

# German-Polish Reconciliation: How Similar, How Different?<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

There is by now a voluminous literature in German and in Polish (but not in English) on German-Polish relations. This essay aims to add to our understanding of German-Polish reconciliation by providing a comparative perspective. The academic field of reconciliation is vast, so at the outset I will suggest what I mean by the term. First, how does the vast scholarly literature define this ubiquitous term? The two extremes of the literature are the “forgiveness” school and the “rapprochement” school, with a number of mixed positions lying in between. In the extant literature, reconciliation definitions differ according to motives, actors, mechanisms, and end state. Reconciliation ranges from minimal co-existence to a maximal change of attitudes and beliefs and the development of partnership between formerly warring parties.

My work looks at international reconciliation between countries and societies, as opposed to internal reconciliation between groups within states. I have examined Germany’s relations with Israel, France, Poland and the Czech Republic to draw lessons about reconciliation over the last six decades. I have a maximal, “thick” definition of reconciliation that has also been called “structural”. By "reconciliation" I mean the process of building long-term peace between former enemies through bilateral institutions across governments and societies. Reconciliation involves the development of friendship, trust, empathy and magnanimity. It involves both

religious and emotional dimensions and practical and material aspects. In fact, two German words, according to Artur Hajnicz, get to the full meaning of reconciliation: *Versöhnung* and *Aussöhnung*.<sup>2</sup> Germany's pursuit of reconciliation has consistently reflected both meanings, melding moral imperative with pragmatic interest.

This concept of reconciliation does not infuse peace with a vision of harmony and tension-free coexistence, but rather integrates differences between peoples.

Productive contention about history in a shared and cooperative framework for identifying and softening (but not eliminating) divergence is a more realistic goal than perfect peace. Authentication of reconciliation thus emerges from challenge.

The sense of reconciliation used here for the German-Polish relationship accords with the characterizations of Marek Prawda - reconciliation means the management of diversity in a cooperative framework; of Wladyslaw Bartoszewski - reconciliation incorporates squabbles within a family; and of Dieter Bingen - reconciliation means a community of fate that involves vicissitudes.<sup>3</sup> Reconciliation is a long and difficult process, as noted by German chancellor Willy Brandt when writing about German-Polish reconciliation in 1976: "The soil in which reconciliation could flourish required careful spadework."<sup>4</sup> Germany's first chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, had also used a gardening metaphor when speaking of Franco-German reconciliation and the 1963 friendship treaty between the two countries: "This friendship between France and Germany is like a rose that will always have buds and flowers," and he added "thorns."<sup>5</sup> It is this dual character of abundant blooms and sharp pricks that is at the heart of my understanding of reconciliation.

In outlining my framework of reconciliation, I try to answer the basic, current question of whether German-Polish relations are durable, and therefore reparable, after the downturn of 2000-2007 (particularly the last two years under Jaroslaw Kaczynski as Prime Minister), or were they permanently damaged. The downturn was real, but it has to be considered against the backdrop of the accumulated relationship built over forty years and against the reality of less public, stable and positive institutional relations at both the governmental and societal levels. My approach is to see relations both horizontally (over time) and vertically (across levels). In many respects, the dimensions of reconciliation evident in German-Polish relations can be identified also in Germany's relations with France, Israel and the Czech Republic.

#### **THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF RECONCILIATION**

In reconciliation, the mix of pragmatism and morality as motives differs depending on history, leadership, institutions and international context, or what we call the political dynamics of the process. I will address these four dimensions in the German-Polish case and refer to findings from the other cases.

##### **History**

In the recasting of relations after conflict, there are three sequential stages relating to history: the past as stimulus, the acknowledgement of grievances, and the past as present. Looking at "History" in this nuanced sense gives us a greater capacity to situate contemporary German-Polish relations.

##### **The Past as Stimulus.**

In the Franco-German and German-Israeli cases, the French and Israeli governments were initially very reluctant to deal with Germany because of the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust. These attitudes changed quite quickly, beginning around 1950, and there was a willingness to engage using moral arguments, as a direct response to the past. There was a similar reticence in Poland, due to the nature of the Nazi crimes. In all three cases, one can describe the starting position as one of enmity. Due to the Cold War, governmental action initiating a process of reconciliation occurred much later in the Polish case, coming only with détente in the 1970s, and even later in the German-Czech case.

Religious organizations in society played an important role in lubricating the government process in the cases of France and Israel, just as they did in the German-Polish case in the 1950s and 1960s, as acknowledged by government leaders. As with France and Israel, religious effort was early in Poland. As with France, in the Polish case it was both Protestant and Catholic actors, as would be the case much later in the German-Czech example, after 1989. In the German-Israeli case, spiritual initiatives went across religions, for example the Societies for Christian-Jewish Cooperation (*Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit*) and the Protestant-backed Peace with Israel (*Friede mit Israel*) movement.

#### Acknowledgment of Grievances

The second stage of history's shaping role in reconciliation, Germany's "Acknowledgment of Grievances," involved converting the affective, moral component into pragmatic and material needs and formal political commitment. In the Polish case, as with France, Israel and the Czech Republic, the acknowledgment

entailed the language referring to historical issues in bilateral treaties and in major statements as well as symbolic expressions of reconciliation. For example, the December 1970 Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the People's Republic of Poland on the Basis for Normalizing Their Relations acknowledged Poland as "the first victim" of a murderous World War II and recognized the Oder-Neisse line as Poland's western border, albeit de facto and not de jure. Other agreements recognizing historical grievances followed: 1972 diplomatic relations; 1990 Border Treaty; 1991 Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Treaty; 1972, 1975 and 1991 compensation payments (without calling them restitution or reparations); 2000 agreement on slave and forced labor (with Poland providing roughly one quarter of the recipients and receiving approximately one quarter of the funds). The Polish case demonstrates that some issues of history can be frozen and revived only years later, mirroring the German-Israeli case; for example, it was only in 1965, thirteen years after the 1952 Reparations Agreement, that diplomatic relations were concluded between Germany and Israel. In the Czech case, victims of Nazism received their first compensation from Germany only in 1997.

With respect to statements and symbolic events, we should note their appearance before and after 1989. Before 1989 there were at least ten instances in the Polish case, including the 1958 speech at Warsaw university by Carlo Schmid, a key Social Democratic leader, who was also involved in reconciliation with France and Israel; Brandt's 1970 kneeling at the memorial for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; and the 1981 "Package Initiative" (*Paket-Initiative*) through which ordinary Germans demonstrated their help for Polish society after the promulgation of martial law.

There were also ten “firsts” after 1989, including the November 1989 joint mass by Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Helmut Kohl in Krzywowa/Kreisau; the first speech of a German president, Roman Herzog, for the fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising in 1994; the first speech of a Polish Foreign Minister, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, to the German parliament in April 1995; the first speech of a German president, Johannes Rau, to the Sejm in 2004. There are similar examples from Germany’s relations with France, Israel and the Czech Republic: treaties, agreements, statements, symbolic acts that acknowledged past misdeeds, memorialized historical events or asserted a fresh start in relations compared to past.

Positive manifestations do not preclude missteps such as Chancellor Kohl’s first choice of location for the joint mass with Prime Minister Mazowiecki: the former Annaberg, which was vigorously rejected by Poles for the Nazis had memorialized there the Germans killed during the uprisings of 1920-21. This faux pas was reminiscent of the German-Israeli case: In 1971, the German government opened its first cultural week in Israel on the anniversary of Kristallnacht.

### The Past as Present

The third expression of history’s importance for reconciliation has two main features: (1) debates about the past, which can be divisive but necessary to authenticate the relationship; and (2) affirmative commitments in joint efforts to confront the past. The past is neither forgotten nor represents a mere footnote; rather it is a “productive irritant” to be confronted constantly. Regarding the debates, there are the three familiar historical issues that have separated Germans and Poles in the last seven years : Erika Steinbach’s Center against Expulsion (*Vertreibungszentrum*)

to be created in Berlin with official approval; restitution and compensation claims initiated by the Prussian Claims Society (*Preußische Treuhand*) that provoked the Polish Sejm claim for reparations to the state; and the return or restitution of confiscated, looted and displaced cultural assets.

Despite many heated debates in society and on the part of politicians, the first and second issues do seem susceptible to resolution by the two governments. Even under the last (Jaroslaw Kaczynski) government, there were bilateral consultations on the Expulsion Center, and a German commitment to Europeanize the subject matter. With the new Donald Tusk government, there seems to be acceptance of the reality of the Center combined with a German-Polish agreement to work collaboratively on joint historical projects such as the exchange of exhibitions and the creation of a World War II museum in Danzig.

On the issue of restitution and reparations, in the Schroeder government there were joint German-Polish statements and actions rejecting the Prussian Claims Society's initiatives and the Sejm's counter response. Even though Chancellor Angela Merkel rejected Prime Minister Kaczynski's October 2006 proposal for the mutual relinquishment of claims (the so-called "zero option"), she has repeatedly come out against any German claims for compensation from Poland, most recently during Tusk's trip to Berlin in December 2007.

The art question seems to be the thorniest in terms of resolution, with entrenched positions on both sides, and German observers labeling cultural property in Poland the "last German prisoners of war."<sup>6</sup> Approaching the assets as a "common

cultural legacy” (*ein gemeinsames Kulturerbe*), rather than from a national perspective, could be one way out.<sup>7</sup>

The “return of the past” has also been evident in German-Czech relations regarding the property claims of Sudeten Germans, their call for rescission of the Benes Decrees, the prolonged German unwillingness to provide restitution to Czech victims of Nazism, and the Expulsion Center. In the case of Israel, the past has also returned, both in the statements of the German literary figure Martin Walser about the oppressive obligation to memorialize the Holocaust, and in anti-Semitic statements of the mainstream German politicians Jürgen Möllemann (FDP) and Martin Hohmann (CDU). Like Polish leaders, Israeli leaders have warned Germans not to confuse victims and perpetrators. Concerning anti-Semitism in Germany, while the Israeli government has expressed concern, as Germany’s partner in reconciliation it has also lauded the German government’s efforts to combat this phenomenon. There are also recent, outstanding restitution issues for some citizens of Israel, which the German government has refused to recognize. We should note, however, that Germany has paid 62 billion Euros in total restitution and reparations payments since 1952 (about one third to individual Israelis and the state of Israel). Even in Franco-German relations, where the past has played a lesser role than in the cases of Poland, Israel and the Czech Republic, there was significant concern over President Jacques Chirac’s 2004 invitation to Schröder to attend the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day.

The second set of activities dealing on a regular basis with the past, but in an affirmative way, are the actions of various civil society organizations. There are too many

to enumerate, but we can identify three that are present in the Polish case and across the other three cases: the bilateral textbook commission, the Action Reconciliation/Service for Peace (*Aktion Sühnezeichen/Friedensdienste*) and the German Historical Institute. Neither Israel nor the Czech Republic has the latter in formal terms, but they do have some equivalent: the German-Czech Historians Commission (*Deutsch-Tschechische Historikerkommission*) and the Institutes of German History in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. These three organizations in all cases are linked in their goals (education about the past; inculcation of a “culture of remembrance” - *Erinnerungskultur*), means (meetings, publications) nature of history (broad conception but with a focus also on the Holocaust) and effect (creation of bilateral networks, and successor generations, model for other international dyads).

### **Leadership**

The second factor determining reconciliation is leadership. In relations of reconciliation, leadership has to be visionary, willing to overcome domestic opposition, and capable of creating leadership duos, often based on personal chemistry with political leaders in the other country, and often spanning ideological lines. In the Franco-German and German-Israeli relations this happened early on with Adenauer’s special relationship with de Gaulle and with Ben-Gurion, but has continued throughout the life of the relationships (Schmidt-Giscard; Kohl-Mitterrand; Schröder-Chirac) (Brandt-Meir; Strauss-Peres, Fischer-Sharon, Merkel-Olmert). The close personal relationship between Vaclav Havel and Richard von Weizsäcker is often mentioned in the German-Czech case.

Unlike in the French and Israeli cases, but similar to the Czech case, during the early years of the Cold War, what Helmut Schmidt described as the “formal” impersonal

diplomacy of communism made it difficult to develop friendly relations between German and Polish leaders.<sup>8</sup> Added to this structural reality was Adenauer's personal antipathy for communist leaders. Nonetheless, in subsequent years there were some significant exceptions. Brandt wrote extensively about Wladyslaw Gomulka and Jozef Cyrankiewicz, and suggested that in both cases seeing the person and the human face behind the leader and the communist helped lubricate the December 1970 Warsaw discussions and subsequent Normalization Treaty. Helmut Schmidt developed a close relationship with Edward Gierek, whom he considered a friend and a reliable partner, characteristics that facilitated the conclusion of the October 1975 agreement, according to Schmidt.

As an East German who grew up in the German Democratic Republic near the Polish border, Angela Merkel has been unique among German chancellors in her ability to connect with Polish leaders on a personal level. Interaction with the new Polish Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz during her December 2005 trip to Warsaw was aided by the fact that both leaders were physicists by training, and that she recognized the personal dimension in all aspects of politics. When relations were tense between Germany and Poland in spring 2007 and needed redirection, both sides emphasized the positive personal dimension of political relations by including Chancellor Merkel's husband and President Lech Kaczynski's wife in the private portion of Merkel's trip at the President's vacation home. Close associates of President Kaczynski referred to the "personal chemistry" between the two leaders that started to develop in president Kaczynski's October 2006 trip to Berlin.<sup>9</sup> In addition to the political assessment that relations would improve with the new Polish government in fall 2007, there was the

sense that the long-standing personal connection (since the early 1990s) between Merkel and Donald Tusk would contribute to the airing and resolution of bilateral and EU differences. The fact that Tusk was born in Gdansk/Danzig, speaks German, and is a Germanophile, while not in any way forgetting Polish suffering at German hands, augured well for the new relationship.

The personal dimension of German leadership has not been confined to heads of government, but is found also among German heads of state. For the last two decades, German presidents have made relations with Poland a priority for reasons related to their background. Richard von Weizsäcker participated in the invasion of Poland in September 1939, then as President of the German Protestant Council (*Evangelischer Kirchentag*) was involved in the October 1965 church publication that advocated a new approach to the expellee and border questions. Roman Herzog, Johannes Rau and Horst Köhler have all emphasized the importance of history and the need for reconciliation with an element of religious conviction. Köhler was born in Polish territory that the Nazis occupied during World War II.

As in France, Israel and the Czech Republic, personal pique and bad personal relations can also influence official relations, as demonstrated by President Kaczynski's cancellation of the June 2006 Weimar Triangle (*Weimarer Dreieck*) meeting following the satirical *tageszeitung* article that lampooned the two Kaczynski brothers. In the other country cases, one could cite the bad relations between De Gaulle and Erhard, Pompidou and Brandt; between Begin and Schmidt; and between Vaclav Klaus and Helmut Kohl.

### **Institutions**

Relations of reconciliation are distinguished by a very high degree of bilateral institutionalization at both the societal and governmental levels. The Franco-German tandem, dating from the 1963 Elysée Treaty, is the best known example, but the German-Israeli relationship is a close second, and German-Polish ties also display significant dimensions of institutionalization at both levels. The German-Czech case is the least institutionalized, in part due to the hermetically-sealed nature of Czechoslovak communism after 1968.

### Societal Organizations

The plethora of societal connections between Germany and Poland, recorded especially in the work of Basil Kerski, are quite well-known, but five features that cross the four cases bear emphasis: (1) The institutions are not ad hoc, but exist with regularity over time and involve regeneration; (2) they span every area of societal life from culture to economics, from science to trade unions, from sports encounters to religious organizations, from town twinnings to youth exchange, from German political foundations to individual party ties, from friendship associations to academic connections; (3) they often have as patrons government or former government officials; (4) they maintain independent agendas, even when they receive government funding; and (5) they show solidarity with the bilateral partner in times of official crisis. As in the French and Israeli cases, the Polish-German societal connections predated official relations.

A sixth characteristic of societal organizations in reconciliation relates to their relationships to governments. There are four distinct roles that societal actors can play: (1) Catalysts, where they provide the initial stimulus for official relations (e.g., lay and

church hierarchy in the Polish and French cases; economic actors in the Polish and Israeli cases; academic and student connections in the Polish and Israeli cases; dissidents in the Polish and Czech cases).

(2) Complements, where they augment official behavior on a daily basis (much of the societal activity in the Polish, French, Israeli and Czech cases).

(3) Conduits, where they perform tasks, e.g. dealing with political oppositions, that officialdom cannot always do. Here we see the German political foundations in the Polish case (offices after 1989) and in the other three country cases with similar goals (confrontation with the past – *Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit*; European integration; comparative public policy), means (meetings, exchanges, publications) and outcomes. In the Polish and Czech cases, there was the additional goal of democratization. In the Polish case, before 1989 the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (in the 1970s) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (after 1982) had contacts that were useful to their German parties in power.

(4) Competitors, where societal actors oppose official behavior (German expellee attitudes regarding the Oder-Neisse border in the 1960s and 1970s; the activity of German non-governmental actors during the emergence of Solidarnosc; the German expellee calls from 2000 on for a Center Against Expulsion). In all three Polish cases, the non-governmental actors influenced governments either in the short-term or the long-term. Recent examples of competition are present in the other country cases, for example the German media criticism of Israel during the second intifada in the Middle East when the German government showed solidarity with Israel; the opposition of the Sudetendeutsche Expellee Association (*Sudetendeutsche*

*Landsmannschaft*) to the German government's strong support of Czech membership in the EU).

### Governmental Institutions

As in Franco-German and German-Israeli relations, the connections between German and Polish societal actors dominated until the first major official breakthrough, in 1970, although there were governmental interactions and institutions in economics beforehand, echoing the priority given to this area in Germany's relations with Israel (Reparations Agreement 1952) and with France (European Coal and Steel Community 1952). Like the other three cases, German-Polish institutional ties evolved gradually. There have been three main stages of institutional developments: (1) 1970-1989 in which the new legal framework of the 1970 treaty produced new institutions, but in a circumscribed way due to the reality of communism in Poland; (2) 1989-2000, the "golden years" of phenomenal bilateral growth in institutions following the 1989 agreements and the 1991 treaty on the heels of the Cold War's end;<sup>10</sup> and (3) 2000-2007 when the relationship was severely tested by differences between the two governments but institutional developments remained stable.

As with Franco-German and German-Israeli relations and even in the more infant German-Czech partnership, the first hallmark of reconciliation is institutionalization across all policy fields: defense, economics, science and technology, the environment, law, transportation. In the Polish case, as in the French and Czech cases, there is the added dimension of cross-border cooperation. Secondly, parallel to Franco-German and German-Israeli relations, the first period of German-

Polish institutionalization did not witness massive proliferation, which then did take place in the second period. As a third feature of institutionalization, there is the creation and realization of a framework for regular government-to-government consultations and visits. As with Franco-German and German-Israeli relations, there are also joint cabinet meetings. German-Polish institutionalization has been deliberately patterned after the Franco-German case.

My focus here is on the third German-Polish period, labeled as “frosty” or an “ice age” from 2000-2007,<sup>11</sup> beginning with Erika Steinbach’s initiative for a Center Against Expulsion and continuing with the installation in Poland of the Kaczynski twins. The latter introduced into officialdom a heavy dose of populist nationalism that meant frequent public criticisms of Germany over history, often in response to societal actors in Germany, such as the Prussian Claims Society, and sometimes in response to the German government, for example the German-Russian gas pipeline agreement between Gerhard Schröder and Vladimir Putin.

Analysts differ over whether this period between 2005-2007 constituted a defining moment for ties, moving them away permanently from partnership, or whether this was a temporary negative phenomenon in an otherwise solid relationship of reconciliation. Observers who emphasize the ingrained nature of differences see only ritual in the relationship. Those who believe that the process of reconciliation has not been irretrievably interrupted emphasize the strength of societal ties, and the blending of interests and values that join Poland and Germany. As in German-Israeli, Franco-German and German-Czech relations, reconciliation is occasionally punctuated by crisis. The test of reconciliation is the ability to weather such periods.

The view advanced here is one of optimism for German-Polish relations, where reconciliation's robustness is borne out by three developments in the period 2000-2007: the continuity and purpose of bilateral visits; the style and substance of statements about the relationship; and the nature of proposed solutions to disputes.

1. *Continuity and Purpose.* With the exception of the Weimarer Triangle cancellation mentioned earlier, there was a regular exchange of visits at the level of heads of government and state, including President Köhler (August 2005 and May 2006), Chancellor Merkel (December 2005 and March 2007), President Lech Kaczynski (March 2006) and Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski (October 2006). There were also six joint meetings between the two cabinets in the period 2000 and 2006, as well as frequent meetings of the defense ministers and foreign ministers. The uniform purpose, even on the Polish side, was to “improve” and “deepen” the relationship.<sup>12</sup>
2. *Style and Substance.* The German government used the occasion of visits to be non-confrontational and patient in style, with the goal of not inflaming relations. Polish leaders during visits also tried to be less confrontational than on other occasions, reprising a German emphasis on the need for openness, honesty and a constructive approach about differences.<sup>13</sup> The sober and pragmatic style of Germany in these visits was accompanied by references to the substance of relations as a “partnership” denoted by “trust” and “friendship”, as well as a sensitivity to the “dark chapters” of German history, indirectly elevating the moral dimension of ties, quite similar to the characterization of German-Israeli and Franco-German relations in their mature stage.<sup>14</sup>

3. *Solutions to Disputes* Institutional responses to problems in German-Polish relations took two forms: the establishment of a broad framework to help guide relations, and the creation of issue-specific mechanisms. Already in late 2004 (taking effect in 2005), there were two major responses to the difficulties in relations surrounding the reparations and restitution issue: the appointment in the German and Polish foreign ministries of Coordinators for German-Polish Societal and Cross-Border Cooperation, and the announcement of the German-Polish Year under the patronage of the German and Polish presidents. These choices reminded one of the developments in Franco-German relations with the inauguration of the Blaesheim Process of even more regular official meetings (following the difficult EU Nice summit in 2000) and the creation of a second level of coordinators (as part of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Elysée treaty in 2003). Issue-specific consultation mechanisms in German-Polish relations included the working group on energy and the dialogue between the German Minister of State for Culture and the Polish Culture Minister over the Center for Expulsion.

Finally, beyond the highly public institutional responses to general and specific problems, the optimistic scenario would point to the ongoing, detailed and often quiet policy cooperation in three policy arenas: cross-border activity, the environment and defense.

### **International Context**

”International Context” covers both the larger global setting (relations with the US and Russia) and the specific framework of the EU. On the issue of relations with the US and Russia, Germany and Poland continue to have disagreements over the

German-Russian gas pipeline and US missile defense, although the Tusk government is looking for a détente with Russia and for less of a lock-step with the US. Other relations of reconciliation have tolerated well such differences, for example over the US and over Russia between Germany and Israel.

The dominant international framework is the EU, and here again we can identify the dualities that have marked the other three factors of reconciliation we have considered so far. As with Israel's Free Trade Agreement, Association Agreement and Action Plan with the EU, Germany has been Poland's key advocate in every step towards membership. Yet, the reality of Poland's EU membership has revealed differences with Germany over voting issues and the budget. Both items were resolved for the time being, under Jaroslaw Kaczynski as Prime Minister, and with Germany extending itself beyond the regular, formal negotiations in order to secure an agreement with Poland. We should remember that divergence does not have to be debilitating. In the case of the Franco-German pair in the EU, research has shown that the larger the initial policy divergence, the greater the ultimate jointness and influence.

There is an additional point that leads one to some long-term optimism concerning the German-Polish dyad in the EU. As in the bilateral relationship, divergence is necessary to authenticate the relationship. By asserting itself in these policy debates, Poland has converted into fact the theoretical formula of equality of rights and responsibilities of all EU member-states. As with France, the sense of symmetry between Germany and Poland is an important ingredient of reconciliation.

### **Conclusion**

Seven points emerge from the above analysis:

1. Using the four factors of history, leadership, institutions and international context permits a full panorama of the relationship rather than a snap-shot.
2. German-Polish reconciliation can be identified in the high level of institutionalization at both the governmental and societal levels, with the transnational actors often stimulating official behavior and then remaining essential.
3. Debates about history are inevitable in relations of reconciliation and history acts as a “productive irritant.”
4. Personal commitment has been a significant factor lubricating the political process.
5. At both the bilateral and EU levels, Germany and Poland have been able to limit or resolve their differences through extended or repeated negotiation and through the creation of bilateral consultative mechanisms.
6. German-Polish reconciliation displays similarity with other cases in German foreign policy.
7. Divergence, debate and dissension are a natural part of relations of reconciliation. Crisis is necessary to test and authenticate the relationship. Reconciliation is distinguished from lesser partnerships by its ability to manage differences in a cooperative framework. This view is clear in the words of Willy Brandt, writing about Franco-German reconciliation decades ago:

Bonn...[took] advantage of the ... occasion to point out that the two nations' special circumstances would continue to yield differences of interest and opinion in many fields. Friendship did not connote a neglect of one's own interests or a lack of candor towards others.<sup>15</sup>

The new Tusk government seems to have taken Brandt's observation to heart in the way it conducts relations of reconciliation with Germany at both the

bilateral and EU levels. The next level of reconciliation may well mirror the practice in Franco-German and German-Israeli relations, in which the two sides pursue joint policies towards third issues or third countries. In the French case, there is the common Franco-German diplomatic representation in Podgorica, the joint cultural programs in more than forty countries, the joint visit of the French and German Foreign Ministers to Croatia, and the recent joint visit to Japan of the French and German government representatives for European affairs. In the Israeli case, German and Israeli leaders believe their common quest to find answers to critical policy issues can be beneficial to the rest of the international community, and they recently agreed to jointly train African experts on issues of irrigation. These novel examples remind us that reconciliation is a complex and never-ending process, a truth that Germans and Poles know only too well.

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<sup>2</sup> For the dual meaning, see: Artur Hajnicz, *Polens Wende und Deutschlands Vereinigung. Die Öffnung zur Normalität* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1995), pp. 142-61.

<sup>3</sup> See Marek Prawda's statement when Ambassador to Sweden at the Stockholm International Forum Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, April 23-24, 2002 at:

<http://www.manskliarattigheter.gov.se/stockholmforum/2002/page1728.html> (accessed December 15,

2002); the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung interview with Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, March 29, 2007 at:

[http://www.kas.de/upload/audio/Transkriptionen/2007/Transkript\\_Interview\\_Bartoszewski.pdf](http://www.kas.de/upload/audio/Transkriptionen/2007/Transkript_Interview_Bartoszewski.pdf) (accessed

April 17, 2007); Dieter Bingen, "Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen und die polnische Innenpolitik.

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<sup>4</sup> Willy Brandt, *People and Politics: The Years 1960-1975* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company: 1978), p. 181.

<sup>5</sup> For the text of the exchange between Adenauer and de Gaulle on the 1963 Franco-German friendship treaty, using the rose metaphor, see: André Passeron, *De Gaulle Parle 1962-1966* (Paris: Fayard, 1966), p. 341.

<sup>6</sup> Reinhard Müller, "Rückgabe von Beutekunst. Die letzten deutschen Kriegsgefangenen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine FAZ.NET*, July 26, 2007 at:

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<sup>7</sup> See Klaus Ziemer, "Vergangenheit und Identität im europäischen Einigungsprozess," conference on "Polen und Deutschland – Zivilgesellschaften und nationale Identität in Europa," Wissenschaftszentrum, Berlin, June 28, 2006, at: <http://www.gidialog.de/gid/28062006-berlin-wissenschaftszentrum-polen-und-deutschland-statement-ziemer> (accessed September 24, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Helmut Schmidt, *Weggefährten. Erinnerungen und Reflexionen* (Berlin: Siedler 1996), p. 251.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Thomas Urban, "Diplomatie der Drohgebährden," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, February 17, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> The term is Dieter Bingen's. See "Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen nach 1945," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 5-6/2005, January 31, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Roser, "Deutsch-polnische Beziehungen; Schwieriger Gast," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, October 30, 2006; Spiegel Online, "Merkel wünscht sich Freundschaft zu Polen," *Spiegel Online*, October 28, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Jacques Schuster, "Polens Präsident verabschiedet sich mit Gesprächsangeboten aus Berlin," *Die Welt*, March 10, 2006; Sybille Korte, "Erste positive Signale nach Monaten der Abkühlung," *Agence France Presse*, October 27, 2006; Associated Press, "Merkel für bessere Zusammenarbeit mit Polen in der EU," *Associated Press*, October 28, 2006; Associated Press, "Steinmeier wirbt für Verbesserung von deutsch-polnischem Verhältnis," *Associated Press*, October 26, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Der Bundespräsident, "Tischrede von Bundespräsident Horst Köhler beim Abendessen zu Ehren des polnischen Präsidenten Lech Kaczynski und Frau Maria Kaczynski im Schloss Bellevue," March 8, 2006 at: <http://www.bundespraesident.de/-,2.62901/Tischrede-von-Bundespraesident.htm> (accessed May 19, 2006); Agence France Presse, "Kaczynski: Gute Beziehungen wichtig für Polen und Deutschland," *Agence France Presse*, March 8, 2006; General-Anzeiger (Bonn), "Kein Grund zur Sorge," *General-Anzeiger (Bonn)*, October 30, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Bundesregierung, "Nie wieder Politik zu Lasten unserer Nachbarn," December 2, 2005, at: <http://www.bundesregierung.de/-,413.927382/interview/Nie-wieder-Politik-zu-Lasten-u.htm> (accessed December 12, 2005); Bundeskanzlerin, "Looking ahead to the Future in German-Polish Relations," December 2, 2005 at: <http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Content/EN/Reiseberichte/pl-wir-wollen-die-beziehungen-zukunftsgewandt-ausrichten.html> (accessed January 17, 2006); *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, "Polen will Zwist mit Deutschland beilegen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 9, 2006; Holger Schmale, "Der Charme des kleinen Mannes," *Berliner Zeitung*, March 31, 2006; Michael Fischer, "Neuer Ton in den deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen," *Associated Press*, October 30, 2006; Die Bundeskanzlerin, "Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel an der Universität Warschau," March 16, 2007 at: [http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/nn\\_5294/Content/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BPA/2007/03/2007-03-16-rede-merkel-warschau.html](http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/nn_5294/Content/DE/Pressemitteilungen/BPA/2007/03/2007-03-16-rede-merkel-warschau.html) (accessed March 20, 2007); Associated Press, "Merkel: Wir wollen freundschaftliches Verhältnis zu Polen," *Associated Press*, October 28, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Brandt, *People and Politics*, p. 129.