Germany:
The Dominant Power in Europe
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Source: Palmer 2004
Population: 
82,431,390 (July 2005 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: 
78.65 years (total population) 
75.66 years (men) 
81.81 years (women) (2005 est.)

Literacy: 
99 percent of people age 15 and over can read and write 
(1999 estimate)

Capital: 
Berlin

Per capita income: 
$28,700 (2004 est.)
Germany in Historical Perspective

Source: Palmer 2004
The First Reich (936-1870)

- Germany emerged upon the breakup of Charlemagne’s empire around 843 A.D. when Otto the Great (936-973) became the ruler of many German-speaking areas in Central Europe. This became known as the Holy Roman Empire and The First Reich, or empire, a “loose confederation of tribes and principalities.” By the end of the 13th century, Otto’s empire had fragmented into hundreds of city-states and principalities. Germany remained fragmented, agrarian and non-industrialized well into the 18th century. It developed no large, politically – conscious middle class or national institutions. Napoleon’s invasion in 1806 forced smaller German city-states to merge with larger neighbors, but Germany did not completely unify until after the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 when Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and a confederation of German states defeated France. Prussia’s dominance left its smaller allies no choice but to integrate into a German state thus creating The Second Reich.  

Source: Palmer 2004
The Second Reich

During the Second Reich (1871-1918), Germany rapidly industrialized closing the gap with Britain and France. Industrialization caused urbanization and greatly expanded the middle and working classes. The landed nobility, industrialists and generals continued to dominate Germany’s politics. German nationalism swept the middle class – whose fortunes had grown along with industrialization – and most workers. World War I, a war launched by Kaiser Wilhelm II to establish German supremacy in Europe, resulted in a German defeat. The Kaiser abdicated and proclaimed a republic so that Germany would be in a stronger position to negotiate a “just peace.” The peace treaty was anything but just and its terms were so harsh it sowed the seeds for World War II. Germany surrendered the French provinces of Alsace-Lorraine that it had seized in 1871 – a loss of 15 percent of its arable land and ten percent of its population. Germany lost all of its foreign colonies, much of its merchant navy and railway stock as well as was forced to pay the victors billions of dollars in reparations. Politics was characterized by accusations and recriminations between liberal politicians and the military. Meanwhile, terrible labor conditions fed the rise of Communist movements. 

Source: Palmer 2004
“Offering Germany little, and offering even that too late.”

– Allan Nevins, in *Current History*, May 1935, p. 178

Source: Palmer 2004
The Weimar Republic (1919-1933)

- The 1919 Constitution, drafted by delegates whose goal was to preclude a return to power of Germany’s military-industrial elite. The structure they created resulted in gridlock between the president and prime minister. The bicameral legislature – whose lower house (Reichstag) was elected by proportional representation – giving all political groups a voice. This produced a government unable to make decisions in a crisis and a lower house – whose members elected the prime minister – subject to extremist takeover. The world depression resulted in a Germany hit with a near 50 percent unemployment rate, hyperinflation and the increasing popularity of two extremist parties – the Nazis and the Communists. By 1932, the center had caved in. The Nazis had become the largest party in the Reichstag with the Communists their largest opponents. Pitched battles between the two groups pushed Germany to the brink of civil war. **The Weimar experience suggests that without a population dedicated to democratic principles, written documents cannot guarantee the practice of democracy.** Weimar also tells us that governments must be able to rule.

Source: Palmer 2004
Hitler and the Third Reich
(1933-1945)

This section highlights major reasons for Hitler’s rise to power. The Nazi, or National Socialist party, founded in Munich in 1919 was just one of a multitude of fringe parties appealing to those on the margins of society. Without the 1930 economic collapse, it probably would have remained so. German social and economic institutions were disintegrating and the government losing its ability to rule. Germans sought a charismatic ruler — a leader whose personality exhibits superhuman qualities, or at least exceptional powers or qualities (Max Weber) — to lead them to salvation. Although the Hitler of 1920 bore little resemblance to Weber’s above definition, the Nazi party became increasingly attractive especially to the “old and new” middle classes as Germany’s economic situation grew worse. Hitler also appealed to those who feared a Communist revolution or civil war — members of the middle class and the old aristocratic political elite who wrongly thought they could use Hitler but then get rid of him when the crisis was over.

Source: Palmer 2004
Hitler and the Third Reich
(1933-1945)

• In 1933, Hitler won the elections with 51% of the vote and was declared chancellor. The Communists were destroyed, the Third Reich born, and Hitler transformed Germany into an aggressive military power that sought to conquer the world. Nazism or Fascism became a dominant, modern political philosophy. Fascism, based on the “survival of the fittest,” was a “fanatical blend of racism, extreme nationalism and paranoia.” The Germans were the master race created for world domination. Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany’s economic decline. For Germany to recover, Hitler preached, the Jews and anyone else who might pollute the genes of the master race must be eliminated.

Source: Palmer 2004
“Charisma” is “a certain quality of an individual’s personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities.”

– Max Weber, 1947

Source: Palmer 2004
“Fascism” is a “fanatical blend of racism, nationalism and paranoia.”

Source: Palmer 2004
The Two Germany’s (1945-1989)

• Upon Germany’s military defeat in 1945, the state was divided into four sectors: American, British, French and Russian - each occupied by a victorious army. Allied wartime unity soon collapsed. In 1948 Germany was divided into two separate countries: the German Democratic Republic in the East and the Federal Republic of Germany in the West. A constitutional convention merged the American, British and French zones into a single West Germany. The delegates decided they would draft a “Basic Law” rather than a formal constitution, a document that did not recognize the divided state. The Basic Law was founded on democratic principles – in line with views of the three western occupying powers. West Germany was demilitarized, the Nazis allowed no influence, and the small town of Bonn – far away from imperial, regal and symbolic Berlin – was selected as the temporary capital.

Source: Palmer 2004
The Two Germany’s (1945-1989)

- West Germany became democratic and wealthy. East Germany under Communism remained poor. Even though East and West Germany had been divided into two separate countries, the western allies continued to occupy their sectors of Berlin deep in East Germany’s heart. In 1961 to stem increasing East German defections to the West, the Communists erected the Berlin Wall a giant brick fence around the western enclave. In 1989 as the Soviet Union began to crumble, East Berliners smashed the wall en masse and the East German regime collapsed. For the Soviet Union it symbolized the end to Communism in Europe. For the West and West Germany it meant a whole new Europe as the rapid reunification of the two parts become inevitable. The agreement was signed October 3, 1990 and the East –agreeing to the Basic Law and all West German social and economic legislation - was absorbed into the West.

Source: Palmer 2004
The Incomplete Reunification (1991- )

- Although most West Germans understood economic sacrifices would be needed for integration to occur, none realized how badly the East German infrastructure had decayed or how much it would cost them to rebuild. Over time, this created resentment and the feeling that East Germans did not “pull their weight.” An economic recession made things worse. East Germans – for their part – lost hundreds of thousands of jobs as the former Communist economy was made more efficient by capitalism. Today, 15 years and $1.52 trillion later, unemployment in the West hovers around ten percent and in the East at 16 percent. The rebuilding is incomplete.

Source: Palmer 2004
Post-War Political Institutions were designed to prevent a return to authoritarianism.

Source: Palmer 2004
The Basic Law

- The Basic Law (Constitution) was written to avoid mistakes of the past. The goal: effective leadership but still responsive to the people. This was done through a bicameral parliamentary democracy with the chancellor chosen by the Bundestag (lower house) whose members were elected directly by the people. The president would be largely symbolic. Further, Germany would be a federation. Laws that affected the Lander (or states) not only needed Bundesrat (upper house) approval but they were also administered by the Lander. Bundesrat members were chosen by the states. Laws enacted by the federal government were subject to approval by a “Supreme” Constitutional Court – a further check on the system.

Source: Palmer 2004
“Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.”

– Reinhold Niebuhr, from *Children of Light and Children of Darkness*, foreward, (1944)
Elections and Politics in Germany

• Bundestag members are elected through a complex two-ballot system held on the same day and designed to elicit the best of both single-member-district and proportional representation systems. This “personalized proportional” system allows voters to express their choices in terms of individual candidate personalities and the political party. (See Palmer p. 185 for details). To eliminate fringe parties, a party must garner at least five percent of the popular vote to be eligible for a Bundestag seat. The party leadership orders the names on the ballot – a way to keep members in line.

Source: Palmer 2004
Executive Power in Germany

• The chancellor is German’s chief executive and equivalent to the British Prime Minister. The president is primarily symbolic. As in the UK, the chancellor and his cabinet are called the Government. The government can only be removed as a whole by a “no confidence” vote in the Bundestag. The chancellor sets overall policy direction. Although the chancellor cannot micromanage daily affairs of the ministries, he or she can override ministerial decisions that are contradictory to overall guidelines. The Chancellor’s power is strengthened by 1) support of a 400 person staff established to keep tabs on the various ministries, 2) his or her position as head of the majority party; 3) the right to determine where individual candidates appear numerically on electoral lists, and 4) his or her position as focal point for the media.

Source: Palmer 2004
• The President’s political roles are pro forma, but his or her moral role can be formidable. Often a respected elder statesman, the president is elected for a five year term of no more than two terms by a combined vote of all federal and lander parliamentary representatives.

Source: Palmer 2004
• The Bundestag (Lower House) and Bundesrat (Upper House) share legislative powers.

Source: Palmer 2004
The Bundestag

The Bundestag is German politics’ heart and is comprised of 672 members directly elected by the voters. The deputies elect the chancellor who has far greater access to information than do other members. Elections must be held within a four-year period – most governments, but not all, run the four-year cycle. A positive vote-of-no-confidence can cause a government to fall, but new elections must take place within 14 days meaning the country cannot be left with no government for long. No-confidence votes occur rarely in German politics. The Bundestag employs the British “Question Hour” practice as well as has instituted “The Current Hour” which allows deputies to force the government to answer questions on particularly important issues.

Source: Palmer 2004
The Bundestag

• The Bundestag’s primary task is legislation; all bills require majority vote in the Bundestag before becoming law. Government bills usually pass easily because of strong parliamentary party (Fraktionen) cohesion. Representation of local interests are important to German voters, but so too are party ones. Leadership control of party finances helps enforce party discipline because elections are expensive. The government subsidizes the process in accordance with each party’s electoral successes and these subsidies. These subsidies are also controlled by the party leadership. Pressure groups also contribute – but the party leaders control those funds, too. German political values support the tradition of a strong chancellor.

Source: Palmer 2004
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Bundestag (Lower House)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Bundesrat (Upper House)</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ 672 members</td>
<td>■ 69 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Elected by German population</td>
<td>■ Selected by Land governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Up to four-year terms</td>
<td>■ Provides German Landers with active voice in federal policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Members elect chancellor</td>
<td>■ Majority vote required for passage of legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Power of vote of no confidence legislation</td>
<td>■ Considers most federal legislation not directly related to foreign policy and national defense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Palmer 2004
The Bundesrat

- The Bundesrat gives the German Lander, or states, an important voice in national policy-making. Its 69-members are chosen by the Land governments. A majority vote in the Bundesrat is needed to approve legislation that impinges upon Lander prerogatives, e.g. education, police, local finance, most transportation issues, land use, and boundary disputes between Lander. So are national emergencies and amendments to the Basic Law. Bundesrat opposition to a bill can be overridden by an absolute majority or two-thirds majority vote in the Bundestag depending on circumstances. Powers between the Lander and the federal government are fluid but those of the land governments have increased over the past forty years due primarily to a liberal Constitutional Court that holds Lander responsible for administering federal laws including the collection of taxes and joint responsibility in several areas. About 60 percent of federal legislation requires Bundesrat approval. Members are divided among the Lander according to population from six seats for the most populous to three for the smallest. Many Bundesrat members also are politically powerful Lander ministers. Regardless, the Land governments tell their Bundesrat appointees how to vote. The relationships between the Bundesrat and Bundestag members are generally cordial. They often work together to shape legislation acceptable to both. Nevertheless, more conflict occurs when the two are controlled by different political parties.

Source: Palmer 2004
The Constitutional Court, a separate branch of government with its own budget, operates along U.S. Supreme Court lines and has power to declare both federal and Land laws unconstitutional, interpret the Basic Law, settle disputes between the Lander and those between the Lander and the federal government and guarantee civil rights included in the Basic Law. In addition, “the constitutional court protects the constitution and democratic character of the German state.” As such the court can declare non-democratic parties unconstitutional. The Bundestag and Bundesrat select the court’s 16 members in equal proportion. One chamber specializes in civil rights, the other in constitutionality of legislation and relations between parts of the government.

Source: Palmer 2004
Law and Politics: The Federal Constitutional Court and the Judicial System

• The Constitutional Court has increased in importance - normally protecting the government from challenges to its interpretations of the Basic Law. Cases have involved German ratification of the EU Maastricht Treaty, Germany’s agreement to send peacekeeping troops to the Balkans, untangling of East German property rights after unification, and immigration issues.

• The judiciary comes under Lander administration and adjudicates both Lander and federal law - a uniform law code that does not vary from state to state. The system is efficient, inexpensive and not complex. It also employs – on a per capita basis – nine times more judges than in the U.S.

Source: Palmer 2004
Bureaucracy and Politics

- The German civil service is efficient, precise and dedicated as it was under Bismarck and Hitler. The bureaucracy provides high quality service. Senior bureaucrats – acting upon broad Governmental policy guidelines – work out the details. They are respected for their expertise and are consulted regularly by the political leadership. German bureaucrats loath abrupt change because it disrupts order and efficiency: they are not risk takers. The problem is that the bureaucracy’s conservative nature makes it a poor candidate for providing creative solutions to Germany’s increasing problems. This inadequacy is partially addressed through independent planning staffs.

Source: Palmer 2004
The Actors: Elites, Parties, Groups and Citizens

Source: Palmer 2004
Elites

• Long a hallmark of German politics, elites made policy, bureaucrats implemented it and the people obeyed it. But today’s political elite differs markedly from that of Bismarck and Hitler because: 1) its’ members’ demonstrate a strong, unwavering democratic commitment even though German political leaders are strong individuals who traditionally dominate the political process; and 2) power is distributed among a variety of institutions – federal and state, parties – two major and various minor - and numerous pressure groups. Further, German politicians normally spend lengthy apprenticeships - starting at the Land level - where they first need to demonstrate competency and party loyalty before rising to national positions.

Source: Palmer 2004
Political Parties

- The two large **German “catch-all” political parties** are the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Together they receive over 75% of the vote and dominate both federal and Land elections. Normally, one or the other forms a government in coalition with one of Germany’s smaller parties to obtain an absolute majority in the Bundestag. The two-second tier parties – ones that always receive five percent or more of the vote and seats in the Bundestag – are the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the Greens. Until 1998, the FDP performed the balancing role, but with SPD victories in 1998 and 2002 the Greens became the SPD’s coalition partner of choice. The smaller Communist party and a group of neo-Nazi parties attract the political extremist fringes, but are confined to the sidelines. The Democratic Socialists, East Germany’s former Communist Party is particularly strong in the eastern Landers - enough so to obtain seats in the Bundestag and Land parliaments. The neo-Nazis have never obtained enough votes to qualify for the Bundestag. Rallies of some neo-Nazis are banned and the Constitutional Court could ban all anti-democratic, extremist parties – but has yet to do so. Overall German political parties are strongly cohesive and their members only vote their “conscience” on “free vote” issues.

Source: Palmer 2004
The Christian Democratic Union (CDU)’s Bavarian counterpart is called the Christian Social Union (CSU). The CDU began as a coalition of centrists committed to liberal democracy in the late 1940s. The term Christian was chosen to appeal to both Catholic and Protestant voters as well as to differentiate the party from its anti-religious, leftist counterparts. The CDU, in coalition with the FDP, has governed post World War II Germany for much of its existence. CDU’s free enterprise stance, the strong leadership of its first chancellor Conrad Adenauer, its support for participation in a unified Europe and NATO as well as for rapid reunification of the two Germanys in 1989 under then chancellor Helmut Kohl makes the CDU the party of the center right. Its supporters foremost come from the business community, practicing Catholics, women, older voters and residents of small cities and rural areas. But the CDU also tries to accommodate Protestants and labor. The CDU lost in 1998 thanks to the spiraling costs of reunification, high unemployment and a massive fundraising scandal. Angela Merkel, an East German, leads the party into the September 18, 2005 “snap” elections. In 2005-2009 Germany was governed by grand coalition of CDU and SPD. In 2009 CDU won elections again and governs in coalition with FDP.
Political Parties

• The Social Democratic Party (SPD) began during the Second Reich as a democratic Marxist Party somewhat less radical than the Communists. The party lost the first post World War II election because of its anti-religious stance and voter fears of its Marxist stance. In the wake of disastrous election results in 1957, the SPD dropped its ideological purity, its calls for nationalization of industry and substituted a balance between economic growth and social welfare. The SPD supported NATO membership and argued that socialism and Catholicism were compatible. An uneasy and ungainly grand governing coalition with the CDU lasted from 1966-69, then the SPD ruled Germany for the next 16 years (1969-1985). Although labor was given a greater role in “corporate decision-making,” business prospered under the SPD. The SPD came to power again in 1998 in coalition with the Greens with its “kinder, but gentler” or new left approach to government. Unemployment, however, remains high, the economy has weakened, and East Germany’s economic integration remains a dream. In 2004, chancellor Gerhard Schroeder lost the SPD chairmanship; and the coming elections finds the party divided. SPD electoral support comes from younger, urban Germans, Protestants as well as union members - particularly secular ones – although the unions do not “own” the SPD. In 2009 CDU won elections and formed coalition with Liberals. SPD did very badly by losing votes to far left.

Source: Palmer 2004
Political Parties

• The Free Democrats (FDP)’s primary supporters come from the Protestant middle classes and the farmers. The FDP tries to occupy the center ground between the CDU and the SPD, but as their differences have narrowed so has the ideological space between them. The FDP has served in both CDU and SPD governments. As the Greens increased their share of the vote in more recent elections, the FDP has seen its popularity decline – kept alive primarily by CDU voters who have been willing to split their ticket.

Source: Palmer 2004
Political Parties

• **The Greens** rest on two ideological pillars: 1) environmentalism; and 2) pacifism – a combination that did not always mesh with many voters’ positions prior to the end of the Cold War. Since the reunification of Germany, environmentalism has returned to the forefront. The Greens have done well (for a minor party) since the post 1991 elections. They have been in the coalition government since 1998 although tensions exist between the SPD and the Greens particularly over nuclear energy.

Source: Palmer 2004
Political Parties

• Germany as a Party and Partisan State: Because party influence is so pervasive in political life, Germany has been called a “party state.” This means that 1) the party system recruits and educates the political elites; 2) the parties are a counterweight, or check on a powerful chancellor; 3) the two large disciplined catch-all political parties make the political process more responsible because the victor is capable of implementing its electoral platform; 4) party cohesiveness provides “coordination and harmony” among the diverse groups and institutions that comprise Germany’s complex political world; 5) the parties offer a meaningful choice of candidates and issues to the voters; 6) the party system offers German citizens the possibility to participate politically beyond voting in scheduled elections; 7) the party system provides a two-way communication channel between the elite and the voters; and 8) the party system is a stabilizer in German society.

Source: Palmer 2004
German Pressure Groups

- German Pressure Groups are some 20,000 strong, varied, and influential. Many coalesce into “peak” associations. Members sit on government councils and committees allowing them to review parliamentary legislation before enactment. Some members are elected to the Bundestag.

Source: Palmer 2004
Business

• **Business** is represented by three large organizations: the Federation of German Industry (BDI) that represents over 90,000 companies and has close CDU ties, the Federation of German Employment Associations (BDA) which plays watchdog on government wage policies and works with labor to develop agreed-upon policies, and the German Industrial and Trade Conference (DIHT), the choice of small businesses and craftsmen.

Source: Palmer 2004
Labor

• Labor’s most important union is the German Federation of Labor (DGB), an organization that places economic success over ideology. It works to increase labor participation in management decisions (co-determination) and advocates German jobs for German, not immigrant, workers. German labor is the most highly paid and has among the most benefits of the industrial powers, a position that is become untenable if Germany wants to remain competitive on the world stage. The governing SPD has demanded “give-backs” from the unions causing a rift with their natural supporters and a return to union-backed strikes.

Source: Palmer 2004
Institutional and Social Groups

- **Institutional and Social Groups** include German bureaucrats from whose ranks come one-third of the Bundestag. These groups also contain the Catholic and Protestant churches that normally receive ten percent of an individual’s income tax. Religious views are expressed explicitly through the CDU where the close church-party relationship is a foundation stone.

Source: Palmer 2004
Corporatism and Neo-corporatism

- **Corporatism and neo-corporatism** are terms used to describe “group” rather than individual “representation” – a long standing, non-confrontational approach to the relationship between government and pressure groups. This accords the groups “quasi-official” roles in the political process and is based on voluntary cooperation between the two. It places the recognized groups within the system where they have a much greater chance of influencing legislation of interest to the group, but it also **locks out** other, newer interests such as women, youth, environmentalists and foreign workers some of whom have formed “citizen action groups” and engaged in demonstrations, petitions and marches to express their political demands.

Source: Palmer 2004
German Citizens

- **German citizens** vote heavily, belong to political parties, pressure, and/or civic action groups. Polling organizations regularly assess their views. Concerns over high unemployment, youth crime, inadequate training positions and high immigration are at the top of the citizens’ agenda. Polls taken during 2003 and 2004 suggest that over 47% of German society believe the country has major problems and that the next generation will be less well off than they are themselves. Seventy percent are annoyed that they are held responsible for the Holocaust. Polls also show that opinion continues to drift towards the political center – an important gauge for political parties as they devise strategies for the coming elections. East Germans – still economically behind their West German brethren – remain distrustful of the government – and are, therefore, the most likely to be swayed by extremist groups and the appeals of the Democratic Socialist Party (the old Communists).
Cultural, Economic and International Interdependence

Source: Palmer 2004
German Political Culture – from Authoritarianism to Post-Industrial Society

• After World War II, sociological studies highlighted the overriding importance of authority to Germans, the visceral and unquestioning need to obey rules, and low tolerance for ambiguity and social conflict. As a consequence, many scholars questioned whether German political culture and democracy were compatible.

Source: Palmer 2004
German Political Culture – from Authoritarianism to Post-Industrial Society

- Today’s West Germans, however, are better educated than their parents and grew up in an environment of democracy and prosperity. Until reunification in 1990, polls indicated continuing increase in German support for democratic values. The former East Germans, however, remained attached to authoritarianism and rules compliance. Reunification requires the lengthy dismantling of a pervasive cultural wall, or “the wall in people’s minds.” Regardless, Germans tend to exhibit a strong commitment to rules, a strong sense of “German” patriotism, a high achievement orientation, a commitment to thrift and savings, a higher regard for organization and efficiency, and a stronger belief in the importance of group over individual rights than many Americans or British. Most of these cultural traits also contributed to West Germany’s miraculous economic recovery after World War II. A number of these characteristics have, however, begun to fade – at least in the eyes of some business leaders. Germany too has become more multicultural with a Muslim minority that retains its own identity. Tensions have increased, the wearing of the head-scarf in public schools – an Islamic symbol – has been banned in some schools.

Source: Palmer 2004
Political Economy

• Political economists view Weimar’s collapse, Hitler’s rise, and West Germany’s post-World War II recovery through an economic lens. From their perspective, prosperity supports democratic government but doesn’t guarantee it. Germany’s recovery was built upon a kind of state capitalism called a social market economy in which government, business and labor all cooperate to obtain growth and equity. The social market economy was designed to, and did see, a West German democracy free of class conflict. It rested on: 1) strong government regulation of the economy; 2) cradle-to-grave social welfare programs; and 3) government decreed labor and industrial cooperation. The German government also “provides industry with a technically trained labor force.” The system, however, is now threatened by: 1) escalating social welfare costs of an aging population and a high unemployment rate; 2) the unexpectedly high and continuing costs of reunification; 3) increasing pressure from Asia and new EU members with far lower labor costs; and 4) an economy hobbled by excessive regulation resulting in inflexibility. All four problems coexist simultaneously, and the large unassimilated immigrant labor force bears the brunt of German discontent.

Source: Palmer, 2004
International Interdependence

• Germany is a creation of international forces that began with the German reaction to Napoleon’s invasion in 1806. The Franco-Prussian War in 1871 facilitated Germany’s unification. The harsh terms of the WWI peace treaty and the Great Depression caused the Weimar Government to fail ushering in Hitler’s Third Reich – facilitated by British and French passiveness and US isolationism. Germany’s Basic Law was drafted under the influence of the Western powers that ensured that West Germany became economically and politically stable by providing a nuclear security umbrella. The Soviet Union’s collapse permitted Germany reunification and an extension of German economic space into East Europe to help rebuild formerly Communist economies. The EU, too, has a major influence on German politics: the Deutsch mark has been replaced by the euro and the state’s economic management is shifting from Berlin (the post unification capital) to EU institutions. Muslim terrorist cells are well established in Germany as indicated by both 9/11 and the Madrid 2004 train bombing. And finally, Germany’s economy is being threatened by cheaper competition from abroad.

Source: Palmer 2004
Germany and the World

• Germany still possesses the third largest economy in the world and as such is the heart of the EU. Remittances from guest workers help sustain the families and economies of poorer East European states and Turkey. Germany maintains one of Europe’s largest militaries and exports missile technology to a number of third world countries including Iraq, Iran and Libya. In keeping with its treaty and constitutional requirements, however, Germany is reticent to send military forces abroad although it has sent them to help with peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

Source: Palmer 2004
Present Challenges and Future Prospects

Source: Palmer 2004
Democracy and Stability

• Germany’s transformation from authoritarianism to democracy was based on eight factors: 1) The Basic Law provided a balance between “power and constraint” – strong chancellors with powers checked by the parliament, the Lander and the Constitutional Court; 2) political elites committed to democracy; 3) single-member-electoral districts that helped create and sustain two stable, democratic political parties that alternate in power; 4) supportive pressure groups; 5) a participatory electorate; 6) a population – at least in the West – that has internalized democratic values; 7) an economic prosperity that has demonstrated democracy can meet the people’s needs; and 8) an international community that has supported Germany’s democratic government economically, politically and militarily.

Source: Palmer 2004
Democracy and Stability

- German democracy, however, rested on a number of already present factors — in particular its strong economy, skilled workforce, and well developed sense of national identity — conditions that do not exist in much of the third world.

Source: Palmer 2004
Human Rights

• The most significant Human Rights problems concern the unequal treatment of women and discrimination against foreign workers – of whom Turks represent the largest number (1.8 million - about 2.1% of Germany’s total population). Muslims now have the added stigma of being linked to Islamic terrorism. While German women are making inroads in one of Europe’s most sexist societies, equality is still not there. The treatment of Muslims remains a particularly contentious issue.

Source: Palmer 2004
Economic Growth, Quality of Life, and Environmental Passion

• Germany has one of the world’s highest qualities of life and a commitment, more or less, to equal access. Public education is free, practical and egalitarian with an excellent technical training track that provides non-academic students with marketable skills. Germany’s generous childcare system permits young children to be taken care of by stay-at-home mothers who can receive a child support subsidy sometimes until the child is 16. Germany’s generous social welfare system, however, has become “prohibitively expensive” and cannot be sustained.

Source: Palmer 2004
Economic Growth, Quality of Life, and Environmental Passion

- Germans care about the environment, but the state’s rapid economic growth has taken a toll on its forests. The amount of hazardous waste is increasing – particularly spent nuclear fuel – as Germany turns to nuclear energy and away from fossil fuels. East Germany’s destruction of its environment prior to 1990 is another expensive clean-up problem and air pollution from East European factories sails across German skies and lands on German soil.

Source: Palmer 2004