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**National Role Conceptions and Foreign Policies:
France and Germany Compared**

by

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Abstract

In spite of domestic and international political changes, French and German foreign policies have displayed high degrees of continuity between the late 1950s and the mid-1990s. Over the same time period, the directions of the two states' foreign policies have also continued to differ from each other. Why do states similar in many respects often part ways in what they want and do? This article argues that the French and German national role conceptions (NRCs) account for both of these continuities. NRCs are domestically shared understandings regarding the proper role and purpose of one's own state as a social collectivity in the international arena. As internal reference systems, they affect national interests and foreign policies. This article reestablishes the NRC concept, empirically codes it for France and Germany for the time period under consideration, and demonstrates comparatively how different NRCs lead to varying interests and policies across the major policy areas in security, defense, and armament.

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France and Germany provide the standard example of reconciliation between two formerly warring states. Yet, Franco-German relations have been simultaneously characterized by reoccurring tensions, shaped by often widely diverging definitions of national interests and formulations of foreign policies. “Franco-German military cooperation in the postwar period,” Philip Gordon finds, “seems to have taken place *despite* important differences in perspective between the two countries, not because of a fundamental rapprochement of views.”¹ Further, “at both public and elite levels,” he observes, “French and German attitudes toward security and defense were highly different.”² And Robert Picht wonders whether French and Germans – notwithstanding the tight cooperation between them – speak the same (political) language (*langage*): “It sometimes would seem as if they were not living in the same world. Their reference systems are far from being identical, the modes of thought, the methods and the postures find the same wave length only with difficulty.”³

Between the late 1950s and the mid-1990s, neither France’s nor Germany’s basic foreign policy orientation suffered fundamental ruptures – irrespective not only of changes in governments, governmental party compositions, and leaders on either side of the Rhine, but also the end of the Cold War and Germany’s second unification.⁴ France and Germany have much in common: both are wealthy and industrial or post-industrial; both are stable democracies. Yet they often display critical differences in terms of national interest formation and foreign policy-making. Why do states similar in many respects often part ways in their goals and actions?

In this paper I argue that pivotal differences between French and German foreign policies stem from fundamentally diverging domestically-shared views on the role and purpose of their states in the world. I conceptualize this internal construction of collective self as “national role conceptions” (NRCs). NRCs encapsulate what “we want and what we do as a result of who we think we are, want to be, and should be,” where the “we” represents nation and state as a social collectivity. NRCs are character profiles that spark certain interests and policies. Different character profiles make different interests and policies intuitive and plausible. Their disparate NRCs inform variant French and German interests and foreign policies. Their NRCs account for both the overall continuity in French and German foreign and security policies, and their

¹ Gordon 1995, 11, emphasis added.

² Ibid., 9.

³ Picht 1993, 70. All translations in this paper from French and German into English are my own.

⁴ For various accounts of this kind of half-century long French and German foreign policy continuity see, for example, Gordon 1993; Hoffmann 1964; Hoffmann 2000; Le Gloannec 1997; Sauder 1995; Schweigler 1985.

continued differences.

In order to understand other collectivities' goals and actions, Richard von Weizsäcker, former President of the Federal Republic of Germany, insists that it is necessary to grasp their "self-comprehension" (*Selbstauffassung*)⁵ or "political self-understanding" (*Selbstverständnis*).⁶ This "self-perception of nations and states" (*Eigenwahrnehmung*), Wilfried von Bredow holds, results from what has formed as history from their past.⁷ Such "history" might come as "the lessons we have learned" or "*patrimoine*." NRCs cannot be reduced to the interests or ideologies of dominant groups, parties, or single persons in or near power, or to the organizational features of state and society. They are not the addition or the overlapping consensus of individual or group interests. Nor do they derive from the imperatives of the anarchic structure of the international system.

This paper has three objectives: First, I reestablish NRC as a general concept and clarify the effects of different types of NRCs on the processes of national interest formation and foreign policy formulation. Second, by extracting what is typically taken for granted in French and German domestic politics and describing these NRCs' major elements, I show how to code the concept of NRC independently from the outcomes to be explained. Third, I demonstrate the value of the NRC concept by showing how different NRCs motivate varying security, defense, and armament interests and policies in the two states. Section I addresses conceptual and methodological issues, and discusses matters of empirical data collection and coding. Sections II and III nominally code the German and French NRCs respectively. Section IV assesses NRCs' analytic leverage by comparatively scrutinizing the impact of the French and German NRCs on their interests and policies in security, defense, and armament in a fashion best named "qualitative regression." Section V considers NRCs among other factors of interest and policy and in relation to other theoretical perspectives.⁸

⁵ von Weizsäcker 1988, 1161, emphasis added.

⁶ von Weizsäcker 1992, 97.

⁷ von Bredow 1996. Quote from 112. Others identify a "historically transmitted understanding of self" or point to "the image we have about ourselves." Nonnenmacher 1997; Lamers 1998, 185.

⁸ The research question and the associated conceptual, theoretical, and empirical aims relate this inquiry to four distinct bodies of literature: those of NRCs broadly; French and German domestic construction; French and German foreign policy; and NRCs within current IR debates. I position my conceptualization of the NRC concept with respect to the first set of literature as I go along in Section I. North American NRC work of the 1970s and 1980s, following Holsti's seminal article, has been picked up and continued in Europe over the last two decades. Key works of both geographic sources include Gaupp 1983; Holsti 1970; Kirste and Maull 1996; Maull 1990; Maull 1992b; Rosenau 1987; Sampson and Walker 1987; Walker 1987b. I will draw freely on the second and third bodies of literature in the empirical Sections II-IV. Aiming to capture the nature and ef-

I. National Role Conceptions

NRCs are domestically shared views and understandings regarding the proper role and purpose of one's own state as a social collectivity in the international arena.⁹ They are products of history, memory, and socialization. They may be contested, but often endure. Coded by an empirical distillation of domestically shared elements which together make up the role, NRCs are nominal independent variables. They have their own vocabulary both expressing and reflecting an NRC, and affect interests and policies along three dimensions. They are elements of state and national identity. In conceptualizing and analyzing NRCs and their effects, I reap benefits by bringing together diverse literatures of different origins. I will review NRCs' various aspects in turn.

Location and Anchoring

At a minimum, NRCs are shared among national political and administrative elites, across a variety of public-organizational units of the state, and by the relevant foreign policy community, which encompasses advisors, researchers, and academic and journalistic observers. NRCs are collectively held.¹⁰ Their impact on interests and policies is likely to become stronger the more they "become part of the political culture of a nation,"¹¹ further shared among societal groups and within civil society. Yet, a strong elite consensus might be more consequential than a broad but shallow societal agreement. However, given that the distance is shortest between national interest formation and policy formulation and what is shared among public elites, their advisors, and professional observers near the centers of authority, these groups deserve priority

fects of domestic social-cultural institutionalization, my NRC explorations connect to a constructivist research program, and so relate to the sociological-rationalist debate that now constitutes a central cleavage in international relations theory. See, for example, Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996; Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krasner 1998; Keohane 1989a; Wæver 1996. In my formulation, NRCs share much with other recent "historical-social-cultural inside-out" explanations, which, with conceptual variations, endeavor to grasp the effects of such types of domestic institutionalization. For example, John Ruggie's recent work on U.S. foreign policy focuses on the impact of American "self-perception," an American "sense of self as a nation," or America's "sense of political community" on U.S. interests and foreign policy making. Ruggie 1998, 200, 201; Ruggie 1997, 109. See also Ruggie 1996. Other such explorations include Alastair Iain Johnston's work on Chinese "cultural realism," Peter Katzenstein's examination of Japanese security politics, and Elizabeth Kier's analysis of British and French military strategy. Johnston 1995; Johnston 1996; Katzenstein 1996a; Kier 1997. See further Abdelal 2001; Katzenstein 1996b; Schlichte 1998. I will return to "NRCs among other theoretical perspectives" in Section V.

⁹ This definition both updates and elaborates upon other usages of role conceptions in the literature. Thirty years ago, Kal Holsti explicated: "A *national role conception* includes the policymakers' own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate systems. It is their 'image' of the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward, or in, the external environment." Holsti 1970, 245-246, emphasis in the original.

¹⁰ Compare Katzenstein 1996a, 21. On epistemically objective reality, see Searle 1995.

¹¹ Holsti 1970, 298.

when researching and coding an NRC. Thus, most research of this and similar types, even if working with differing conceptualizations of NRCs, has concentrated on “responsible, legitimated decision-makers” acting as representatives “of a greater unit, the state,”¹² “political elites,”¹³ or on “the highest-level policy makers”¹⁴ and their views on “the roles their nations should play in international affairs.”¹⁵ The core elements of France’s and Germany’s NRCs have been broadly shared, well beyond the confined circles of public elites and the respective foreign policy communities.

Endurance and Contestation

As shared meaning, NRCs are “historical creations.”¹⁶ They are neither invariably fixed nor immutable across time. They appear, develop, and become dominant during one time period. They may change, decay, or recede into history during another time period (and have historically done so). Yet, neither are they purely transient phenomena that disappear very quickly. Holsti thought of NRCs as a relatively stable “attitudinal attribute.”¹⁷ These general attitudes often endure. Their temporal stability makes NRC a useful analytic concept. France and Germany’s NRCs were largely stable between the late 1950s and the mid-1990s. Major elements of France’s NRC extend a great deal further into the past.

NRCs may be politically contested. There may be and have been “domestic disputes what one’s role implies, what one’s role is, or who one is or should be.”¹⁸ Further, NRCs may not always be “clear-cut, orderly, logical, or in any other way standardized.”¹⁹ Sometimes, there may be tensions between an NRC’s different elements. “Role competition occurs,” Stephen Walker points out, “when actions taken to honor one expectation compete in time and resources with actions necessary to meet another expectation.”²⁰ If an NRC is highly contested or if it is not clear what it implies, the concept loses analytic value or is useless for the given historical situation. However, different strands of NRC literature and my own research suggest that NRCs are often fairly robust. And

¹² Gaupp 1983, 15.

¹³ Wish 1987, 99-102.

¹⁴ Holsti 1970, 256.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 235. A social “role” can be split up in an “ego part” (role from within) and an “alter part” (role as ascribed or expected from without, read external social environment). Gaupp 1983; Kirste and Maull 1996. Regarding NRCs, most research has focused on the “ego part.” Whatever the differences or similarities between the psyche of a human individual and shared meanings and understandings within a country, the results from research concentrating on the inside brings about interesting and useful results. Here, an NRC is a variable coded and operating entirely on the domestic level.

¹⁶ Katzenstein 1996a, 22.

¹⁷ Holsti 1970, 254.

¹⁸ Rosenau 1987, 50.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁰ Walker 1987a, 86.

what springs from one or more NRC elements is frequently apparent. During the time period covered here, France's and Germany's NRCs were little contested. If they were contested, then it was along their fringes, not in their core elements. Nor were there generally, as the data show, regular tensions among different role elements that would confuse or render indeterminate their NRCs' explanatory value.

Sources of Data and Coding

In coding France's and Germany's NRCs, I have drawn from a wide range of empirical sources over the last four decades, including official publications and statements, speeches, memoirs of leading statesmen, newspaper articles, and diverse accounts from the two states' foreign policy communities. Additionally, I have drawn from secondary French and German foreign policy literature from both sides of the North Atlantic. The data stem from general foreign policy statements and reviews, rather than specific political issues or questions.²¹ The NRCs on which I focus are never tautologically fused with the outcomes they help generate, i.e. defined on the basis of what they explain.²²

NRCs are empirically coded nominal variables. They are summary labels covering a number of domestically shared elements and characteristic terminology of role and purpose.²³ These core elements and the notions that express and reflect the roles are empirical data condensations.²⁴

Effects on National Interest and Foreign Policy

NRCs affect interests and policies along three dimensions: they prescribe,

²¹ On this issue, see Holsti 1970, 258.

²² Holsti identified a population of seventeen NRCs in the international sphere. Holsti 1970. Others, too, have arrived at ten to twenty basic roles, a number that corresponds to my level of generality/specificity. See, for example, appendixes and several contributions in Walker 1987b. My goal is not to advance role theory, but to describe how domestically-anchored role and purpose meanings affect interests and policies.

NRCs could be broken down into a number of variables, ranging along different dimensions such as active-passive, unilateral-multilateral, or independence-communal foreign policy orientations. See, for example, Holsti 1970, 253, 283. Or an NRC could be broken down into its (potentially) different guises according to policy area. See Walker 1987b, 265-266 (appendixes). I have chosen to code NRC as a nominal variable for each state. This provides explanatory leverage with respect to interest formation and foreign policy conduct.

²³ This approach contrasts with the use of the concept in some recent work, where NRCs have either been taken as Weberian ideal types or as normative objectives to be strived for. Practitioners of the former formulate NRCs as ideal types from which they derive expectations regarding interests and behavior. See Harnisch and Maull 2001; Maull 1992a, 274-275; Maull 1992b, 780; Maull 2000. Regarding NRCs as normative goals and policy guides, see Maull 1992a; Schmidt 1994. The procedure here is "attaching labels" after distilling empirical material. On ideal types and real types, compare Weber 1988 (1922).

²⁴ As practiced below, the respective NRC components and key notions are not intended to be a complete description of self-view. They compress some major and consequential elements and terms at the core of French and German self-understanding. The full content of each, however, goes beyond what this style of analysis aims to capture. That implies that other summary-labeled civilian powers will do some things differently from Germany, and that other residual world powers will in their self-understandings be partially incongruent with the French, doing some things differently from France.

proscribe, and induce preferences regarding process and style of policy- and decision-making. NRCs have a *prescriptive* impact in that they motivate wills, goals, and actions. Yet NRCs also rule out. Putting them outside realistic consideration, they make interests and policy options intuitively implausible, categorically exclude them as wrong or unacceptable, or make them unthinkable. These are NRCs' *proscriptive* effects. NRCs often are powerful tools to predict what actors will *not* want and *not* do and will *not* consider optional or feasible. They *proscribe* as much as they *prescribe*. Finally, NRCs influence interests for a certain *processual style* of foreign policy-making. This includes the entire procedural range of fixing positions and formulating policies, both within the national government and with governments of other states.²⁵

Often, interests and policies that derive from NRCs are viewed as normal, right, and intuitively plausible within the respective country. From another NRC's perspective, quite different interests and policies may be normal, right, and plausible. For Germany, renouncing nuclear weapons has been normal and right. For France, possession and control of an independent national nuclear striking force is equally intuitive and right.

Although most studies that have employed NRCs as an independent variable have sought to analyze phenomena having to do with foreign policy, they have not been congruent regarding "the thing to be explained."²⁶ Commonly, NRCs somehow relate to endogenizing interests.²⁷ My distinction among the three pathways with which NRCs affect national interests and foreign policies unifies and standardizes the outcome-to-be-explained.

Origins

NRCs are intersubjective products of history, memory, and socialization. On a historical-empirical plane, systematizing research on NRCs' origins would entail the detailed tracing of the roots and emergence of various NRCs and their elements. Conducted most thoroughly, such studies might yield editions as monumental as Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire* on France.²⁸ On a general theoretical plane, systematizing work on NRCs

²⁵ It is not necessary to overemphasize the differences between prescriptions, proscriptions, and processual dimensions. Sometimes it may be a question of formulation, whether one puts the inducement of an interest or policy as the one or the other. For example, whether Germany's NRC proscribes erratic unilateral policies, or induces a slow and incrementalist procedural style in the formulation of a certain policy may in the first place be semantic. In other instances, however, only one of the three dimensions will be adequate. In any case, drawing the distinction helps to bring order to arguments about NRCs' causal effects.

²⁶ Holsti 1970, 305. *Explananda* include goals, motives, interests, strategies, appropriate foreign policy means, instruments, decisions, behavior, and foreign policy action patterns. See Gaupp 1983, 15; Kirste and Maull 1996; Maull 1990; Maull 1992b; Rosenau 1987; Sampson and Walker 1987; Walker 1987a.

²⁷ See Kirste and Maull 1996, 285-290.

²⁸ Nora 1997 (1984-1992).

would require a theory to explain when historical experiences do and do not translate into NRC components, as well as why some roles emerge while other conceivable roles do not.²⁹ Both kinds of inquiry on NRCs' origins are beyond the scope of this article. There surely are profound historical forces that account for the significant disparity between the two large Carolingian heirs' NRCs. Key is that French and Germans have different historical reference points in thinking about themselves and their foreign policy roles.³⁰

In the German case, the historical legacies of the Second World War and the Holocaust, with the conception of a democratic Germany as a counter-design to the barbaric regime of the Third Reich, are constitutive.³¹ Perhaps it is trivial to state that two disastrous World Wars, the moral devastation of the Holocaust, trench warfare, scorched earth, mass slaughterings, lots of barbed wire, and a wall with a death strip and a death toll have left their traces in Germany's collective psyche. It is also true. "Historical legacies," Gebhard Schweigler remarks, "unlike personal inheritances, cannot simply be rejected if the terms appear disadvantageous."³²

France's historical reference points differ fundamentally. Here, it is the indivisible model-republic, the first nation with a *grande armée*, prime among European armies for some two hundred years between the mid-seventeenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries, conquering and ordering Europe, and bringing to it a civil code and Cartesian clarity. It is a self-view of a collectivity always at the forefront of political, social, scientific, and cultural progress and sophistication. And, very importantly, it is a collectivity about which General de Gaulle successfully invited his fellow citizens to think "in a certain way."³³ Contemporary French conceptions of the state and the nation date back at least to the early and late eighteenth century, respectively.³⁴

II. Germany as a Civilian Power

Summarizing its core components and associated vocabulary, I label the German NRC "civilian power." Broadly, a "civilian power is a state whose foreign policy role conception and role behavior are *tied* to goals, values, principles, as well as forms of exerting influence and instruments of

²⁹ For attempts along such lines, see, for example, Naomi Bailin Wish, who discusses different NRC sources and offers a "two-stage, national attribute-role conception model." Wish 1987, quote from 102. Sampson and Walker correlate broad social and societal domestic cultural norms, especially organizational norms, with NRCs. Sampson and Walker 1987. And Maull explores the societal and domestic conditions for the development of the role conception "civilian power." Maull 1992b, 781-782.

³⁰ Compare Grosser 1983, 31.

³¹ For the same view with different emphases, see Banchoff 1996; Berger 1998; Schweigler 1996; Zifonun 1997.

³² Schweigler 1996, 8.

³³ de Gaulle 1954, 5.

³⁴ See, for example, Rémond 1982; Sauder 1995, chapters 7 and 8.

exercising power, that serve to civilize international relations.”³⁵ Central German NRC components include (1) “never on our own”; (2) promotion of an increasingly precise legal framing of international relations and support for broadening the legitimacy of the international order; and (3) a generally restrictive attitude toward the use of military force, particularly by single states. Standard German foreign policy notions comprise responsibility, predictability, reliability (*Verantwortung, Berechenbarkeit, Zuverlässigkeit*). During the period covered, Germany’s was a foreign policy discourse with little disagreement on essentials.

Core Components

“*Never On Our Own.*” This is the first core element of the creed that Germany has cultivated as its self-view. It is the shared propensity toward a broad international legitimization of all important foreign policy, especially in security affairs. It is a general dislike for “going alone” or “doing it alone,” a view of unilateralism as unsuitable for oneself: “never on our own.”³⁶ “[T]ogether with our friends and partners,” is one standard way to state the matter.³⁷ Or, as elaborated programmatically by then Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, “Only together with our partners, not against them, can we win the future.”³⁸ It suits Germany, von Weizsäcker stresses, to “evade any type of ‘showing off’ and any unnecessary ‘going alone.’”³⁹ Referring to multilateral political structures or broad international coalitions, Helga Haftendorn aptly summarizes this role-purpose element as Germany’s “self-confident self-integration in larger political contexts.”⁴⁰

Legal Framing, Rule of Law, Regularized Conduct. A second NRC component is the belief that it broadly befits Germany to contribute to civilizing international affairs by supporting, defending, or advancing the legal framing of international affairs, international rule of law, and regularized conduct.⁴¹ Germany’s is a legalistic culture that not only pays much respect to legal stipulations, but accords great legitimacy to legally codified procedures and regularized conduct. This NRC component is the outward corollary of a norm that has even stronger effects for internal political processes. The component applies to both global and regional levels, and to the entire range of foreign policy issue

³⁵ Kirste and Maull 1996, 300, emphasis in the original. I should stress that my usage of the label “civilian power” exclusively refers to my own coding of it with its compression of components and notions.

³⁶ Schweigler 1996, 16.

³⁷ For example, Hacke 1996, 4.

³⁸ Kinkel 1998.

³⁹ von Weizsäcker 1992, 111.

⁴⁰ Haftendorn 1993, 41.

⁴¹ The German terms *Verrechtlichung* and *Verregelung* perhaps best grasp the role component: “judification”; “rulification.” The section attempts to pin down the shared meaning using more common English terminology.

areas.⁴² Substantively and processually, this component makes it appropriate to formulate one's wants and policies in conformity with existing and already codified international rules and legal norms. It also animates propensities to further advancing, deepening, and consolidating international law and rule as a policy goal in itself.⁴³ Finally, it channels interests toward specific international policy issue areas such as human rights, the promotion, consolidation, and observance of which flow from this role-purpose propensity.⁴⁴

Military Force as Last Resort toward Non-Selfish Ends. A German "civilian power" is not pacifist. But there is great skepticism toward the use of force.⁴⁵ It is a mix of ends, legitimization, and implementation that characterizes Germany's attitude toward military force as the third major NRC component. Put briefly: the use of military force might be acceptable as last resort toward non-selfish ends, with both means and ends necessarily legitimized (strategically, tactically, morally) by a broad international coalition that must include Germany's "partners and friends," ideally under the aegis of an international organization. The consensus, Maull spells out, engenders the embracing of primarily non-military instruments for the achievement of one's own goals: mediation and arbitration, institutionalization, negotiations and compromises that might emerge with the help of non-military incentives and sanctions.⁴⁶ Still, there might be instances where "civilian powers as the Federal Republic might not be able to renounce entirely on military instruments for its politics. Yet, special conditions and principles apply for the employment of military power. Further, the resort to military means fulfills, as opposed to classic power- and security politics, transformed functions, and differs in terms of organization and handling."⁴⁷ Self-defense aside, the ends cannot be narrowly national-selfish. There must be a broad international consensus on the justifiability of such ends. The function of force is to (re)channel the conflict into non-military forms of conflict resolution as quickly as possible. As a rule, its handling must be legitimized by collective, international decisions that are broadly supported.⁴⁸

Notions: Responsibility, Predictability, Reliability

There is an entire set of role-purpose-foreign-policy vocabulary. These notions express, reflect, and substantiate Germany's role components. Key terms include responsibility, predictability, calculability, reliability, stability, accountability, and continuity.

⁴² See especially Schmidt 1994, 316-317, 322-325.

⁴³ See Maull 1992a, 272, 276; Maull 1992b, 776.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Maull 1992b, 776.

⁴⁵ For both, see Kirste and Maull 1996, 303.

⁴⁶ Maull 1992b, 778.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 785.

⁴⁸ Compare Maull 1992a, 273.

Standard formulas include that Germany, “due to its history,” has a “special (co-)responsibility” for peace (“especially in Europe”), or a German “co-responsibility for the world society.”⁴⁹ Kinkel finds the “expectation of our partners” regarding meeting the demands of “our European peace responsibility” justified.⁵⁰

A book-length study on the foundations of German foreign policy identifies two related terms that particularly represent broadly shared “basic foreign policy orientations.” In the course of the consolidation of the old Federal Republic, it finds, “*stability*” became a value in itself.⁵¹ “The highest value that West German politicians communicate for the foreign policy of the Federal Republic is a variant of stability: *predictability* (calculability). West German foreign policy is to be always calculable – meaning for all sides always predictable and comprehensible.”⁵²

Hans Dietrich Genscher, German foreign minister from 1974 to 1992, is a particularly important witness. His memoirs center around the same relatively small number of key German role and purpose terms: responsibility, reliability, continuity (also: partnership, partners and friends).⁵³ Frequently, they come in combinations such as “responsibility politics/policies” (*Verantwortungspolitik*), or Germany as a “reliable friend and partner as anchor for stability and peace.”⁵⁴

French observer Daniel Vernet perhaps particularly clearly views what seems natural and normal elsewhere, commenting on the German governmental change in 1998: “Continuity. Predictability. Reliability. There you have the three master words of German foreign policy by the future chancellor and his minister.”⁵⁵ He still perceives a German self-understanding of “civilian power” motivating German interests and policies.⁵⁶

For a long time, a cardinal term to refer to much of what I have distilled above as German NRC components was “continuity.” Stressing, citing, pointing out “continuity” based on the “broad consensus” on foreign affairs orientations was the magic mantra to condense one’s sharing in what I subsume under the shorthand label “civilian power.” For four decades, a most diverse set of personalities in a most diverse set of political situations has emphasized it: Genscher (and the FDP) as the

⁴⁹ Hacke 1996, 6.

⁵⁰ Kinkel 1998.

⁵¹ Schweigler 1985, 225.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 226, emphases added.

⁵³ Genscher 1995. Similarly see Genscher 1981.

⁵⁴ Genscher 1995.

⁵⁵ Vernet 1998a.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

guarantor of continuity in German foreign policy; Kohl as continuing what Adenauer had begun, Brandt extended, and Schmidt consolidated; the new red-green government building upon the broad consensus on which German foreign policy had rested; and so on.

Discourse Boundaries

German “foreign policy discourse” in the mid-1990s remained characteristic and bounded. Gunther Hellmann identifies five “schools of thought” (*Denkschulen*) and spells out their basic attitudes regarding what Germany should strive for internationally, and what would be a suitable foreign policy for the country.⁵⁷ Some varying accentuations aside, there are few disagreements in concrete foreign policy issues in this discourse among social scientists, political advisors, foreign policy decision makers, and opposition politicians.⁵⁸ Germany’s multilateral and broadly integrationist orientation remains particularly strong.⁵⁹ “The (tacit) commonalities among them [these groups] are larger than the differences. The consensus among them is broad: there are only different emphases.”⁶⁰ Differences fade when one takes a cross-national comparative perspective with other countries-as-collectivities.

Particularly, these groups agree on what German role and purpose is *not*, and what interests do *not* derive therefrom. For example, none of them wants Germany to become more unilateralist, and/or leave NATO, and/or acquire its own nuclear striking force. Equally, none holds that Germany should become more unilateralist, and/or leave NATO, and/or demilitarize, and/or turn pacifist. Germany’s NRC, like any NRC, is also the sum of momentous absences.

III. France as a Residual World Power

For France’s NRC, I use the short-hand label “residual world power.” It summarizes the self-view of an active-independent regional leader with ambitions of global scale and presence.⁶¹ The substance of this NRC’s elements differs in kind from Germany’s: (1) “independence,” implying a view of self as standing alone, able to make decisions and act in as many foreign policy fields as possible without having to count on others; (2) “activism,” in terms of shaping and participating in the management of international affairs – including the use of military force; and (3) at least the potential for global “presence.” Standard reference vocabulary

⁵⁷ Hellmann 1996, especially 21-31; Hellmann 1997. He labels them “pragmatic multilateralists,” “Europeanists” / “integrationists,” “Euroskeptics,” “internationalists,” and “normalization nationalists.” Hellmann 1996, 3-21; Hellmann 1997, 26-29.

⁵⁸ Hellmann 1997, 25-27, 31-32.

⁵⁹ Hellmann 1996.

⁶⁰ Baring 1997.

⁶¹ The adjectives that come with the noun “power” in reference to France vary. With the United States and the Soviet Union as “superpowers,” France comes as “great” power or “near-great power.” Schmidt 1996; Kindleberger 1976. When the U.S. or the Soviet Union is labeled “great power(s),” France often comes as “middle” power.

expressing French foreign policy norms include greatness, rank, and glory (*grandeur, rang, gloire*), and a few others like pride, prestige, and dignity. One can detect important chunks that became part of the “Gaullist consensus” in French history before de Gaulle entered the scene to fuse them into a more or less coherent NRC, which has largely endured since the General left power.

Core Components

Independence. This chief element of French self-understanding incorporates France’s “full foreign policy independence in the world of states.”⁶² Standing alone, proud, independently as a constituent NRC component does not rule out cooperation. But it rules out allowing things to take their course, so that at some point the collectivity might have no choice *but* to cooperate with others.⁶³ An “active-independent” role conception, Holsti explicates, “emphasizes at once independence, self-determination, possible mediation functions, and active programs to extend diplomatic and commercial relations to diverse areas of the world.”⁶⁴ This “set of principles,” Margaret Hermann understands, implying the self-perceived “need to remain independent and unaligned,” relates to defining interests and policies that help to “make sure (that) all bases are covered, that all options are considered so as to insure no loss in independent status.”⁶⁵ A “dogged interest in maintaining their national separateness,”⁶⁶ the independence element includes the “*ideal* of autonomy of decisions.”⁶⁷ Werner Rouget considers “‘independence’ the leading notion” of the Fifth Republic’s foreign policy.⁶⁸ Whereas as French purpose it predates the origins of the Fifth Republic, Nonnenmacher reflects that “insisting on independence and autonomy has remained a firm dogma of French parties: communists, socialists, and Gaullists alike.”⁶⁹

Activism. Charles de Gaulle crystallizes the activism element in his “Memoirs of Hope” where he succinctly rehearses what he considers

⁶² Becker 1983.

⁶³ To be sure, “residual world power” as summary label and “independence” as NRC component, denote dominant role and purpose meaning. They do not describe a (however measured) state of affairs (or policies themselves), for example a “positionality” measured according to bare power (resources) in the international system. Grieco 1993. At the very least, the coupling between NRC (components) and brute power is loose, diffuse, and indirect, if not dissociated. Compare Ruggie 1983. An NRC may (or may not) conflict with limited capability; it frequently does in the French case. But then, NRCs help shape interest and policy. So they affect what are appropriate levels of power to be projected and what for; they co-define plausible, legitimate, and efficient goals. Even though Germany, Italy, and Japan possess similar or larger power capabilities, their NRCs differ widely from France’s.

⁶⁴ Holsti 1970, 262. Similarly, see Sampson and Walker 1987, especially 117.

⁶⁵ Hermann 1987, 136.

⁶⁶ Walker 1987b, 270.

⁶⁷ Gordon 1993, XV, emphasis added.

⁶⁸ Rouget 1989, 68.

⁶⁹ Nonnenmacher 1986.

France's appropriate role and purpose.⁷⁰ After sketching the political situations in Europe, the Atlantic Alliance, the Third World, the Near East, Africa, Asia, Latin America and international institutions after his return to power in 1958, de Gaulle stresses: "In each of these areas, I want France to play an active part," elaborating that "it is essential that that which we say and do be independent of others."⁷¹ As his entire new government and prime minister, he emphasizes, he "was convinced of France's right and duty to act on a world scale."⁷² Some four decades later, reflecting upon his fourteen years at the Elysée serving François Mitterrand, Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine describes a "French will to will."⁷³ Walker understands that the elements "independence" and "activism" lead to an "interest in participating in the international community but on one's own terms and without endangering a dependent relationship with any other country."⁷⁴

(Potential) Presence. "France, the only West European nuclear power along with Great Britain, present on five oceans and four continents," the *Loi de Programmation Militaire* for the years 1990-1993 prototypically formulates, "has chosen to ensure her security by herself to guarantee her independence and maintain her identity."⁷⁵ This (potential) presence NRC ingredient does not embody geographic limitations.⁷⁶ "The French, von Weizsäcker remarks adamantly, "continue to produce their history as the accomplishment of a universal mission."⁷⁷

France's overseas *départements* (DOM), integral political-administrative units of the "motherland," and its other territorial holdings of different political-administrative statuses (TOM), corroborate this (potential) presence role component.⁷⁸ The four overseas departments comprise two Caribbean islands (Guadeloupe, Martinique), a portion of South America (Guyane), and an island in the Indian Ocean (Réunion). Among others, France further possesses or controls New Caledonia and French Polynesia in the Pacific Ocean, Mayotte in the Indian Ocean, and the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon off Newfoundland's coast. "Confetti of the empire," these splinters are leftovers of another institutional time.⁷⁹ Yet, it is not the material possession or control of these quite costly territorial tenures that matters, but the role conception to which they contribute.

⁷⁰ de Gaulle 1970.

⁷¹ Ibid., 177.

⁷² Ibid., 180.

⁷³ Védrine 1996, 7.

⁷⁴ Walker 1987b, 270 (appendixes).

⁷⁵ Quoted in Gordon 1993, 1.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Schlichte 1998.

⁷⁷ von Weizsäcker 1998.

⁷⁸ See, for example, de Montbrial 1989, 288-290; Savignac 1995, 210-216.

⁷⁹ Scholl-Latour 1988, 88-99.

“France has always understood itself as a globally acting middle power, which leads an ambitious foreign policy. Doing so, it does not evade frictions” with other states.⁸⁰ And A.W. DePorte observes that the “Fifth Republic has pursued an active foreign policy in every part of the world and every sphere of international life.”⁸¹

Another Normality’s Vocabulary: Greatness, Rank, Glory

France’s role components, too, come with a vocabulary list, to which they are closely tied: greatness, rank, glory, and a few related terms. They are additional significant ingredients of a firmly anchored reference system contributing to the institutionalization of the role and purpose of a collective self. They are of a fundamentally different sort than those which are standard currency in Germany.

Grandeur is perhaps the key term denoting the French NRC. Vernet even holds that the entire Gaullist foreign policy can be summarized with this single term.⁸² Maurice Vaïsse crisply titles his detailed study of French foreign policy between 1958 and 1969 “La Grandeur,”⁸³ seconding Philip Cerny who wrote on Gaullist foreign policy under the heading “politics of greatness.”⁸⁴ The notion of *rang* typically comes in formulations such as: France has to “take its rank,” France has to live up to its rank, or must “keep its rank.”⁸⁵ It is a domestically rooted view of self that France occupy “a place in the front rank,”⁸⁶ – “its traditional place in Europe and the world as a nation.”⁸⁷ Vernet describes a sense of a French obsession with its own rank and role in the world.⁸⁸

André Malraux recalls that de Gaulle underscored, in one of the first guidelines he issued to those immediately surrounding him after his return in 1958, the necessity “to give back to France its nobility and its rank,”⁸⁹ which the General considered neglected during the Fourth Republic years. Eleven years later, in December 1969, Malraux had a quiet personal talk with de Gaulle in his private domicile in Colombey, after the general’s conclusive farewell to politics. Malraux recalls that de Gaulle considered himself to have had “a contract with France” – with France, not with the French, as Malraux emphasizes.⁹⁰ The same theme persists, three presidents and thirty years later. Regarding France’s standing in Europe, Steven Kramer notes: “it was evident that neither

⁸⁰ Vernet 1997a.

⁸¹ DePorte 1991, 253.

⁸² Vernet 1998b.

⁸³ Vaïsse 1998.

⁸⁴ Cerny 1986.

⁸⁵ Frank 1991, 68-69.

⁸⁶ DePorte 1991, 254.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Vernet 1992, 655, 663.

⁸⁹ Malraux 1971, 21.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 21-23.

President Mitterrand, nor the political class would be satisfied with a second role for France”⁹¹ – with whatever consequences for interests, positions, and policies.

Gloire, too, now probably the least common term of the three, intimately relates to France’s internally anchored view of its role and purpose in international matters. “Glory” is often employed when looking back at (the glory of) French history or the (glory of the) French army. Conceptual expressions of such legacies contribute to formulating challenges of the present and tasks for the future.

Charles de Gaulle’s most celebrated and most often quoted text, next to his call of 18 June 1940, is the first few pages of his *Mémoires de Guerre (L’Appel, 1940-1942)*.⁹² A conceptual abstract delineating France’s role, mission, and character, its key phrases and terms are in their own way a condensation of a self-categorization remaining valid today, even if de Gaulle’s pathos has (sometimes) gotten lost. They have been referred to as a matter of course, ever since *L’Appel* was first published. Already in the rhapsodic opening paragraph, after having formulated what has become the de Gaulle standard quote of all standard quotes (“... *une certaine idée de la France*”), de Gaulle states that “France cannot really be itself (*elle-même*) but in the first rank.” He concludes his introductory paragraph by exclaiming that “... our country, such as it is, ... France cannot be France without greatness.”⁹³ He then talks about “a sense of France’s dignity,” “a certain anxious pride regarding our country,” and about having been struck by the “the symbols of our glory.”⁹⁴ Next to greatness, rank, and glory, such terms appear on *L’Appel*’s first three pages pertaining to France: dignity, pride, and prestige.⁹⁵

From Before to After de Gaulle

“Probably the most important measure of the significance of Charles de Gaulle’s foreign and defense policies is the extent to which they generated a set of norms that have shaped French behavior of the past thirty-five years,” Cerny reflects. “It is primarily within France that those norms have retained their overall coherence and influence – symbolic and material – both for public perceptions of France’s proper role in the world and for the working of policymaking processes at elite level.”⁹⁶ The chief constituents of this “national consensus”⁹⁷ have endured.⁹⁸ “The

⁹¹ Kramer 1991, 962.

⁹² de Gaulle 1954.

⁹³ All quotes from de Gaulle 1954, 5.

⁹⁴ (*nos gloires*) Ibid., 5-6.

⁹⁵ (*dignité, fierté, prestige*) Ibid., 5-7.

⁹⁶ Cerny 1994, 99.

⁹⁷ Frank 1991, 92.

⁹⁸ For concise summary of de Gaulle’s own Gaullist foreign policy, see Aron 1983, chapter 16, especially 445-450. With the United States as dominant power, residual world powers per-

foreign policy of the first *septennat* of François Mitterrand,” Rouget comments in 1989, “expresses in an almost perfect fashion how the Fifth Republic – independently of the party political orientations of its presidents – comprehends and practices continuity and constancy of France’s foreign relations.”⁹⁹ “In foreign and security politics,” Nonnenmacher perceives, “only few outsiders are ready to question the basic orientations of the country as they came from de Gaulle.”¹⁰⁰ De Gaulle “sets the terms of discourse about French foreign policy in ways that have persisted,” DePorte insists. And he “propounded ideas about the links between France’s internal life and its place in the world.”¹⁰¹ This amounts to “a policy-generating insight into the relationship between the nation’s inner life, its *essence* as France, and its place in the politics of nations.”¹⁰²

Yet, de Gaulle invented neither the core tenets of a collective French self-view, nor a new foreign policy.¹⁰³ The General took on historical raw materials and hammered out a set of basic orientations that would be consequential for French foreign and security policies. It was his achievement to find a common denominator for a range of reference points that were already present when he entered (and re-entered) the scene, fusing them into a more or less coherent self-view of a social collectivity.

In fact, major themes of France’s post-1958 NRC long predate de Gaulle. They come from other layers of historical time, and have deep roots in French history. For example, “defending the nation’s political independence, restoring France to its power and greatness and its universal mission” had already been among the principles set out during the Second World War by the national council of the *Résistance* (then, too, influenced by the General).¹⁰⁴ Gordon, in his investigation of the impact of the Gaullist legacy on French foreign policy, recognizes that “Gaullist” policies and aspirations can be traced back to at least the Treaty of Versailles, if not to Napoleon and Louis XIV. Much that is “readily identified as ‘Gaullist’ in fact has roots that were clearly planted in the years that preceded the General’s return to power.”¹⁰⁵

haps tend toward some reflexes of disinclination against the twentieth century’s yardstick. There is little doubt that the French NRC has included varying doses of anti-American sentiment as ingredients. “It was General de Gaulle himself,” Raymond Aron finds, “who gave his letters of nobility to anti-Americanism.” Aron 1983, 448-449. This, too, belongs to the General’s enduring heritage. As Aron titled a 1974 *Le Figaro* article, tongue (only half) in cheek: “The Americans and us: Our closest adversaries.” Aron 1997 (1974), 1441-1444.

⁹⁹ Rouget 1989, 67. Further see, Gordon 1993, XV; Le Gloannec 1997. On the broad party consensus, see especially Sirjacques-Manfrass 1984, 72-73.

¹⁰⁰ Nonnenmacher 1999.

¹⁰¹ DePorte 1991, 251.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 252. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁰³ Vernet 1998b.

¹⁰⁴ See Vernet 1992. Quote from 663.

¹⁰⁵ Gordon 1993, 4. Rainer Baums identifies still deeper historical foundations of some

IV. Interests and Policies Induced: Franco-German Comparisons

The elementary differences between France's and Germany's NRCs shape, via the three pathways of prescription, proscription, and process, French and German interests and policies across security issues areas. Security policies come in four layers: international order policies; alliance politics; military and deployment strategies; and force structure and armament policies. Interests and policies formulated on these four levels may be more or less coherently integrated.¹⁰⁶ Since I want to show that NRCs find expression in a wide range of specific policies, I will only briefly consider the first two levels, security orders and alliances, and concentrate on policies of the last two levels.¹⁰⁷

Security Orders and Alliances

“Pan-European peace order” (*gesamteuropäische Friedensordnung*): so Axel Sauder summarizes Germany's order interests and policies.¹⁰⁸ Since the Cold War days, German order policies have aimed at moving toward a pan-European net of interdependencies which would make belligerent behavior irrational and which would geographically encompass Europe and the North Atlantic area. These goals and their behavioral implications are not ad hoc products of the late 1980s, but reach back at least to NATO's Harmel report of 1967. The phrase “*gesamteuropäische Friedensordnung*” first appeared in the 1960s.¹⁰⁹ It has guided German order interests and policies ever since. Germany has, by and large, kept up this political design as an ultimate long-range goal, in spite of political difficulties, setbacks, and conflicts with some of its most important friends.¹¹⁰ Germany's order policies have aimed at overcoming European divisions and including Eastern European states into the West's security arrangements. Germany has sought to push ahead European integration, to counteract Europe-wide nationalization tendencies, and to increase both interstate and transnational cooperation, coordination, and association arrangements of most diverse kinds. Demarcating and

pivots of contemporary French self-view. For instance, he finds traces of “the striving for national independence” as “a quasi-natural law like maxim for all foreign and security political action” that today has become an “untouchable component of French reason of state” reaching back for a thousand years. This Capetian heritage has been handed over to Philippe le Bel, Louis XI, Richelieu, Louis XIV, the Jacobins, Napoleon Bonaparte, finally arriving at Mitterrand. Baums 1992, 259.

¹⁰⁶ Sauder 1995, 43-45.

¹⁰⁷ I do not really select single policies or issue areas as case studies here. Rather, I try to show that their NRCs affect the entire range of French and German security, defense, and armament politics. If you consider security order; alliance politics; overall force structure; mission definition and deployment; nuclear striking force; arms procurement, production, and industry; and arms export as cases that I illuminate for both France and Germany, then this section offers fourteen cases or observations. It holds that overall the two NRCs, as coded, plausibly explain a great deal of the variance of these observations, and that there is a good “fit” of the imagined line in this “qualitative regression” exercise.

¹⁰⁸ Sauder 1995, 113-135.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 117.

¹¹⁰ See *ibid.*, 114.

knitting together state power has been an important motive of these German order interests and policies.¹¹¹ Germany's pan-European order leanings have at times irritated France due to concerns that Germany might trade in its "anchoring in the West" for a comprehensive European order.

German order and alliance policies over the last four decades have been both multilateral and integrationist.¹¹² EU and NATO, supplemented by the OSCE and the WEU, have become Germany's second nature when it comes to foreign policy. For both order and alliance policies, there is a German propensity toward what might be called "as well as" policies. That is, avoiding the sharp edges of difficult choices and insisting instead on non-choices; and attempting to make combinations of policy decisions that others frequently view as mutually exclusive. For example, in terms of both order and alliance orientations, Germany has always evaded the choice between the "United States and France," or between the "North Atlantic area and Europe," at times invited by Germany's two most important allies. In the same spirit, Germany refused the choice between *either* a widening (Britain et al.) or a deepening (France et al.) of European integration as fallacious alternatives, and insisted on "*as well as*" policies: to push ahead on both fronts at once. Such interests and policies might have been born in a historical situation without alternatives. But a quickly internalized view of self turned them into stable products of widely shared role and purpose views.

Changed external circumstances have only marginally affected German alliance interests. Its policies toward the EU have not altered qualitatively since the European eruptions of 1989-1991.¹¹³ Properly, German order and alliance policies have been termed "binding-in policies" (*Einbindungspolitik*).¹¹⁴ The actualization of Germany's prescriptively NRC-induced order political and alliance interests are constitutionally facilitated by *Grundgesetz* article 24, which permits the federal government to transfer national sovereignty to international and supranational organizations, collective security arrangements, and international arbitration institutions by a simple law. In brief, Germany's civilian power NRC finds expression in the state's order and alliance interests and policies. These broad sets of interests and policies also

¹¹¹ Ibid., 116.

¹¹² See, for example, Anderson and Goodman 1993. Three bilateral relationships – with the United States, with France, and with Israel – have underpinned and complemented Germany's overwhelming multilateral foreign policy orientation since 1949. With the political-geographic changes after 1990, there are now two more critical bilateral relationships: with Poland and with Russia.

¹¹³ Compare Banchoff 1999; Katzenstein 1997b. See also other contributions in Katzenstein 1997a.

¹¹⁴ Hellmann 1994.

underscore how much it has become a Germany *in* Europe, rather than a Germany *and* Europe.¹¹⁵ For Germany, Robert Keohane and Stanley Hoffmann note, “international institutions have become intrinsically valuable,” positing that Germany’s order and alliance policies are *also* ends.¹¹⁶ As interests and policies, they result to a large extent from the shared “never on our own” and “legal framing-regularized conduct” core elements, and the central notions of responsibility, reliability, and continuity.¹¹⁷

France, too, had never really accepted the “Yalta world.” Overcoming the “Yalta order” with its two superpowers, their dividing of Europe – often rendering it a mere object of the two powers on its fringes – had been, in broad terms, France’s guiding principle for its set of order interests and policies. Yet France’s goals have been all but congruent with Germany’s. For France, overcoming Yalta would ideally have meant establishing continental Europe (under France’s leadership) as a third actor on a par (or so) with the superpowers. Such a Europe could have more or less closely sided and cooperated with the United States. However, it would have been a Europe distinct and independent from the tutelage of the superpower to its west. Sauder names such a continental order beyond Yalta a “European confederation.”¹¹⁸ To be sure, these have been long-term French political order interests, at times difficult to keep up and sabotaged by adverse circumstances and the diverging interests of other European states (and the U.S., not to mention the Soviet Union). Yet, just as Germany’s order designs, they have not been ceded, either during the Cold War or after.

Nonetheless, during the 1990s, France’s order goals have often remained fragmentary and vague in more concrete terms. All identifiable particles of order interests and policies, however, are strongly NRC-guided. The state remains any order’s cornerstone, the nation its home. The European Union is to develop into an international political actor, while keeping the Union’s common foreign and security policies intergovernmental. In many ways, a more state-centered counter-model to Germany’s tighter and more comprehensive Europeanism, compromising external state autonomy, unless inevitable, is part of no French order design.¹¹⁹ Although lacking precision and concrete formulation as a coherent diplomatic project today, the Gaullist consensus remains the driving force behind French order interests and

¹¹⁵ Katzenstein 1997b.

¹¹⁶ Keohane and Hoffmann 1993, 403.

¹¹⁷ Scholars and practitioners perceive Germany unilaterally throwing its weight around (and acting not fully predictably and reliably) as unusual. Consequentially and appropriately, Beverly Crawford formulates Germany’s recognition of Croatia and Slovenia as an analytic puzzle. Crawford 1996.

¹¹⁸ Sauder 1995, 136-157.

¹¹⁹ See Wæver 1990.

policies.

According to Raymond Aron, France's leaving of NATO in 1966, preceded by pulling first France's Mediterranean fleet, then its Atlantic fleet, out of the integrated NATO command, constitutes the epitome of Gaullist diplomacy.¹²⁰ It springs from France's goal of (at least symbolic) "total independence," and its desire to elevate itself to great power status of global rank (*rang mondial*).¹²¹ It corresponds with its unwillingness to fully situate itself within one of the two blocs.¹²² Broadly speaking, France's NRC proscribes full NATO integration, as that would encumber too much its independent formulation of strategic objectives and undermine the high degree of autonomy considered appropriate.

The proscriptive and processual NRC effects may crystallize most clearly in France's independent nuclear striking force, to be looked at below. This force and its deterrence doctrine serve an independent nation. It cannot be submerged into an integrated command. A small example from more than three decades after de Gaulle's NATO exodus illustrates the persistently different French and German order and alliance reflexes: After Helmut Kohl and Jacques Chirac had disclosed the common Franco-German strategic concept after the Franco-German summit in Nuremberg in December 1996, communists and socialists in the French national assembly sharply criticized the paper for an alleged secret "Natoization" of French defense policy.¹²³ Former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius warned against the danger of "subjugation under the USA."¹²⁴ Much in contrast, in Germany the paper was warmly welcomed as increasing and deepening security and defense cooperation with Germany's most important partner.

To be sure, French order and alliance interest and policies in no way rule out cooperation or even solidarity with other states. Compatibility yes, integration no. It is a cooperation that hinders less the ability to decide autonomously on a case by case basis, as well as increasing the potential opportunity costs of rupture. Frequently causing tensions and difficulties, France's and Germany's diverging order and alliance interests and policies have complicated Franco-German bilateralism. These interests and policies have, to name only one example, decisively shaped their relations to NATO and the United States – one lasting difficulty in the Franco-German relationship.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Aron 1983, 439.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 448.

¹²² See *ibid.*, 447. For a thorough historical account of France's alliance (and some order) policies in the later 1950s and early 1960s, fully in line with the argument here, see Soutou 1996, chapters 5-6.

¹²³ See Vernet 1997b.

¹²⁴ *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 31 January 1997, 26.

¹²⁵ Due to limited space, I skip the discussion "France and Europe." Sauder provides a leading motive of such a discussion: "European integration is from a French perspective no substitute for power competition among states, but – also – its continuation with other means."

Overall Force Structures, Mission Definitions, Deployment

Armed forces are not only military, but also key security political instruments. “Force structure” is a telling policy domain documenting how a state prepares to act militarily, and how it plans to implement and actualize such actions. The German *Bundeswehr* is conceived as “alliance forces” (*Bündnisarmee*).¹²⁶ Neither in terms of overall force structure, logistics, deployment options nor mission definitions is it designed to act other than in larger international coalitions. German forces are not organized, staffed, or equipped either for rapid unilateral deployment, or for independent performance of all important military tasks. They were born a NATO daughter and that they have remained. Their equipment has mainly been oriented toward the *Bundeswehr*’s role within NATO. Germany has not attempted to arm comprehensively. It has no interest in major unilateral power projection capabilities such as intermediate- or long-range missiles, or aircraft carriers. Interests as expressed in the force structure itself, and its deployment options and mission definitions, are fully in accordance with the shared “never on our own” NRC element, and the responsibility, reliability, and continuity notions. Such interests and policies have formed and been formulated via the prescription and processual causal pathways according to international law and together with Germany’s allies.

During as after the Cold War, “the German *Bundeswehr* is to be employed abroad only within a multinational framework on the basis of a mandate of the United Nations and after thorough examination of each single case.”¹²⁷ The UN mandate ideal has been extended to NATO as tutor for German foreign involvement. It may be supplemented in the future by some collective EU action or within the OSCE frame. Until 1990, the *Bundeswehr* has carried out more than 120 humanitarian missions abroad. These missions, prescriptively informed by the “responsibility” notion, have included the shipment of medication, food and other support for refugees of floods, earthquakes, and other catastrophes.¹²⁸ Since 1990, the *Bundeswehr* has participated in NATO-led operations in former Yugoslavia, and has supported UNPROFOR and IFOR.¹²⁹ It has continued to support UN-led humanitarian missions in Cambodia, Rwanda, Somalia, Mozambique, and East Timor.¹³⁰

Via all three pathways, prescription, proscription, and process, Germany’s NRC strongly affects German preferences and policies

Sauder 1995, 136. Ole Wæver on French views on Europe: “For them political thinking has to be about the state, about the state as actor, about coherence and will.” Wæver 1990.

¹²⁶ Rühl 1999.

¹²⁷ Kreile 1996, 10, 10 fn. 43. Kreile draws on information from then German defense ministry *Staatssekretär* Jörg Schönbohm.

¹²⁸ See Sommer 2000, 14.

¹²⁹ For example Duffield 1999, 786-790.

¹³⁰ See von Randow and Stelzenmüller 2000.

regarding overall force structure, equipment and logistics, deployment options and mission definitions, and deployment itself. Equipping and staffing the forces for rapid unilateral deployment, and such deployment itself, are ruled out by its NRC's proscriptive effects. German policies in all of these areas spring from a view of self and one's role and purpose as a collectivity. They cannot be understood as mere results of power capabilities or domestic group interests. Nor do they result from external coercion.

In striking contrast to Germany, France's forces are comprehensively armed, corresponding to its residual world power NRC. French weapons include arms systems possessed only by the world's leading military powers. France has self-developed and produced an entire native nuclear triad, including nuclear submarines as its crown jewels, and aircraft carriers as similarly elevated, costly, and prestigious weapons systems. Befitting the prescriptive and processual inducements of all three NRC core components – independence, activism and (potential) presence – and in line with the “greatness” and “rank” notions, France kept during the second half of the twentieth century two aircraft carriers, *Clemenceau* and *Foch*. When the two had to be taken out of service around the turn of the century after problematically long periods of employment (*Clemenceau* some forty years, *Foch* slightly less), there was no political discussion regarding the assumption that France would replace them.

To build the new cutting-edge aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* took eleven years. Its costs amounted to some FF 20 billion (not including the costs for the airplanes that it would carry; the high costs are the reason that France has only replaced one of the two old aircraft carriers). The 40,000-ton ship, with a length of 260 and a width of 64 meters, will be staffed with some 2000 soldiers. It can carry forty Super-Entendard and Rafale combat aircraft, both French productions. It is, next to the American aircraft carriers, the only one that may, thanks to its nuclear propulsion, remain at sea for up to five years without interruption.¹³¹ Very appropriately, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* titles its report on the carrier's first test voyage: “Charles de Gaulle’ – approaching the USA.”¹³² Whatever options the new carrier opens up, whatever strategic and tactical considerations *Charles de Gaulle* furnishes, it also is a simple statement that France, if it so desires and decides, can alone and independently of others be powerfully present anyplace in the world within a short period of time: if France so wishes, there is not a square centimeter of land or sea on this globe whereto France could not project power, and which it could not attack with the

¹³¹ Compare *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 26 January 1999, 3; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23-24 January 1999, 7.

¹³² *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23-24 January 1999, 7.

aircraft that the new carrier can transport.

French forces are structured to provide deployment options and mission definitions to project power and military force unilaterally, independently, and without geographic limitations. They are designed to enable France's political leadership to strike rapidly and independently from others, (almost) anywhere. With all implications regarding logistics and equipment, France's NRC induces a processual interest and policies fostering the capacity to act independently, and to safeguard the option to act independently. Unlike Germany's, France's NRC does not proscribe interests and policies toward unilateral and independent international action that includes military force. Instead, it prescribes such interests and policies. It proscribes policies that would undermine this capacity.

During the Cold War, French troops have not been integrated into NATO's doctrine of "forward defense" (i.e. attempting to stop a Warsaw Pact attack at the German-German border). Instead, France operated with contingency plans that entailed a concept of "two battles." This meant that France might only have participated in the European theater after NATO's forward defense had already collapsed and French territory was immediately threatened. The "two battles concept," still not yet fully buried by the mid-1980s, did not necessarily exclude French support for, most notably, Germany and thus indirectly for NATO. But there was no such automatism. Fourth and Fifth Republic France has regularly taken recourse to the unilateral deployment of military force as a matter of course if it saw fit, such as in the Central African Republic (1967-1969) and in Chad (1968-1971). It has also fought two large colonial wars since 1945, Indo-China (1946-1954) and Algeria (1954-1962). Since 1990 it has participated in collective military operations and often taken over most violent, dangerous, and demanding military operations (e.g. Sarajevo).

Nuclear Striking Force

The two countries' postures toward a native nuclear striking force (including deterrence and deployment doctrine) is perhaps paradigmatic of the effects of fundamentally divergent NRCs in engendering radically different interests and policies. For France it is normal, natural, and intuitively plausible to possess a nuclear force, and to independently formulate a deterrence and deployment doctrine for it. For Germany it is just as normal, natural, and intuitive *not* to have nuclear arms. In both countries, these normalities are not politicized. If France is obsessed with its *force de frappe*, as some observers occasionally suggest, Germany is obsessed with its nuclear pacifism.

The "naturalness" of both normalities is particularly striking, as, especially during the Cold War, it was all but evident that either nuclear stance would increase the two countries' security. Whether France's

independent nuclear force, including deterrence doctrine, increased France's security (or even decreased it) has been a hotly debated issue among nuclear strategists.¹³³ Conversely, the credibility problems of NATO-US's extended deterrence covering West Germany ("risking New York for Berlin?") was one of the lasting strenuous transatlantic German-American Cold War issues. The NRC-induced nuclear positions have brought about frictions and difficulties in the Franco-German relationship. On the one hand, the wider ramifications of the nuclear issue, important in co-defining each state's relationship with NATO, has been a persistent obstacle for a more substantive moving together in security and defense matters between the two states. On the other hand, France's pre-strategic (in NATO parlance: tactical) doctrine of "ultimate warning" (*ultime avertissement*) has diametrically opposed Germany's interest in deferring the use of nuclear weapons as long as possible. Moreover, the French pre-strategic nuclear weapons (Pluto, then Hadès) were of such a range that, if fired eastward, they would have detonated on German territory. The issue accompanied France and Germany until the Cold War's end.

France had during the Cold War built for itself a complete "nuclear triad" consisting of missiles, nuclear submarines, and airplanes that can carry nuclear warheads. Possession and doctrinal assignment originate in the prescriptive and processual effects of its NRC's independence component, and its "greatness" and "rank" notions.¹³⁴ For Rouget it is evident that interests in the national nuclear military capacity derive from the notion of "independence."¹³⁵ That notion generates, Karl Feldmeyer spells out, the need for French interests and policies to be able to defend itself or to deter third parties from attacking France independently from others – as, for example, then Defense Minister Chevènement repeatedly underlined.¹³⁶ "Regarding our nuclear forces," Foreign Minister Roland Dumas clarifies, "their independence rules out considering them as a subgroup of the American ones."¹³⁷ Perhaps General Ailleret's 1967 nuclear deterrence doctrine "in all directions"¹³⁸ constitutes the somewhat capricious culmination of France's nuclear policies – hardly explainable by threat imbalances "from all directions." Scott Sagan finds the same causes at work: "The repeated Gaullist declarations that French nuclear weapons should have world-wide capabilities and must be aimed in all directions (*tous azimut*) are seen, not as the product of security threats that came from all directions, but rather because only such a policy could be logically consistent with

¹³³ Compare, for example, Leimbacher 1992, 35, 212-230. See also Sagan 1996/97, 76-82.

¹³⁴ For congruent evidence, see Sagan 1996/97, 76-82.

¹³⁵ See Rouget 1989, 69.

¹³⁶ See Feldmeyer 1988.

¹³⁷ Dumas 1986, D 239.

¹³⁸ See Clauß and Krafft 1988.

global *grandeur* and independence.”¹³⁹ Urs Leimbacher identifies a deeply political dimension in France’s defense doctrine: “It embodies a reason of state (*Staatszweck*).”¹⁴⁰

During the same time, Germany has not considered the idea of acquiring its own nuclear arms. The reasons for not doing so are not that they had been externally denied to the state, or been considered too resource-demanding at home. Its NRC’s proscriptive effects have ruled out interests in such forces and made acquisition policies barely conceivable.¹⁴¹ The persistence of French and German nuclear attitudes after the end of the Cold War and Germany’s second unification strengthens the argument. As has been the case before, the German interest not to have nuclear arms remains uncontested today. Assembling a native nuclear arsenal remains inconceivable across the German political spectrum. Some speculations in American academia notwithstanding, there is no evidence whatsoever that Germany is in the process of changing its stance toward nuclear weapons. The reason seems trivial: nobody within Germany *wants* a change in policy. France’s basic nuclear orientations have changed just as little. Two states geographically so close and so similar in many ways have quite deviating interests regarding a native nuclear striking force. Their NRCs explain the variation.

Arms Procurement, Arms Production, Arms Industry

French and German NRCs also shape their arms procurement and production policies, and the two states’ relations to their arms industries. France has striven to be able to self-supply its forces with the entire range of weapons systems it sees fit for a power with ambitions of a global presence. That undertaking has included indigenous development and production of such highly sophisticated and demanding systems as a nuclear triad and aircraft carriers. France’s arms procurement and production policies are little contested domestically. They result from France’s NRC core components and notions along the prescriptive causal pathway. Dagmar Trefz plainly concludes that French arms procurement and production is a function of its “independence” propensity.¹⁴² Walther Stütze elaborates that this “independence self-understanding” in particular sparks France’s interest to have at its disposal an armament industry that is independent from the United States.¹⁴³ “As a result of de

¹³⁹ Sagan 1996/97, 79, emphases in the original.

¹⁴⁰ Leimbacher 1992, 212.

¹⁴¹ Likewise, the state has renounced the production, storage, and use of biological and chemical weapons. Resulting from its NRC’s proscriptive effects, it does not want them. Its policies are made accordingly. This is not to argue against possible international-external norms against such weapons, or that such norms would be causally ineffective. See Price 1997; Price and Tannenwald 1996. But the country would have no interests in producing, storing, or using such weapons even in the absence of such international norms.

¹⁴² Trefz 1989, 98-99.

¹⁴³ Stütze 1983.

Gaule's defense doctrine aiming at independence," Gerald Braunberger notes elementary differences between French and German interests and priorities, "France owns an armament industry that can manufacture from aircraft carriers, nuclear warheads, combat airplanes, tanks, heavy artillery, almost all military equipment up to the last screw in national production."¹⁴⁴ Accordingly, the French armament industry has been, with differing legal statuses, state-owned or state-controlled. Some weapons factories have been state-owned since the eighteenth century. France has only recently begun to privatize parts of its arms industry.

The contrast with German interests and policies is again striking. As an NRC-induced processual interest, buying abroad, producing under license, or co-developing and producing with "partners" or "friends" is not only common practice, but taken as something generally beneficial. There is no attempt to cover the entire spectrum of modern arms with domestic products. Questions of technological independence and symbolic pride in the capability to produce any or certain weapon systems, so important for France, are German non-issues. Rather, the opposite tends to be the case: sensing apparent tendencies toward too much military-technological unilateralism and comprehensive arming, not only within Germany but within the group of Germany's military partners at large, a Bonn-based research group warns that the "all-around arming of single partner countries is in the first place a sign of mistrust that urgently needs to be overcome."¹⁴⁵ Arms manufacturing may not exactly be a repressed branch of German industrial prowess. Yet, the arms industry also does not enjoy much legitimacy with its particularistic interests, either within the government, or within the population at large. "In particular," Leimbacher points out, "Bonn does not exercise public industrial- or technology policies through the arms industry."¹⁴⁶ "A maximum of defense-industrial self-sufficiency (and) autarky remains to the French, what it has not been to the Germans," David Haglund summarizes, "a virtue, even if an unattainable one in practice."¹⁴⁷

Arms Export

French and German self-defined public arms export policies differ. Since the two states have co-developed and produced a number of arms systems, arms export issues have frequently surfaced and caused irritations. When it comes to selling the joint products abroad, their NRC-induced interests clash frequently. With respect to a major Franco-German combat helicopter project under way, for example, and France

¹⁴⁴ Braunberger 1997. This does not necessarily rule out shopping abroad. For example, France has compromised NRC impulses when it perceived the tensions between NRC demands and costs or economic-industrial inefficiency as prohibitive.

¹⁴⁵ SALSS 1985, 50.

¹⁴⁶ Leimbacher 1992, 91.

¹⁴⁷ Haglund 1991, 161.

pushing its interest in technical properties that would make the helicopter more marketable abroad, CDU armament expert Willy Wimmer once remarked without attempting to hide his deprecation: “The French only fly what also can fly in the South American pampas.”¹⁴⁸

The responsibility notion of Germany’s civilian power NRC exerts powerful proscriptive and processual impact on the state’s restrictive arms export policies. It implies a sense of accountability for what purposes and by whom the arms it has produced will be employed. Germany does not export arms into “tension areas” (*Spannungsgesbiete*), to regimes whose human rights records it deems unsatisfactory or questionable, to destinations where it can reasonably be expected that German arms may be utilized in transgression of international law, or, finally, to governments which may use the arms against its own people. Germany does not hesitate to export arms to stable democracies with impeccable human rights records such as its “partners and friends” within the EU and NATO and a number of other states. Not surprisingly, there is a large gray area where it is not quickly and intuitively evident whether or not to export. Whether responsibility permits in specific cases to export or not is a regularly recurrent issue in German domestic politics. Borderline cases are difficult political issues which regularly instigate spirited domestic political debate. They are part of a German political normality. For example, the issue whether German Leopard-2 tanks could be sold to Turkey was a fierce political issue that for the first time threatened the continuation of the SPD-Green coalition after two years in power, illustrating the processual effect toward a slow incrementalist mode of interest formation and policy formulation.¹⁴⁹

Whereas for Germany exporting arms is a highly sensitive matter, for France, with no proscriptive NRC forces at work, selling arms is an acceptable business practice. If there is an NRC effect on the matter, arms sales as policies are welcomed, as they display the nation’s technological and industrial capability. The international sale of homemade arms confirms the competitiveness of French products on world markets. Selling arms is an intuitively plausible interest for an active-independent collectivity with ambitions of global presence. Just as in Germany there is a broad consensus regarding the normality of restrictive handling of arms exports, in France there is a broad consensus that selling arms abroad is a normal and legitimate source of income. Moreover, the practice often directly benefits the public budget, as most of the defense industry has been publicly owned or controlled.

In France, the arms industry has traditionally played an important

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Hoffmann 1987.

¹⁴⁹ Although a NATO partner, Turkey is a problematic export destination for German arms because of Turkey’s human rights record and its unresolved Kurdish minority problems.

and respected role. It belongs, Gerhard Bläske records, “next to agriculture and tourism, to the most important providers of foreign currency.”¹⁵⁰ Unlike Germany, France sells to whomever pays. Behind the United States and Great Britain, it has ranked the world’s third largest exporter of arms and military goods. In 1997 it sold abroad in a volume of some 30 billion French francs.¹⁵¹ Arms sales are an important contribution to France’s ability to keep up the comprehensive armament-related components of its domestic industrial structure.¹⁵² French customers have included not only regimes with – for German standards – unacceptable human rights records and states in “tension areas,” but also states charged and treated as international outlaws or “rogue states” – an expression of independence and autonomy of decision of its own kind.¹⁵³

V. Concluding Remarks

National role conceptions are nominal variables, coded by empirically extracting the major elements and notions that make them up. The differences between the French and German NRCs are deep. Their NRCs’ vocabularies underscore this variation in substance. In this sense, Picht is correct in his statement, quoted above, that the Carolingian inheritors in many respects speak different languages. Yet, they do live in the same world. Their dissimilar self-understandings and views of their proper role and purpose in international affairs are a part of it.

NRCs shape national interests and foreign policies. They are internal reference systems which affect what states want and do, and what they do not want and do not do; they prescribe, proscribe, and induce certain processual preferences. Their dissimilar NRCs inform variant, often incompatible and conflicting, French and German security, defense, and armament policies. These policies are “the product of an entirety of contradictory reflections emanating from both sides of the Rhine on the role and the ‘rank’ of France and of Germany.”¹⁵⁴

NRC-induced interests and policies are often taken as normal, natural, and intuitive within the respective country, as are the substance and notions of the respective NRCs themselves. “That which is taken for granted” is what culture is all about, Elizabeth Kier remarks.¹⁵⁵ Within Germany, much of Germany’s proper role and purpose in the world, and what follows therefrom for German interests and policies, is taken for granted. Within France, much of France’s proper role and purpose in the

¹⁵⁰ Bläske 1998.

¹⁵¹ See Forster 1998, 4.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Or to states combining all of these characteristics. France has, for example, sold to Libya. Forster 1998, 4.

¹⁵⁴ Stark 1993/94, 996.

¹⁵⁵ Kier 1997, 36.

world, and what follows therefrom for French interests and policies, is taken for granted. For most Germans and French, neither is amazing and neither is strange. That the same cannot often be said when French and Germans look at each other's views of role and purpose with their consequences for their respective goals and actions, is not a new finding. Elsewhere, other standards of what is normal are normal.

Two issues remain to be addressed. The first concerns NRCs in relation to other factors of national interest and foreign policy. The second refers to the prospects of endurance and change of the French and German NRCs and their effects.

NRCs among Other Determinants of Interest and Policy

How do NRCs relate to other factors of national interest and foreign policy, whether constructivist or rationalist? NRCs are domestic social-structural explanatory factors. Employed by themselves, as in this paper, they may provide answers to a certain set of political and historical analytic problems. Searching their scope conditions and areas of applicability, one may continue testing "how much mileage" one can get out of NRCs properly coded, how much explanatory leverage they provide, and where they reach their limits.

NRCs are an internal element of state and national identity. Yet, they do not exhaust identity. On the one hand, there are other internal-domestic features, most notably institutional characteristics of the political system. They, too, may condition interests, but also regulate the access of organized society's interests to political power centers – and are an important aspect of state identity.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, there are external-relational identity attributes which affect interests and policies.¹⁵⁷ In this way, NRCs can be viewed as part of a constructivist-institutionalist research agenda. As such, they may be combined with other factors favored by such approaches, either domestic or external-relational-systemic. Although a major component of identity, NRCs alone cannot provide complete explanations of national interests and foreign policies.

NRCs' possible relation to variables favored by rationalist theories of international relations or foreign policy are not uniform. In some respects, NRCs can be thought of as complementary with realist theories. Regarding structural realism,¹⁵⁸ they might mediate states' responses to similar systemic pressures, or specify policies-as-answers to external

¹⁵⁶ Here the historical institutionalist literature figures in prominently. For standard works, see Hall 1986; Katzenstein 1978; Katzenstein 1985. For overviews and discussions, see Hall and Taylor 1996; Krasner 1984; Thelen and Steinmo 1992.

¹⁵⁷ This has been the focus of one major branch of constructivism, notably Finnemore 1996; Katzenstein 1997b; Klotz 1995; Reus-Smit 1999; Ruggie 1986; Wendt 1999.

¹⁵⁸ Waltz 1979.

stimuli. Regarding classic and “state-centric” realisms, they might contribute to a better understanding of the kinds of goals, types of ambitions, and purposes of projections to which available power resources are deployed.¹⁵⁹ However, if NRC-induced interests and policies contradict those derived from realist theories, the two approaches will offer competitive explanations to be adjudicated empirically. The same will be generally the case if NRC work is an integrative part of a more comprehensive constructivist-institutionalist research program, which would operate with another ontology and another conceptualization of the international sphere.

Although they might causally push in the same direction, NRC and inside-out liberal explanations are often competitive: here shared role-purpose understandings, there particularistic interests of interest groups, firms, individuals approaching their government.¹⁶⁰ In such instances, features of the political system or societal organization might provide intermediary variables determining which matters more and which less. But there are other ways, too, to think of the connection between NRC and liberal perspectives. For example, the one may be a frame for the other: NRCs might set a frame and define limits and borders for the legitimacy of particularistic interests once entering the political machinery. Alternatively, NRCs might be influential when domestic groups develop their interests in the first place. Or NRC and liberal modes of argument might be intricately intertwined in other ways.

With respect to neoliberal institutionalism,¹⁶¹ NRCs could contribute to defining interests and efficiencies to be pursued internationally, either alone or as part of a theory of domestic politics. In this case, what just has been said about inside-out liberalism applies. Which of these relationships pertains, depends on the research problem or analytic focus. These conceivable relations among factor groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive and defy a general answer. One must learn about them through detailed empirical study, not abstract de-historicized reasoning. In the absence of a general assessment, the relationship must be decided pragmatically on a case-by-case basis.

Endurance, Change, Transformation

How likely is it that the French and German post-war role conceptions and their resulting effects will persist in the time ahead? Fairly stable between the late 1950s and the mid-1990s, as this article has held, to what degree are they in a process of change at the turn of the century? None of the French NRC’s core components appears to alter fundamentally. Nor do the role’s key notions appear to mutate or

¹⁵⁹ Gilpin 1968; Kindleberger 1976; Zakaria 1998.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, Frieden and Rogowski 1996; Moravcsik 1997; Moravcsik 1998.

¹⁶¹ Keohane 1984; Keohane 1989b.

disappear. However, although NRCs help to define plausible fund allocation and cost calculation, conflicts between NRC and available resources keep France from fully translating domestically shared purpose into foreign policy. This tension might bear the seeds of change. For France, directing power and channeling its projection is also a question of how much of its own ambitious role's costly demands it is willing to afford. The allocation of resources toward the ends of an exigent NRC will remain a difficult French political issue. As few indications suggest that France's NRC will radically transform in the near future, its enormous costs continue to torment the viability of the role itself.¹⁶²

For Germany, realizing its NRC's exigencies is hardly confined by capability scarcity. Yet, the German case is intricate.¹⁶³ The "never on our own" and "legal framing" NRC elements, as I have described them, remain at the center of German self-comprehension. But especially in the wake of the atrocities in Bosnia and Kosovo, German understandings with respect to the admissible and appropriate exercise of military force, painfully and grudgingly, appear to evolve. The modification seems accompanied by embracing a somewhat more active role in international affairs, and, as some observers perceive, an at times more assertive style. Furthermore, Germany's proper international security role now appears more contested in domestic politics than it has been for some time.

Two factors in particular might foster German NRC adaptations in the medium term. The first concerns the demands by those states with which Germany is most closely tied. Perhaps it is an irony of Europe's history that it is now repeatedly Germany's "partners and friends," often France, who push Germany to take on "more international responsibility," to play a more "active" part internationally, to modify some of its civilian power elements, or to bend their effects. The second factor is ongoing generational changes within Germany with respect to key public positions. In addition, the events and repercussions of September 11 could have catalytic effects on German role modification. These events have shaken German self-understanding, more than that of others.

Still, even if Germany adapts its attitudes toward the use of military force in some situations and takes on a more active international role, the question remains: in which cases, under what conditions, and to what ends. World War II and the Holocaust are likely to remain constitutive of how Germans think of themselves and their role in the world. The political debates at the turn of the century revolve around what these historical legacies mean, and what they imply for Germany in the international arena today. How and to what degree these factors will

¹⁶² For both aspects, see Hoffmann 2000; Védérine 2001.

¹⁶³ For recent assessments, see Harnisch and Maull 2001; Rittberger 2001; Webber 2001.

modify the German NRC, and whether seemingly ongoing adaptations are harbingers of deeper transformations, is as difficult to predict as it is important to follow. However, the comparative perspective of these considerations highlights that the roots of possible NRC change can be quite disparate.

In the wake of dissimilar historical experiences and in light of different potential impulses of change, at the beginning of a new century both French and Germans are searching for the selves of their collectivities and pondering the proper roles of these collectivities in Europe and the world. “Continuity *or* change,” both with respect to self-view and its expression in policy, might not be the most appropriate way to frame the issue. Rather “continuity *within* change” or “change *within* continuity,” or perhaps “legacy-guided change” seem more fruitful ways of thinking about such processes of self-(re)definition with behavioral implications. If NRC elements in one or both countries indeed are in the course of mutation, the respective NRC’s substance of the past forty years will strongly condition these processes. And these processes will take time. This judgment leads one to expect continued differences in French and German foreign policies, as well as frictions between the two. However, depending on the direction of change, potential transformations of one or both NRCs might also make the bilateral Franco-German relationship less problematic. Should Germany’s self-view turn less “civil” or France’s turn less “world power,” tensions and misunderstandings between the two might very well diminish, both in frequency and intensity.

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