and Americans

have both been considered "outsiders" (the latter by choice) from which they derived a sense of "exceptionalism" and came to manifest a certain xenophobia vis-à-vis Europe. In recent years both have been plagued by a crisis of confidence in their respective economic miracles, as Cooney and Jones contend. Löwenthal and Moltmann emphasize that the US national "identity" (as well as its image abroad) has moreover been shaken by the traumatic experiences of Viet Nam and Iran. While the two countries share a forty-year commitment to free market preservation and military containment, the differences in their preferred styles and strategies for pursuing these goals have now moved into the foreground. Their respective searches for identity and for a return to power appear to be leading them in very different directions.

The German Question qua European Question that emerges in this context reads: What are the specific political, economic and security prerequisites that must be met in order to permit the eventual reunification of Germany? Further, what does the Federal Republic "really want" from the United States as a means of enhancing its prospects for overcoming the postwar division?

As many intellectuals and politicians preoccupied with die Deutschlandfrage are fond of quoting, "Germany is divided because Europe is divided."<sup>14</sup> But this is only one of two main reasons that lie behind the German division. The breakdown in relations between the US and the Soviet Union, followed by the formation of the NATO and Warsaw Pact alliances, along with the overarching ideological conflict between East and West, are factors responsible for the official creation and maintenance of two separate German states. But in accordance with von Weizsäcker's eloquent appeal, it is not the end of the war that provided the catalyst for division. The source of the many human hardships facing the peoples of both states in the postwar era "lies in the beginning of that regime of violence that led to war. We cannot



separate the 8th of May 1945 from January 30, 1933."<sup>15</sup>

Hence, Germany was divided to ensure its denazification, its democratization and pacification; there was little agreement as to the best strategy for achieving these objectives between the competing ideological powers of East and West, however. By 1955, Germany-divided had become the symbol as well as the stage for a dramatic heightening of tensions between the superpowers. Much of the confusion and controversy over the "openness" of the German Question now stems from the emphasis placed by different actors, at different times, on one or the other of these "reasons" for the existence of the two Germanies. This confusion is manifested in the paradoxical conditions set down for German reunification within the framework of European integration.

The Reunification/Integration Paradox has its origins in the incomplete nature of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. The lack of a final peace treaty and the collective nature of Four Power responsibility during the occupation years kept the dream of reunification alive for inhabitants of "the zones." But the deeper the division became between the superpowers, the more committed to Western values the Federal Republic appeared to be, and the more actively prepared the Germans were to accept the necessity of a defense contribution of their own, "the sooner the Western powers could tolerate their claimed right to reunification, even in contractual terms, 1952-1954."<sup>16</sup> Germany cannot hope to reunify without the active support of its European neighbors or without the concurrence of the Soviet Union. The more thoroughly integrated the FRG strives to become in the West European Community, the more she expects to win trust and support for her efforts to move closer to the GDR. One should recall, however, that it was France's desire not to see German reunited that led to de Gaulle's early push for European integration. Furthermore, the

more institutionalized and permanent the FRG's commitment to the West, the more unacceptable her efforts to integrate or combine with the GDR will become to the countries of Eastern Europe, e.g. Poland.

A thirty-year identification with the European community has complicated, if not strained, the Federal Republic's ties to the United States, whose approval and security guarantee are absolutely essential to the FRG's desire to avoid an "integration by force" with the East. What the West Germans ostensibly seek from the US is an end to the further "Americanization" of their economy and culture -- the loudest demands being posed by the peace and "alternative" movements so unloved by Schwarz. This is paralleled by the call for a halt to the "Europeanization" of the political and economic costs for security-related policies no longer viewed as sensitive to "German interests." The US has responded with hurt-surprise to (alleged) manifestations of anti-Americanism, especially in the FRG; yet it overlooks the adverse impact of its own "seemingly erratic impositions of egocentrism" on the European economies, e.g. in the form of high interest rates and protectionist measures, as described by Jochimsen and Biedenkopf (p. 148ff). The fact that the Federal Republic remains "a net importer of security" imposes other domestic-economic costs as well, argue Joffe and May (p. 181). Schlesinger admits that American fears of an ultimate Soviet takeover are probably no more (un)realistic than European watchfulness-mixed-with-faith that the economic enticements growing out of the detente era will subdue the red beast. Stern warns that Bonn should not be forced to choose, either between the United States and Europe, or between Western Europe and German-German rapprochement. The trick is to find strategies that permit "as much congruence as possible, as much diversity as necessary." The plea is for the United States to adopt a more flexible response to the sea change in European economic interests and

security preferences.

The attainment of economic stability based on liberal-market principles, and an unshakable commitment to democratic institutions are but two of the prerequisites West Germans must demonstrably fulfill, if the Preamble is ever to become a political reality. Inevitably, however, the reestablishment of national unity will only become possible "when it appears to the Germans and all other powers who determine the fate of Europe to be less dangerous than the maintenance of division."<sup>17</sup> In other words, not even time will resolve this paradox -- not until East-West antagonisms are permanently laid to rest.

#### V.

Nowhere are the "differences" between American and European needs and interests more apparent than in the area of military and strategic defense policy. While a majority among the West German political, industrial and military elites continues to support nuclear deterrence as the best defense against possible Soviet aggression,<sup>18</sup> a critical - vociferous segment of the public has shifted in favor of détente and disarmament as the key to European security. As inconsistent and sporadic as its involvement in foreign policy deliberations has been since the 1950's, the often uninformed "public" has emerged as a participant to and object of current national security debates. This was nowhere more evident than in the Federal Republic during the "Hot Autumn of 1983" when peace movement organizers succeeded in mobilizing an estimated 2-3 million demonstrators and sympathizers in opposition to Pershing II and cruise missile deployments. The ostensible "demobilization" that followed in the wake of actual deployments suggests, however, that the public's role in these debates has yet to stabilize -- and the policymaker's role becomes more complicated as a result. On the one hand, the political leadership bears responsibility for "designing and pursuing defense and

security policies that promise to be effective according to established military and strategic criteria, while simultaneously taking into account new realities of the social context surrounding national security..." (p. 102). On the other hand, it cannot ignore a possible erosion of public support for the Atlantic Alliance which holds "deep implications regarding the process of legitimizing defense and military strategy in Western democracies" (p.102).

Flynn and Rattinger, along with their six co-contributors, approach potential shifts in public opinion in reference to security issues with a sensitivity rarely found among a multitude of survey research analyses of this order. Without entangling themselves in the never-ending debate over more/less sophisticated statistical procedures, these authors effectively explore the interpretation problems inherent in questionnaire wording, as well as in our general lack of knowledge as to how foreign policy attitudes are actually formed. The result is a work that is methodologically digestible and politically thought-provoking for even the most "unquantitative" of comparative researchers.

Each chapter offers a country-based review of public attitudes towards defense, with a special emphasis on mass orientations since the mid-seventies (when foreign policy was at last "discovered" as an important subfield by survey researchers themselves). The analyses of public opinion data compiled from a variety of sources in Britain, France, the Federal Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States are organized and developed around four axes or "images." The first, Images of the Soviet Union, looks to differences in the Soviet "threat" as perceived by American and European citizens at large. The second focal point, Images of Security, juxtaposes internal against external, economic against military factors, as a source of increasing popular uncertainty and discontent. The third set of concerns

revolves around Images of Deterrence, in light of growing public suspicions that the "cure" of nuclear war might be worse than the disease of Soviet encroachment. The final axis, Images of Allies, is applied to problems of reliability, trust and meaningful communication between the United States, on the one hand, and its European partners, on the other.

As important as each of these chapters is in the larger framework of Atlantic relations, two stand out as particularly relevant to the task at hand, namely, Rattinger's essay on "The Federal Republic of Germany: Much Ado About (Almost) Nothing," and the editors' joint conclusion. The analysis of polls conducted in the FRG reveals an extremely complicated set of internal and external security concerns unique to a divided Deutschland. The most important German Questions to arise in this context pertain to the current and future status of the Federal Republic in the Western military alliance. First, one needs to inquire whether the spectres of pacifism and "neutro-nationalism" raised by discussions within the peace movement have fundamentally altered the nature or strength of West Germans' commitment to NATO. What do the citizens of the Federal Republic expect and demand from the Alliance? Secondly, do their expectations differ significantly from those of other NATO members? Thirdly, what price are the Germans prepared to pay in terms of security risks, if neutralization and non-alignment are presented as the preconditions for reunification?

Recent empirical efforts to test the waters of German public opinion demonstrate that the tide has not yet shifted against Alliance membership per se -- even when the sample is heavily sprinkled with peace movement supporters.<sup>19</sup> Some 56% of those affiliating themselves with the Green Party in May, 1983 considered NATO "necessary," despite their rejection of the pending Pershing II and cruise missile deployments (pp. 166-167). There

appears to be little disagreement regarding the overall importance of American security guarantees; when faced with a direct choice between NATO-membership and neutrality, the former prevails over the latter by a significant margin -- 70% to 17% in February, 1982 and 72% for continuing membership versus 9% for withdrawal in August, 1983 (p. 144).

Thus, the first question is more easily answered than the second. The West Germans evince no inclination to withdraw from a collective defense system that, up to now, has guaranteed them an historically unprecedented degree of internal stability and external security. They nevertheless appear to be interested in redefining their status in NATO in such a way as to permit them a more active, participatory role in Alliance decision-making. The call is for more prior consultation (not "briefing") and genuine codetermination with respect to the choice of tactical weapons systems and regional defense strategies, on the one hand; they prefer, on the other hand, greater autonomy in the conduct of foreign policy where "German interests" are involved. Codetermination and autonomy are no doubt rights that the Bonn government would exercise only with great caution, trapped as it is between the rock and the hardspot of a unique security paradox.

The Stability/Security Paradox finds expression in the ruminations of Richard Löwenthal, who holds that the Bundesrepublik, some thirty years after her founding, has become the most stable of the larger European states, when measured against such objective standards as price stability, unemployment rates, or electoral succession. The problem is, her citizens cannot believe it. Objective stability is not matched by subjective security -- "dem Selbstverständnis der Bundesdeutschen fehlt die Selbstverständlichkeit."<sup>20</sup>

The reasons for this perceived insecurity derive as much from the present as from the past. The ideological division of Europe compelled the two German

states to engage in frequent, often vehement public disavowals of each other's domestic and foreign policy achievements during the first twenty years of their existence, in order to demonstrate fidelity to the ideological precepts imposed by their respective superpowers. Efforts to secure the political-economic survival of one German state were perceived to pose an existential threat to the other. Yet, the very division of Germany that has held the two halves hostage to a "provisional" state of insecurity unter sich has itself become one of the stablest elements in the ongoing, globally destabilizing confrontation between the Eastern and Western blocs.

Both history and geography make it impossible for either German state to divorce questions of national security -- and the issue of its postwar half-national identity -- from the dialectic of international relations. The Federal Republic seeks "maximal coupling with minimal provocation."<sup>21</sup> While the general perception of the overall East-West military balance has not undergone a significant change in recent years, the public's main worry has shifted from military strength to "keeping the peace." Neither defense spending nor the expansion of the Bundeswehr are viewed as "extremely important;" the peace movement draws sympathy, but not necessarily active commitment. In short, "military defense is endorsed by public opinion much more easily as an abstract principle than its burdensome practice..." (p. 127). When the "ugly label" nuclear weapons is affixed, "it has no chance if it is up against more 'civilized' concepts such as negotiation and detente" (p. 127).

Taking the authors' many methodological and cognitive-theoretical qualifications into account, the Federal Republic is shown to possess a rather stable set of images regarding the Soviet Union, internal and external security imperatives, albeit with a new sensitivity to the inherent dangers of

a reliance on deterrence. It is the last set, Images of Allies, that provides evidence of subtle but significant changes in public orientations, and yields at least a partial answer to the question of German "different-ness" vis-à-vis other Alliance partners.

The conclusion drawn by Flynn and Rattinger is that the West German public thinks pretty much like other European publics, but perhaps "more so." The real differences lie between European and American perceptions. Partners east of the Atlantic are now inclined to view the Soviet Union as a more "normal adversary," one to be lived with and negotiated with, rather than "wiped out" in a messianic confrontation between the superpowers. Security defined in primarily military terms is judged inadequate, as more weapons on either side mean lessened prospects for peace. Declining confidence in the "rationality" of either a graduated or an extended deterrence strategy is linked to the public's general loss of faith in the "expert" character of decisions made by political/technical elites. The ever more attentive publics are prepared to pay the social and financial price of European security only to the extent that Alliance policies are perceived to be defensive ("structural non-offensive capacities"); otherwise they will impose political costs of their own. Even the craziest or most "chaotic" peace protester one might encounter in the FRG is no less "rational," no more "aberrant" than the citizens of other Alliance states in rejecting the proposition that one's own country may have to be destroyed in order to be defended.

## VI.

Divided or reunified, neutralized or allied, the two German states will remain physically and, therefore, politically in the middle of the East-West conflict. In no position to "drop out" of the international, bipolarized system, the Germans appear to have but one other option for securing their



mutual survival, namely, to cast aside their common political sack-and-ashcloth roles donned in 1945 and assume the cloak of power accorded to other "normal" sovereign states. This alternative, seeking to ensure that the security needs of one's own country prevail through the responsible exercise of power, is likely to resurrect the original German Question, albeit adapted to 1980's constraints. Do the calls for a "community of responsibility," a "coalition of reason," and a "security partnership" mean that borders will be maintained but their character radically altered? Or are the two parts again moving to reestablish something bigger, a Gesamtdeutschland, through confederation and reunification? Have the Germans sufficiently atoned for sins of the past, three generations removed - or does "original sin" leave its black mark on the souls that forever follow? What evidence can they deliver "that will convince the rest of the world that they have learned their lesson and have become all the better for it?"<sup>22</sup>

In a two-part work on "power politics" and the "style" of West German foreign policymaking, Schwarz argues that postwar Germans have truly become different. He holds that their proclivity for "too little" attention to the former has become almost as bad to "too much." The Germans once obsessed with power have banned its use from the collective political memory, and thus deprived themselves of a capacity for pragmatic-purposive maximization of their own interests. "The tamed Germans of the Federal Republic have come much farther afield than the German Reich with its nervous striving for a place in the sun" (p. 39). Bonn's initiatives over the last 10 years have resulted in a network of diplomatic and economic engagements that allows its representatives to move with self-assurance into those regions and states once closed to their forefathers/mothers. But Schwarz admonishes that the Federal Republic manifests both anxiety and arrogance (especially vis-à-vis the United

States) in scorning a power-political approach to foreign policymaking. Instead "the cured alcoholic as the preacher of universal sobriety" has adopted an anti-statist, naively moralistic dream-role as harmonizer and peacemonger.

It appears that "the Germans more than many other peoples cultivate the extremes in the style of their international activity: sometimes berserk, sometimes the friendly household pet lacking any instincts against danger" (p. 58). Whatever "taming" of the Germans remained to be done, subsequent to the experiences of the capitulation and occupation years, was eventually effected by group pressure and the imperatives of routinized adaptation to multinational foreign policy entanglements. Schwarz maintains that "adherents to the so-called peace movement" who demand a denuclearized, bloc-free Germany are "without appreciation for the disciplinary and behaviorally stabilizing effect of the multilateral system" (p. 41, p. 47). Yet the general thrust of his own argument is to urge that the Federal Republic "do more" and "do less" simultaneously to render its geopolitical position less vulnerable and to combat growing domestic resentment over its condemnation to a state of permanent provisionalism. "Without a hard core of patriotic responsibility towards one's own country, towards one's own liberal way of life, for the welfare and power interests of one's own state...", the Germans have become "politicians and citizens who predominantly lay their sacrifices before the altar of international order and cooperation, and forget that their own land will sooner or later be punished by the gods" (p. 151).

The concurrent, rather contradictory calls for more multilateral cooperation and a stronger emphasis on Germany's "own" interests -- even to the point of possible withdrawal from NATO -- reflect a growing gap between the "successor generations." In undertaking delayed efforts to "conquer

Germany's past," members of the "Economic Miracle" and "Long March through the Institutions" generations have drawn very different conclusions for the FRG's present and future foreign policy course, which find expression in the "Lessons of History"/Return to Normalcy Paradox.<sup>23</sup>

"We have learned the lessons of history" is a declaration oft repeated by Helmut Kohl, at age 56 the first Chancellor with no direct experiential link to the events of 1933-45 (who also speaks of "the blessing of having been born late"). The national shock of shifting from "major power" to "no power" status has produced internal political asymmetries, leading in turn to errors of judgment and behavior that the Germans themselves mistakenly perceive to be "normal."

The Alliance partners would like to believe that the Germans have thoroughly mastered the lessons of history and that they have indeed become "better;" they are sympathetic to the two states' desire to avoid serving as a potential Ground Zero. But should the two attempt to disentangle themselves from the never-ending risk of a major superpower confrontation, the "tamed" Germans are immediately suspected of trying to establish something "greater." Common efforts to concretize their respective "dream roles" as harmonizers and peace mediators -- even at the rhetorical level of "security partnership" -- raises the anxiety level and generates counter-pressures abroad. From this one necessarily concludes that neither the Federal Republic nor its eastern counterpart have yet to be perceived as normal states. Schwarz contends that "even the self-torturing efforts to conquer the past should soon belong to the past" (p. 141). Nevertheless, the "lesson of history," the acceptance and mastery of which was/is expected to result in a return to normalcy among subsequent generations, is that the Germans have never been "normal" -- and probably will not be treated as such for a long time to come.

## VII.

In being transformed from one into many, the German Question(s) have perhaps acquired new meaning for the future course of the Atlantic Alliance. For neighboring and partner states, the most important Question made in Germany entails a mixture of old and new elements, namely, reunification and what are variously known as the "Dutch Question," the "Austrian Solution" and fears of "Finlandization." For the citizens of the nation-divided, the fundamental task ahead is that of resolving the new German-German Question in a manner promoting a symbiotic relationship between "unity," "freedom," "security," "peace" and "autonomy." Instead of reacting rashly to the potential threats to one's own national security attributed to "too much" inter-German rapprochement, the Western powers face an obligation to lay the old German Question permanently to rest, Schulz and Danylow suggest, by offering a more attractive alternative coupled with realpolitische concessions (such as chemical- and nuclear-free zones). Simultaneously, the Bonn and East Berlin governments must clearly and publically divorce their shared objective of overcoming the negative human costs of division from the anachronistic aim of reunification. The power to assume greater direct responsibility for their own defense might serve both in rechanneling overreactive nationalist or national aspirations, while domesticating internally divisive debates over security policy by stabilizing and domesticizing them.<sup>24</sup>

Must the German Question -- with an emphasis on the elimination of the mental and physical walls that divide its people -- be resolved in formal-legal terms in order to guarantee the strength and effectiveness of the Atlantic Alliance? Or, what will happen if nothing happens? For the United States, Britain, France and the smaller partner states, the answer is clearly, no. As Grosser defines the situation, "the Western allies only want

reunification as long as it is impossible," while an American source notes "we are not being asked to do anything about the German Question, and we prefer not be asked."<sup>25</sup>

Is the Federal Republic's loyalty to the Alliance jeopardized by or dependent upon a final solution to the German Question? In the short term, the answer is, for the most part, no, as long as she is not compelled to choose between the United States and Europe, between West integration and the improvement qua intensification of German-German relations. The longer-range answer also reads, probably not, although it is conceivable that the FRG could later insist upon some compensation (e.g., in the form of a veto over theater nuclear missile "release" or greater tactical flexibility within its own borders) in exchange for her "voluntary" renunciation of the right to national reunification.

Movement in the search for a new, post-postwar German identity can be construed as evidence that the citizens of the Federal Republic have begun to develop confidence in themselves and in their own "free-democratic basic order" -- a development meriting the active support of her Western partners. The emergence of independent peace and ecology groups, along with Erich Honecker's own "damage limitation" activism since the 1983 commencement of NATO deployments, indicate that Wandel durch Annäherung has occurred in the GDR as well as in the FRG. Moreover, both have become subject to Annäherung durch Wandel in the global economic and strategic environment.

If one accepts the verity of the French axiom, c'est seulement le provisoire qui dure, then the members of the Alliance will have to consider the extent to which a strengthening and deepening of ties between the two German Republics can and must contribute to the future stability of the region.<sup>26</sup> If it is not true that only the provisional, namely, the existence

of two-states-in-search-of-nationhood, will prove the most permanent feature of the postwar global order, then one would be well advised to heed the warning of seasoned statesman, Richard von Weizsäcker: "The German Question will remain open as long as the Brandenburg Gate remains closed."<sup>27</sup> The opening of the Brandenburg portal and the Wall of which it has become an integral part, will constitute a most necessary but not, I contend, a sufficient condition for the "closing" of the German Question.

## NOTES

1. Richard von Weizsäcker, Die Deutsche Geschichte geht weiter (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985), 8.
2. Reported in Die Welt, 7. July 1983.
3. Eberhard Schulz and Peter Danylow, Bewegung in der Deutschen Frage, cited supra, 99.
4. See Peter Alter, Nationalismus (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985).
5. Richard Löwenthal, "The German Question Transformed," Foreign Affairs (Winter 1984-85), 313.
6. Löwenthal, loc. cit., 302.
7. Eberhard Schulz, Die Deutsche Nation in Europa. Internationale und historische Dimensionen (Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, 1982), 166.
8. Ibid., 409.
9. Gebhard Schweigler, National Consciousness in a Divided Germany (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1975).
10. Schulz, Die Deutsche Nation, loc. cit., 186. Even the more recent survey results show a striking majority in favor of maintaining the preamble in its present form. Noelle-Neumann found 79% for, 7% against in October/November, 1983. See Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Im Wartesaal der Geschichte. Bleibt das Bewusstsein der deutschen Einheit lebendig?" in Werner Weidenfeld, ed., Nachdenken über Deutschland. Materialien zur politischen Kultur der deutschen Frage (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1985), 137.
11. Schulz, Die Deutsche Nation, op. cit., 175.
12. Ibid., 175.
13. Fritz Stern, "Conclusions: 'Return of the Repressed'," in The Federal

Republic of Germany and the United States, cited supra, 237.

14. See inter alia von Weizsäcker, op. cit., and Schulz, op. cit.
15. Richard von Weizsäcker, "Gedenkstunde des Deutschen Bundestages zum 40. Jahrestag der Beendigung des Zweiten Weltkrieges," reprinted in Europa Archiv 40, No. 10 (May 1985), 265.
16. Schulz, Die Deutsche Nation in Europa, op. cit., 159.
17. E. Schulz, Die Deutsche Nation, op. cit., 111.
18. Dietmar Schössler and Erich Weede, West German Elite Views on National Security and Foreign Policy Issues (Königstein/Ts: Athenäum Verlag, 1978).
19. See especially, Karl-Heinz Reuband, "Demoskopische Verwirrungen in der Nachrüstungsfrage: Was halten die Bundesbürger vom Nachrüstungsbeschluss?," Vorgänge 66 (1983), 64-80; Reuband, "Die Friedensbewegung vor und nach den 'Aktionswochen' im Herbst 1983," Vorgänge 67 (1984), 12-25; Reuband, "Die Friedensbewegung nach Stationierungsbeginn: Soziale Unterstützung in der Bevölkerung als Handlungspotential," Vierteljahresschrift für Sicherheit und Frieden 3, No. 3 (1985), 147-156; and, Reuband, "Antiamerikanismus - ein deutsches Problem?" in Vierteljahresschrift für Sicherheit und Frieden 3, No. 1 (1985), 46-52.
20. Richard Löwenthal, "Stabilität ohne Sicherheit - Vom Selbstverständnis der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," Der Monat (1978), 75.
21. Josef Joffe, "West German Security Policy," in Cooney et al., cited supra, 190.
22. Hans-Peter Schwarz, Die gezähmten Deutschen, cited supra, 23.
23. Szabo's work in this area looks primarily at the postwar generation which began to make its political influence felt in the 1970's. I have attempted elsewhere to distinguish analytically among three successor



generations, the latter two of which have contributed significantly to the "alternative politics" and new social movements of the 1980's. Compare, Stephen F. Szabo, ed., The Successor Generation: International Perspectives of Postwar Europeans (London/Boston: Butterworths, 1983), and Joyce Marie Mushaben, "Anti-Politics and Successor Generations: The Role of Youth in the West and East German Peace Movements," Journal of Political and Military Sociology 12 (Spring 1984), 171-190.

24. Schulz (pp. 112-113) borrows literally from Holmes on this point. Cf. Kim R. Holmes, The West German Peace Movement and the National Question (Cambridge, Mass.: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1984), 70ff.
25. For an elaboration of Alfred Grosser's position, see his (translated) work on Das Bündnis. Die Westeuropäischen Länder und die USA seit dem Krieg (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1978). The American quote derives from an interview conducted by this author at the US Mission in Berlin, January 3, 1986.
26. Schulz and Danylow, cited supra, 99ff.
27. Richard von Weizsäcker, "Die Deutsche Frage aus der Sicht der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" (8. Juni 1985), speech reprinted in Europa Archiv 40, No. 14 (July 1985), 398.