

# NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES HISTORY EDUCATION MASTER PROGRAM

## OTTO VON BISMARCK AND GERMAN POLITICS (1862-1898)

**Master Thesis** 

SULAIMAN SHAFIQ TAWFEEQ

Nicosia

2020

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Thesis Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hasan SAMANI

**Nicosia** 

2020

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### **DECLARATION**

I, Sulaiman SHASIQ confirm that the work for the following term paper with the title: **OTTO VON BISMARCK AND GERMAN POLITICS** (1862-1898), was solely undertaken by me and that no help was provided from other sources as those allowed.

All section of the paper that use quotes or describe an argument or concept developed by another author have been referenced, including all secondary literature used, to show that this material has been adopted to support my thesis.

Sulaiman Shafiq Tawfeeq
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To my family...

### **ABSTRACT**

This study focused on the roles of Bismarck on German politics between 1862 and 1898. The study adopted an analytical framework to provide historical justification of the events that unfold. Four research questions guided the study to address Bismarck's domestic and foreign policies, including consolidation of the German Empire and reforms. It was found that Bismarck fought three wars before achieving a unified Germany. After the war, he embarked to form a new German Empire, which he did through isolations and repression of the opposition and ethnic minorities, including the Danes, Poles, Catholics, Jews, and the Social Democrats. After the peace deal with France in 1871, Bismarck embarked on consultations to restore peace and relationship between European powers. In doing this, he signed many treaties and eventually created the Three League, which was done to isolate France; the Dual Alliance with Austria; and the Triple Alliance with Austria and Italy. His diplomatic plans, including formation of alliance and limited wars earned him his position of Prussian Iron Chancellor and lifted him to international scene. Under him, a unified Germany emerged as Europe's powerhouse. There is no doubt that his unification achievements were worthy of praise. His diplomatic policies reformed the international system and promoted peace across Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Keywords:* Otto von Bismarck, German Unification, Germany, German Nationalism, European Politics

### ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Bismarck'ın 1862-1898 yılları arasında Alman siyaseti üzerindeki rollerine odaklandı. Çalışma, ortaya çıkan olayların tarihsel gerekçelerini sağlamak için analitik bir çerçeve benimsedi. Dört araştırma sorusu, araştırmayı Bismarck'ın Alman İmparatorluğu'nun konsolidasyonu ve reformlar da dahil olmak üzere iç ve dış politikalarına yönelik olarak yönlendirdi. Bismarck'ın birleşik bir Almanya'ya ulaşmadan önce üç savaş yaptığı anlaşıldı. Savaştan sonra, Danimarkalılar, Polonyalılar, Katolikler, Yahudiler ve Sosyal Demokratlar da dahil olmak üzere muhalefet ve etnik azınlıkların izolasyonu ve bastırılması yoluyla yaptığı yeni bir Alman İmparatorluğu kurmaya başladı. 1871'de Fransa ile barış anlaşmasının ardından Bismarck, barışı ve Avrupa güçleri arasındaki ilişkiyi yeniden sağlamak için istişarelere başladı.Bunu yaparken birçok Antlaşma imzaladı ve sonunda Fransa'yı izole etmek için yapılan Üç Lig'i yarattı; Avusturya ile İkili İttifak; ve Avusturya ve İtalya ile Üçlü İttifak. İttifak oluşumu ve sınırlı savaşlar da dahil olmak üzere diplomatik planları ona Prusya Demir Şansölyesi pozisyonunu kazandırdı ve uluslararası sahneye çıkardı. Onun altında, birleşik bir Almanya Avrupa'nın güç merkezi olarak ortaya çıktı. Birleşme başarılarının övgüye değer olduğuna şüphe yok. Diplomatik politikaları uluslararası sistemde değişime yol açtı ve 19. yüzyılın sonlarında Avrupa çapında barışı destekledi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Otto von Bismarck, Alman Birliği, Almanya, Avrupa Politikası, Alman Milliyetçiliği.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Germany's internal and foreign policies have come a long way and have witnessed tremendous change over the decades. The country is usually portrayed as 'head' in foreign literature. After three territorial wars (1870-1871; 1914-1918; 1939-1945), many European states provide adequate concern on a unified Germany, leading to different approaches to address the unification process. The rank of Germany as a world-power, which was as a result of unification and subsequent elevation, is one of the attracting events of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unquestionably, the most influencing force of the Germans approaching political purity witnessed several decades. Indeed the development of current German state has come under various leaderships, and the effect of these leaderships cannot be overemphasized. This study looked into the role of Otto Von Bismarck on the domestic and foreign policies of Germany. The study began with a brief introduction of the European system in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly its relationship with the formation of German state, alongside the unification process. The study continued with a brief summary of the revolutionary movement that influenced German politics. The study then narrowed its focus to analyze Bismarck's diplomatic policies, which is attributed to German unification.

### **Problem statement**

There are a number of literature and existing historical theses discussing the facets of Germany; its unification and emergence as European power. However, the major component consistently missing in the literature is a thorough analytical framework of the struggle that led to present German states rather than a historical approach. A quick search of the literature revealed titles such as: *German foreign policy: Gulliver's travails in the 21st Century* (Harnisch, 2012); *Imperial Germany: 1871-1918* (Lee, 1999); *Bismarck: A life* (Steinberg, 2011); *Bismarck: A political history* (Feuchtwanger, 2014); *Bismarck profile in Power* (Lerman, 2004); among others. Admittedly, there are numerous research that cover all periods of Bismarck's struggle, but these primarily exist as historical research with little or no analytical evidence, leaving no room for comparative and empirical justification. To the best of my knowledge, only one study employed analytical approach in revealing Bismarck's role in Germany's internal and foreign policy. However, the study itself was too brief in analyzing Bismarck's roles, and largely relies on historical approach (Steinberg,

2011). This problem has been realized by historians over the decades which (Dorpalen, 1953: 53) earlier observed:

'The examination and evaluation of Bismarck's statesmanship has been resumed with much vigor in Germany. The topic has always - and naturally - been a favorite of German historians. Yet the current studies differ from previous examinations of Bismarck's policies. They are concerned not so much with a factual analysis of these policies as with their overall significance and validity' (Dorpalen, 1953: 53).

Unlike traditional versions of logical choice, analytical frameworks are problem-based rather than theory-driven (Hallerberg& Weber, 2002: 21). The study incorporated and examined framework that best provide detailed explanations of the event that unfold. By having a clear and definite framework, the study provided clear explanation on evidence that support the argument and evidence that contradict it. The framework subjected the researcher's argument to careful examination in the hope that new insights about the phenomenon will be generated. Analytic experts presumes that researchers address five major questions: (1) does the prediction fit the reality; (2) are the conclusions generated from the premises; (3) does the implication follow the evidence; (4) how adequate does the theory provide explanations in comparison with other justifications; and (5) can the explanation be generalized to other situations (Bates, Greif, Rosenthal &Weingast, 1998: 56).

Bismarck's roles, alongside Germany's internal and foreign policies need to be studied in the context of analytical framework to provide empirical justification of the events that unfold, rather than mere historical evidence. Based on this, the study seeks to revisit Bismack's role on German internal and foreign policy in an attempt to provide empirical insight and understanding.

### Purpose of study

This study seeks to provide analytical insight and understanding about the role of Otto Von Bismarck in Germany's internal and foreign policies from 1862 to 1898. Events that unfold, including success and negativities, will also be part of the focus of this study. Specifically, the study will aim at:

- 1. Examining a critical analysis on the role of Bismarck on Germany domestic policies from 1862-1898.
- 2. Critically analyzing the role of Bismarck on Germany foreign policies from 1862-1898.
- 3. Critically examining the connections between Bismarck's foreign policy and internal policies from 1862-1898.
- 4. Critically identifying the success and limitations of Bismarck's internal and foreign policies.

### Research questions

The study will seek to address the following research questions:

- 1. To what extent did Bismarck's internal policies shape Germany's domestic issues from 1862-1898?
- 2. What is the role of Bismarck's foreign policy on Germany's foreign affair from 1862-1898?
- 3. What is the connection between Bismarck's foreign policies and domestic issues from 1862-1898?
- 4. What are the success and limitations of Bismarck's internal and foreign policies?

### Significance of the study

The study provided analytical insight and understanding on the role of Otto Von Bismarck on Germany's internal and foreign policy. By employing analytic framework, historians, students, and other stakeholders will have a sense of direction on events that unfold: success recorded; limitations beyond the control of Bismarck; and external and internal factors that played significant roles. The findings of the study will also be useful to researchers that rely on traditional approach to have detailed understanding about analytical framework. The study will also enrich many history archives (e.g. European Commission historical archives, National Archives

Historyetc), and provide unique justification on Bismarck's domestic and foreign policy, and how these policies shape Germany's unification process and present status.

### Scope of the study

This study was limited to examining the role of Bismarck on German internal and foreign policies. The study covered the period of 1862 to 1898, which was a period of Bismarck's triumphant in Germany's unification. The study discussed Bismarck's diplomatic policies that led to Germany as the super power in the Europe and potential rival for other powerful states. The study also compared major socio-political developments in the German empire under Bismarck (1862-1898). Thus, the study centered on Bismarck's diplomatic policies and the German development. In order to fully understand this, historical sources (e.g. books and journals articles)were analyzed using analytical framework to examine events that unfold and successes that were made.

### **CHAPTER 1**

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE GERMANS AND GERMANY TO UNIFICATION

### 1.1. First and middle ages

The current Germany has encountered many centuries of immigration, conflict and reconciliation, with repeated change in its constituent parts and territories. Thus the current Germany's boundaries have evolved from continual conflicts throughout its long and troubled history (Coy, 2011: 34). The area known as Germany today has been pre-occupied by stream of migrants since ancient times, with new discoveries indicating traces of early hominid habitation pre-occupied by distant ancestors of modern humans from Africa. Historians believed that during the middle ages, Celtic immigrants migrated into Germany and build their own civilization which lasted for centuries until the emergence of the nomadic peoples who spoke different Germanic languages (James, 1993: 57).

In the following centuries, the warlike Germanic tribes (i.e. the nomads) gradually replaced the Celts and invade the Romans territories. After the disintegration of the Roman authority in the late 400s C.E., the Germanic tribes successively dominate Germany under their authority and forcefully Christianized the remaining pagans in the region (Coy, 2011: 35). The Frankish rulers, alongside the famous Charlemagne, described themselves as the successor of the Roman emperors and therefore set up the foundations of the Holy Roman Empire, a decentralized royal institution that dominated political life in central Europe, and bound individual Germanic territories into an insecure German league. After the reign of Charlemagne, the Carolingian Empire, a large Frankish-dominated empire, disintegrated into several kingdoms (Steinberg, 2011: 28). One of the kingdoms where Germanic language was spoken became a unique and recognized kingdom ruled by Louis the German. The creation of this kingdom became an important milestone in the development of German identity, as language and political loyalty was blended (Coy, 2011: 58). During the middle ages, the imperial structure accorded the disintegrated German territories with administrative and legal proceedings, while protecting the freedom of German princes and cities (Arnold, 1997: 43).

During the 16th century, the unity of the Holy Roman Empire was put to test following the Martin Luther's protest against the Catholic Church. This occurrence split Germany and all European states into rival camps (Du-Boulay, 1983: 12). The period of middle ages was brought into Germany by Napoleon's revolutionary allies, who facilitated the fall of the Holy Roman Empire. During the Napoleonic wars in 1806 where the Napoleon was defeated, the French government disbands the Holy Roman Empire and broadened their revolutionary and nationalist tactics across Germany, joining the German states in the Austrian-led Confederation (Coy, 2011: 47). The eventual advancement of Prussia as an aggressive powerhouse with military prowess led to the proclamation of a German empire in 1871, which was ruled by a Prussian monarch. Under this leadership, Germany witnessed rapid growth and development particularly in areas of military power and economy. As a result of this, Germany began demanding for inclusion among the major powers in Europe through a unification process, a demand that contributed to the breakout of the First World War (James, 1993: 62).

### 1.2. Modern and near ages

Germany's political shape was initiated and transformed into the German Confederation, which was set up at the Congress in Vienna in 1815 to replace the thousand-year-Reich Holy Roman Empire. The Confederation comprised mostly Prussia, Austria, Bohemian provinces of the Austrian Empire and 39 smaller states, with a central Diet or executive council. Until 1806, the smaller states have increased to 200, but Napoleon I reduced them to 16 through his stiff policies which include destroying of the Holy Roman Empire. However, the 16 states were absorbed into the German Confederation, which was established at the Vienna Congress in 1815. The first few years of the 19th century were important for the development of strong nationalism (Lee, 1982: 66). During his constitutional consolidation, Napoleon removed smaller states and liberates towns and cities that delay any form of unity. During this period, Austria and Prussia each had regions within and outside the Confederation, and between 1815 and 1848, they remained cautious of any demonstration concerning nationalism, particularly those sponsored by liberal activities. Berlin and Vienna maintained their mutual co-integration, but was put to an end in 1848 when revolution broke out. At the onset of the revolution, the smaller states, through their representatives, had devised plans for united German states. Although their quest was not reached at that time, it does appear that a unified Germany is approaching (Lee, 1982).

Between 1815 and 1848, Prussia's economy grew steadily, but experienced the first industrial revolution in Europe in 1850s. However, following progressive policies adopted by Prussian government, headed by Manteuffel, her economy took off. This period of boomed economy witnessed an increase in railway network from 3869 km in 1850 to 7169 km in 1860. Furthermore, coal production increased from 700, 000 tons 2.2 million. The Austrian government on the other hand became more concerned on Prussia's influence over the smaller states (Lee, 1982: 32). To compound this issue, the Austrian economy was extremely insecure. For example, between 1853 and 1856, Austria's total export decrease from 184.3 million 150.3 million, with the continental depression in 1857 posing serious effect on the state. Realizing this weak economy, the Vienna government went into talks with the Zollverein, who imposed commercial isolation on Austria. During this period, the Austrian government sought to reform the Zollverein into a larger customs union covering the whole European states. This proposal met stiff resistance as Prussia avoided all proposals to reform the Zollverein. Until 1864, the Zollverein was strongly dominated by Prussia, denying Austria even a treaty of restricted succession.

There is no doubt that Prussia's domination of the smaller states hugely contributed in the eventual success of German unification. It became clear that political forces of the German Confederation were the obstacles preventing any progress towards unity. Although this Confederation was not the perfect plan for Germany, however, Austria preferred it to losing the smaller states to Prussia. Despite its limitations, the Confederation was the only Germany the Austrians would accept. This was in reflection to Schwarzenberg's words: "a threadbare and torn coat is better than no coat at all". Eventually, Prussia had succeeded in preventing Austria from transforming the economic formations of the Zollverein, Austria on the other hand equally succeeded in vetoing any constitutional amendment in the Confederation. Thus, the achievement towards German unification had reached deadlock, and needs to be solved through political means. This was achieved by great German leaders such as Otto von Bismarck, the focus of this study (Lee, 1982: 33).

### 1.3. Bismarck: A Concise biography

Otto von Bismarck was born in Brandenburg-Prussia on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1815 near Tangermuende and Stendal. He lived almost a century, which signified an important period for Europe and German development. His family could be traced back to 13<sup>th</sup> century (Kennedy, 1973). His ancestors were believed to have taking part in the Thirty Years War, in Swedish and French soldiers across Europe. They lived close to the land, served as judges and sheriffs, but had little or no goal. Despite being loyal to their supreme ruler, however, they were independent. Otto's grandfather, Friedrich was known for his prowess as a hunter and soldier. His father, Ferdinand, had more interest in developing his estates. In June 6, 1806, his father married Wihelmine Menchen (a seventeen year old girl) at Potsdam (Steinberg, 2011: 41). The nobility and army of Prussia were predominantly from Bismarck's ancestors, leaving a legacy that characterized his childhood and adulthood. At the age of 7 Bismarck was sent to a progressive boarding school in Berlin where he stayed until the end of 1827 (Feuchtwanger, 2014: 16). As an average student, he passed his Gymnasium examinations in the spring of 1832, which he did well in German, Latin and history; but average in mathematics, physics, English and French. In 1832, he joined the University of Goettingen to study law, but withdrew the following year. As an average student in the University of Goettingen, he fought many duels and made many friends with some foreign students, among which is John Motley, the renowned American historian (Blickle, 1992: 13).

In October 1834, he enrolled at the University of Berlin where he studied French literature, philosophy, and political science in the fall semester, and economics in the summer semester. In May 1835, he wrote and passed his final examination (Kent, 1978: 27). During his time in University of Berlin, he attended many social functions, part of which invitation to court. Seeing his average performance in academics, his mother encouraged him to choose a military career, but he objected. Despite dreaming of becoming a country squire, Bismarck joined the Prussian civil service in June 1835 where he was appointed as the junior officer at the Berlin city court. He later joined the diplomatic service owing to unpleasant experiences he had in the civil service. A year later, he was posted to Aachen district administration where he worked in the estate and forestry departments. However, the Prussian foreign minister, Ancillon, was not satisfied with Bismarck's new post partly because there

was no vacant in the ministry for a backcountry squire from Pomerania (Feuchtwanger, 2014: 21).. Ancillon therefore suggested that Bismarck should first complete his civil service engagement and then join the foreign ministry. Bismarck agreed to the suggestion, though disappointed. He was then transferred to Potsdam in December 1837, where he later joined the guard battalion in 1838 on his father's instruction. In the following year, he resigned from the civil service after he was offered part of his father's estate. Bismarck's civil career had been a disappointment and unpleasant event to him. His limited interest in the civil service was precipitated by lack of funds, slow progression in development, and overall, his strong aspiration for independence and self-fulfillment (Kent, 1978: 28).

After the death of his mother in January 1838, Bismarck became the 'mad Junker' as evidenced by his wild parties, heavy drinking and practical jokes. During this period, he developed strong feelings for Shakespeare's works and became interesting in the republican ideas. In 1842, he traveled to many European states, including England, Scotland, France and Switzerland. Bismarck was dissatisfied with his country life, and later became an official in his district. Bismarck's political authority started to manifest as a result of his believe that only the nobility had the right and competence to rule in Germany, and that these rights need to protected at all cost (Kent, 1978: 37). After his father's death in November 1845, Bismarck moved to Schoenhausen where he was involved in many local affairs, including his involvement in a local fight for the preservation and organization of laws in his district. In January 1847, Bismarck made his position clear regarding the preservation of German prestige and influence (Hamerow, 1972: 56). He emphasized that the nobility should be given extension to rule. Bismarck gained a strong reputation in his district, which made his name to be submitted to the United Prussian Diet as the district representative (Becker, 2008). During this period, Bismarck became a devout Christian, and through his new faith, he met Johanna von Puttkamer, whom he married in July 28 1847. Bismarck's new faith made him to have the belief that German sate has been ordained, and that governments and existing laws were established to protect Christians (Munz, 1969). This theory made him to have logical conviction that people tasked with responsibilities have been ordained by God to protect their subordinates against their enemies (Steinberg, 2011: 12).

In May 1847, Bismarck was sent as delegate to the United Prussian Diet, initiating the beginning of his political career. As a conservative, he fully defended the government against all oppositions; his first speech at the United Prussian Diet proved his conservatism as he directed his frustration to the liberals whose demand for constitution was based on the fact that liberal wars against the Napoleon was motivated by freedom and patriotism. During the altercation that welcomed his speech, Bismarck turned his back and read his newspaper until the rowdy session calmed down (Castelar, 1998: 106; Grant, 1918: 75). His behavior at the Diet made him prominent, and he became an outspoken opposition of Vincke, the leader of the liberal party (Feuchtwanger, 2014: 89). His stand on medieval Christian ideologies was strong against what he termed 'humanitarian and sentiment trash'. According to him, all European states are Christians and in the absence of religious principles, they would fall apart. Bismarck's interest I political debates, his desire to motivate people, his passion for freedom, and his disrespect to majority opinion all characterized his political self. Until his death in July 30 1898, Bismarck never ruled Germany; however, his domestic and foreign policies have contributed in shaping the recent German state as one of the world powerful state (Feuchtwanger, 2014: 101).

Throughout his reign, Bismarck has held many positions, including ambassador to Russia and Paris among many other positions. In 1851, he was appointed Prussian representative to the Federal Diet of the Confederation in Frankfurt where he strived to maintain Prussian supremacy. In 1859, he was moved to a new position in St Petersburg, however, he continue his struggle for Prussia within the confederation. Bismarck remained in the realm of power until in 1860 when a constitutional crisis broke out in Prussia, and resulted in his recall from posting to Paris as Prussian ambassador to head a new cabinet. After recovering from his illness in the spring of 1860, Bismarck went to Berlin for political business where he participated in meetings of the Prussian upper chamber on the request of the regent, who was already contemplating on the reconstruction of the ministry. While in Berlin, Schleinitz, his superior, ordered him to prepare a declaration on the reform of the confederation, which is to be presented in Frankfurt (Steinberg, 2011: 56).

Bismarck's tactical approach was creating mistrust, and this made the regent to reluctantly make him a minister. From 1862 to 1866 Bismarck ruled Prussia without a

constitution, ignoring the parliament, and illegally raising funds through taxation. In his new position as the prime minister of Prussia in 1862, Bismarck moved to facilitate Prussia's supremacy at every opportunity. During his time as the Prussian prime minister and German chancellor, he established a charismatic power, making him a charismatic leader with devoted followers, and someone who inspired radical enthusiasm, and who remained in power by creating and solving conflicts. Throughout his life, Bismarck served under three Kaisers: Wilhelm I, Friedrich III and Wilhelm II, and in the process took responsibility for German's internal and foreign policies (Steinberg, 2011: 56).

Many historians have argued much about Bismarck's political positions and tactic. It has been argued that Bismarck protested too much throughout his reign as German chancellor and prime minister. However, it is undeniable that he was a tactical manipulator and successful diplomat. Upon his appointment as the Prussian prime minister, some of liberal critic see him as an adventurer and hypothesized that his position in the office would be short-lived. Other critics predicted that he will rule with sword at home and ward abroad (Steinberg, 2011: 58). Some of the predictions came to pass because after 1878 as the German chancellor, his policies appeared out of context with social and economic realities. However, there was little space for him to accommodate alternative approaches, and this made him to feel uncomfortable in many of his positions.

### **CHAPTER 2**

### BISMARCK AND GERMAN DOMESTIC POLICY

### 2.1. Bismarck's Domestic Policy before the Unification

Since his appointment as the Prussian prime minister, Bismarck's ultimate quest is the unification of Germany which he achieved through many domestic policies. Prior to German unification, Bismarck has played critical role in shaping Germany's domestic affairs. For example, he played a role in blocking Austrian membership of the *Zollverein*, and opposed Schwarzenberg's attempts to dominate German Confederation through his advice to Prussian government to use all opportunities to grab German leadership (Craig, 1999: 16). During the Crimean war in 1854, he advised his government to utilize Austria's rift with Russia, and consequently proposed a revolutionary approach which requires the use of German nationalism as an avenue to destroy Austria's control within Germany. Bismarck's advice was not accepted eventually although appreciated. The Prussian foreign office was alerted on his quest to abandon the Holy Alliance of 1815. As a result, his influence was reduced and he was sent to St. Petersburg where he got more recognition than his own government (Abrams, 2006: 78).

Following the escalating Prussian constitutional rift, Bismarck was appointed minister-president of Prussia. His domestic policies before unification are so dazzling that many historians tend to rebuild a 'marvelous march of events, in which each stage seems to slip into its pre-appointed place' (Steinberg, 2011: 79). In fact he was faced with difficult problems in his domestic policies throughout 1862 to 1866. Immediately after Bismarck was appointed Prussian prime minister, the *Landtag* complicated the German constitutional rift by heavily criticizing the 1862 budgetary allocation to army. At this point, Bismarck was left between two alternatives of solving the crisis before it could obstruct his freedom of action, and prolonging it to enable him become an indispensable king. Bismarck's first approach was placatory. He built contact with Progressive Liberals, and announced the withdrawal of all budget bills during his first session with the Budget Committee. Bismarck intended to be pacific initially, but his cruel nature only made him to succeed in polarizing options. Bismarck subtly avoided

direct conflict with the *Landtag* by leaving the rejection of the amendments of the 1862 Budget bills to the Upper House, a gesture which the Liberals protested. In an attempt to affirm the military reorganization expenditure, Bismarck juxtaposed that the stalemate between the two chambers of parliament created an interrupt which the government had a duty to rectify (Pflanze, 1990: 78).

The relationship between Bismarck and the opposition had reduced when the Landtag reassembled in January 1863, and throughout the next 6 months, he was left with fight for political survival. At the end of 1863, Bismarck established a certain degree of control in Prussia which was considered by many historians as an act of dictatorship. In this regard, there was significant discipline among the civil servants and the Liberals were repressed against their political opinions. Although Bismarck's domestic policies were considered to be stiff and fierce, they never prevented the Liberal majority in the October 1863 general election like other statesmen who had serious rift with the opposition, Bismarck was enthusiastic about the way Napoleon III utilized universal authority to gain support for his autocratic regime (Eley, 1992: 107). In the summer of 1863, there were many sources alerting that Bismarck was attempting to force the King to break the alliance with the Landtag by advocating for a coup. Indeed, in May 1863, Bismarck initiated series of discussions with Ferdinand Lassalle to destroy Liberalism in which both parties were interesting in the initiative. Bismarck also persuaded his cabinet into accepting schemes for social reform so that if need be, he would be able to design a programmes that will attract mass electorate. Bismarck decided to play a fair game and keep his option open; his plan was to map out crisis with the Liberals until they became disintegrated. After the Danish war, another coup was tabled at the Prussian Crown Council, but Bismarck advised that the notion should be differed until the next year when the Landtag was due to meet (Pflanze, 1990: 91).

Despite their domination in the parliament, the Liberals were just a 'paper tiger' (Abrams, 2006: 67). Despite the huge conflict between Bismarck and Liberal opposition, he achieved excellent result in his economic and domestic policies. Although he did faced many challenges and could not move swiftly and quickly, the ultimate focus of his economic policy targeted the creation of condition that favors the development of laissez-fare capitalism. He further exploited stiff economic policy to divide the Liberals opposition. For example, in 1865, he presented series of bills to the

Landtag on railway construction, and only one of the bills was accepted. The growing achievement of Bismarck's domestic policy began to subvert the strength of the Liberals, and eventually, they were subdued. Bismarck utilized many approaches to unite the fragmented oppositions when the Austrian war was imminent, and 'despite his achievement of German nationalism, 'the predominant movement among the German people was anti-war and anti-Bismarck' (Pflanze, 1990: 326).

### 2.2. Bismarck domestic policy after the unification

Throughout his life, Bismarck served under three Kaisers: Wilhelm I, Friedrich III and Wilhelm II, and took responsibility for German's internal and foreign policies (Steinberg, 2011: 105). In his internal policies, several stages have been identified, including the implementation of a common currency and commercial statute for all German states along with legal procedures, restriction of the influence of Catholic Church, introduction of taxes to replace previous policy on free trade, action against the Social Democrats, to mention a few (Fischer, 1967: 70). Bismarck's internal policies met stiff resistance despite the foreseen economic policies. For example, the restriction of the influence of Catholic Church brought direct conflict with the Center Party, a political party who were considered to be strong opposition of the Bismarck's policies. Furthermore, the introduction of tariffs produced rift with the National Liberals, and his positions were opposed by most of the Kaisers who his positions ultimately depended on (Evans, 2015: 61).

Based on stiff resistance on Bismarck's repressive legislation by the Kaisers, particularly Friedrich III, he attempted to build a position which would undermine Friedrich's power. For example, in 1887, he advocated for a treaty between the National Liberals and the Prussian. The treaty went down well, but Bismarck's efforts were rendered groundless by Friedrich's premature death (Evans, 2015: 78). Owing to stiff resistance by the new crown king, Wilhelm in 1890, Bismarck had to react to different event occurrence in Germany, and also change his approaches and allies to achieve his ultimate domestic course: unification of German states (Abrams, 2006: 71).

Overall, the positive, and largely successful, events of Bismarck's domestic policies were the unification of German states, and provision of common currency and commercial code of conducts. With relatively little effort, Bismarck was able to fill some missing gaps left in the 1871 constitution (Hutto, 2014). In some ways, Bismarck's approach yielded some positive results. For instance, the National Liberals withdrew their stiff opposition against him. The party split into a more progressive entity to form the Freinsnnige Party in 1884, and the National Liberals as a rump (Lee, 1999: 218). The later came to support Bismarck on regular basis, forming an electoral alliance. Another positive result was the neutralization of the influence of Friedrich III in 1888, and in the process building the Kartell and creating a formidable military atmosphere in Germany through the creation of an Army Bill. In general, Bismarck used the National Liberals to enforce the unification process and get through the legislative ideas of the Kulturkampf (Gall, 1986: 67). He succeeded in winning the support of the Center Party in 1879 for the diversion into policy of protection. He also succeeded in undermining the influence of Friedrich II, who died early as a result of cancer. He further maintained his support for the Conservatives throughout his period, and he delayed the advent of SDP as a large parliamentary party (Steinberg, 2011: 231).

Besides these positivity's, Bismarck's political approach yielded some negative events. First, Bismarck neglected and weakened the positions of the Catholic Church - which constitute 37% of the German population - because he considered the church to be a representation of dual threat to his policies (Steinberg, 2011: 234). This measure demonstrated Bismarck's manipulative and conservative approach. Secondly, Bismarck advocated for the liberal initiative meant to prevent traditional institutions from threatening the growth of predominantly secular German states. This resulted into a paradoxical integration of liberal and illiberal effects (Blackbourne, 2003: 34). Third, there were overt failures in the Creation of the Kartells. For example, there was a constant conflict between the National Liberals and the Conservatives. This meant that Bismarck's political affiliation looked more problematic since the 1870s. In order to fix this, he considered creating a new Kartell which would involve creating a split within the Center, just like he did to the National Liberals. The Center was, however, more united, and were not ready to accept an unconditional alliance. In 1890,

Bismarck's attempt to create new Kartells between the Center and Conservatives failed (Blackbourn, 2003).

### 2.2.1. Bismarck policy for the Consolidation on the unification

History has it that Bismarck protested and argued too much, but there is no doubt that he was a successful diplomat and a pragmatist. Following his appointment as the Prussian prime minister, the liberal critics labeled him an adventure, and prophesized that his reign will be short-lived. On internal policy, Bismarck was seen as a reactionary and someone who is not afraid of violating the law. Another critic characterized his reign as 'the rule of the sword at home' and 'war abroad' (Abrams, 2006: 26). Although there was some truth in the above predictions, however, his reign as the chancellor of the German Empire, particularly his policies appeared out of context with social and economic reform. Historians believed that Bismarck attempted to suppress the opposition by his overtly repressive and manipulative strategies. As a result of this, Germany under Bismarck developed into society of competing interest group. The opposition however, resists all oppression and maintained their power and control until the 1918 revolution. Based on his ruling strategy for the German consolidation, Bismarck was labeled by the opposition as an arch-villian, manipulator and the architect of the authoritarian rule. Despite the wealth of evidence on Bismarck, however, it can be interpreted that his strategies are more charitable and his reign provided and accommodated alternative voices and interest which formed the German Empire (Abrams, 2006: 26).

The diversity of the German Empire – namely Catholics, Jews, ethnic minorities and socialists – was a serious challenge to Bismarck. Despite the fact that these entities never posed serious challenge to the German state, Bismarck opted to name them *Reichsfeinde* and subjected them to discrimination and repression, with Catholics being the first group to feel this discrimination and repression. Following the unification of Germany, Bismarck launched the *Kulturkampf* as a struggle of civilization, but was specifically coordinated to discriminate and repress the Catholic Church. In 1870, Bismarck launched the first series of laws aiming to counter the Catholic's first Vatican Council due to fear of its effectiveness. After this, a series of measures were launched which removed Catholic control from the administrative

affairs and school inspection. Eventually, Bismarck masterminded the abolishment of the Catholic section of the Prussian Ministry of Culture, and the expulsion of its members. Bismarck also subjected the Catholic to abide by state regulations. Consequently, the political voice of the Catholics was denied on the ground that the existence of the Catholics indicated opposition to the German state. In 1874, the sections of the Prussian constitution allowing religious freedom were revoked, with clear agreement that priests could face expulsion if they violated the German laws (Abrams, 2006: 30).

The idea of launching the *Kulturkampf* was precipitated by two issues. First, the Germany which Bismarck tried to consolidate was established by predominant Protestants. Bismarck regarded the Catholic as a dangerous independent body capable of an uprising against the state. Second, it had a pragmatic political bearing, which made the National Liberal Party to provide their support, although freedom of individuals was one of the principles of the classic liberals. The liberals believed that the Catholic ideologies such as schools, seminars and charities were symbols of backwardness, and eventually, forced the Catholic to search for a sense of identity in a hostile Protestant state. In 1878, the anti-Catholic campaign failed and Bismarck switched to a protectionist policy with the support of Catholic Center Party, with the party replacing the National Liberals as the party of the government. Following this alliance, many of the anti-Catholic measures were revoked, although the Catholic citizens continue to lag behind in terms of education and employment opportunities – a trend which was informed by the high population of the Catholic citizens in rural Germany and their strengths in social classes (Abrams, 2006: 38).

The Jews were another ethnic minority who suffered discrimination, antisemitic and repressive attacks from Bismarck although they were not mainly labeled and attacked as enemies of the German Empire. The Jews were formally set free throughout the German soil in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and legal balance involved them in the integration and participation of the economic and cultural life. More than half of the Jews were employed and their high educational level meant that their occupational mobility was higher than that of the Catholics and other ethnic minorities. Although the Jews were the dominant populations close to Bismarck, however, he failed to publicly oppose anti-semitism (Williamson, 2013: 67). In spite the fact that most Jews

see themselves as Germans, however, their citizenship of the German state and religious and cultural beliefs were not mutually integrated in the German soil. Besides the Jews and the Catholics, the Poles, Danes and the citizens of Alsace-Lorraine were also labeled as *Reichsfeinde* by Bismarck.

The Poles were the significant minority in the eastern Prussia and Bismarck attempted to Germanize them. In 1866, Bismarck advocated for Settlement Law, which supported the migration of German peasants into the eastern region, thereby removing the aristocratic power of the Polish. Bismarck further introduced more drastic measures that forced out about 30,000 Poles, who could not defend their citizenship status, from the Prussian eastern region. In 1877, German was made the official language of administration and legal system, and the use of Polish was banned in several gatherings, including schools and private clubs. This negatively affected thousands of Poles who lived in industrial areas and who had been recruited in mining industrial for years (Abrams, 2006: 40). Despite this suppression, the Poles continued to form their own activities, published their own newspapers, worshiped as one Polish Catholics, and also formed their political party. Eventually, the Poles, who initially supported regional integration, were forced to defend their position as the German Empire refused to recognize any ethnic minority who wished to support full integration but isolate their own cultural traditions (Abrams, 2006: 51). Just like the Poles were considered as enemies of the German Empire on the ground of their allegiance to Polish nationalism, the citizens of Alsace-Lorraine, a region forfeited to Germany during the Franco-Prussian, were also suspected of paying allegiance to French nationalism. In this region, Bismarck introduced German as the official language of instruction, although they were allowed to speak French in public gathering as the second language (Williamson, 2013: 78).

Apart from the ethnic minorities, the Social Democrats felt the full venom of the Bismarck's repressive and discriminative policy, making them to uphold the authoritarian leadership style against domestic and external threats. The Social Democrats secured two seats in the 1871 Reichstag elections, and increased this to twelve seats in 1877. Membership of the socialist Free Trade Unions increased from 50,000 in 1877 to 350,000 by 1890. Following the alleged two attempts to kill Wilhelm I, Bismarck clamped down on the activities of the social democrats in 1878. Although

the attempts had nothing to do with the socialists, Bismarck had been looking for slight opportunity to damage the Social Democrats and also weaken the Liberals. There is no doubt that Bismarck wanted to conquer the increasing socialist domination in Germany and at the same time fight the ideology of the anti-socialist policy introduced in 1878. He partially claimed victory in his quests as he gained support from some of the liberals while others voted against the anti-socialist policy, hence splitting the party. Eventually, all extraordinary socialist activities were banned; socialist agitators were arrested and imprisoned; socialist clubs were forced to disintegrate; their newspapers were banned; and their financial contributions were forbidden (Abrams, 2006: 76).

Despite the continuous harassment and repression on the Social Democrats, they stood strong against any oppression. Many workers continue to vote for socialists in defiance of the state and in recognition that the party represents their interests. Bismarck's repressive policy failed to weaken the socialist; this movement stood stronger and more resolute against Bismarck's 12 years of repression. Bismarck's repressive strategy was no doubt effective in short-term, and this scored and secured his political position (Abrams, 2006: 81). The Catholics, socialist and other ethnic minorities refused to reconcile with the Prussian state, rather they emerged stronger and more organized from the repression (Williamson, 2013: 89).

The second strategy to the consolidation of the German Empire was ideological conformity. The role of the Protestant in terms of education and military was prevalent in daily life. Values inculcated by these institutions were made to adopt the hierarchy and structure of social dimension. Key institution for the dispersal of these values is the Protestant Church. During the Holy Roman Empire, each ruler has a freedom to determine the official religion to be practiced by the state. The state on the other hand has a control in the selection of the church to attend; this ideology continued until 1918 in the Protestant region of the German Empire. During Bismarck reign, he managed to reform all political and religious ideologies towards ensuring a new German Empire (Williamson, 2013: 89).

### 2.2.2. Bismarck's reforms

The unification of Germany activated short-term speculative events. Following Germany's economic depression which also hit the rest of the Europe in 1873, Bismarck was forced to come into agreements to unravel the situation. He was coerced to accept the strong pressures for tariffs which were exerted by the industries and agricultural interest. Bismarck was aware of the possible benefits to derive from the economic imitative (Brandenburg, 1929: 45). Despite opposing a policy to initiate a national income tax, Bismarck grabbed the initiative to increase revenues from indirect taxation due to the fact that this initiative would be easier to keep away from the Reichstag control. Following the opposition from the National Liberals, Bismarck was ready to break his alliance. This means that he could abandon the major characteristics of the *kulturkampf* in order to gain the support of the Centre Party. However, Bismarck opted to improve his relationship with the Catholic Church. In 1879, his initiative paid off when he pushed for protective tariffs against the support of the National Liberals (Brandenburg, 1929: 45).

Following his alliance with the Conservative and Centre Parties, Bismarck was reported to have achieved the most concrete achievement on the introduction of the tariff reform. Besides introduction of new tariff, Bismarck advocated for stiff economic policy that saw the annual productivity of Germany increased by 5% in 1871-73. Because of rapid growth in railway construction, Bismarck ordered the construction of many iron and steel works. Expansion of many factories was helped by credit policies introduced by Bismarck and by the liquid capital injected into the economy (Brandenburg, 1929: 46). This capital was used to finance many military projects and to pay war loans. Subsequently, the reform of the German currency added about 762,000,000 marks to the free trade capital in the German economy. In 1872, 49 new banks were established in Prussia alone; these banks invested into joint stock companies, a partnership which was established and passed by the Reichstag in 1870 (Coy, 2011: 38).

One of the dazzling efforts of Bismarck's in his reform of the German Empire was the education system of Germany, in which Germany's system of education was more advanced compared to other European states. After the unification of Germany

and the consolidation of the German Empire, more than 33,000 primary schools were already established in Prussia educating almost 4 million children, and by 1911 this figure increased to 39,000 schools with 6.5 million school children. As a result of this, literacy level among German citizens was high, with statistics showing that no fewer than 50 in every 1,000 Germans can be able to read and write in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Abrams, 2006: 67). With this formidable number of schools, the education system of Germany was in better position to inculcate the spirit of patriotism and nationalism among Germans who were already divided along ethnic and religious lines. To achieve full reform, Bismarck advocated for the inculcation of values such as: loyalty to the monarchy, obedience to the state, and discipline to laws in the minds of the pupils (Coy, 2011: 78).

Schools served as agents of Germanization of non-Germans through the teaching of German language, history and culture, with a significant focus given to history. Bismarck laid a foundation that enabled school children to celebrate national victories; engaged children in waving of flags during national events and street procession. School children were taught that their King was a man of piety and unshakable belief in God, and were encouraged to emulate him. However, the education reform under Bismarck did not promote mobility; rather, it served as an avenue to keep German citizens in their place. Although many German citizens were enrolled in primary education, few were encouraged to pursue secondary education, and only those with financial resources could afford to attend (Gerwarth, 2005: 59).

The military is another institution that was reformed during Bismarck's era. Labeled as the 'school of the nation', it was perceived that the military was a strong agent of stability and conservatism in the German Empire. Many historians had labeled Germany under Bismarck as a militarized nation, with the size of the army increasing from 400,000 before the unification to 864,000 after consolidation of the new German Empire. All men considered as German citizens are required to engage in 2-3 military experience to acquire national consciousness as well as discipline and ideological conformity (Coy, 2011: 76). The military alongside education served to preserve the existing German system of privilege and power. In his reform, Bismarck ensured that aristocratic outlook of army was preserved to prevent the Social Democrats from infiltrating the officer corps rank. The SDP members were not allowed to be part of

army recruits. Bismarck's military reform transformed the army into an excessive conservative institution whose main role is to protect the German Empire from external aggressors and oppositions (Lee, 1999: 56).

In the Bismarckian era, many cultural ideologies were adopted, which consequently transformed the political and legal structure. For example, women were considered second-class individuals with no representation in the political and legal affairs. There was endemic inequality between men and women across all sectors in German societies, a situation which was summed up as 'the state for the man, the family for the woman' (Abrams, 2006: 59). The Bismarckian laws showed great discrimination against women by treating them like children. Upon marriage, women had to give up all their rights and property, although they still possess little rights concerning guardianship of their children. There is wide gender gap in terms of work pay and education, and as well as politics. Until 1908, women in Bismarckian era were not allowed to participate in any political activities; they could not vote or join any political party and trade unions; they could not attend to political meetings or establish any political organization; rather, the only public activity women can engage in was charity and philanthropic work (Lee, 1999: 65).

Equally, most political parties paid no attention to women position except the Social Democrats, Bismarck's rival opposition, who supported women's demand for equal, although they failed woefully in this regard. However, women's political activities came to board after 1890 when feminists adopted strong confrontational approach to demand for their political rights. Issue of 'women question' was raised and many women wings later found their voices outside the confines of party politics. During the outbreak of war, there was limited improvement towards women rights in Germany: the length of working days for women was reduced; more women were enrolled into education; more women were given teaching and healthcare professions; and married women had full legal status. However, they had to wait after the war and revolution for full implementation of the constitutional amendment of the women rights (Headlam, 1989: 54).

In the early 1880, Bismarck introduced the social reform legislation, a reform which many historians argued that it was not his sole intention to improve the living conditions of the workers, but to maintain the stability of the German Empire by indicating that state could provide more to the workers than the Social Democrats (Palier, 2010: 23). Many of his social reform policies, including reduction of length of working days, restricting female and child labor, and imposing minimum wage, were opposed by the Social Democrats on the ground that such reform would alienate the industrialists whom Bismarck depend on their support. Following the 1880 social reform, a social insurance package was announced by the Kaiser in 1883. This package benefited few since payments were and people qualified to access the package were mostly the old. Additionally, the implementation of the reform did not pacify workers due to the violent and repressive nature of the Social Democrats against many Bismarck's policies (Gerwarth, 2005: 65).

Due its limited value to German citizens, Bismarck's social reforms were amended after his fall in 1890 to include a more progressive policies which abolished Sunday working; provisions for accident insurance was extended in 1900; funds were set aside for workers' housing scheme; children were protected by employment policy; and all employees were protected by insurance scheme. Although Bismarck's social reform policies could not cater for all German citizens, however, it served as benchmark for the introduction of other social packages (Headlam, 1989: 48).

### **CHAPTER 3**

### BISMARCK AND GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY

### 3.1. Bismarck foreign policy before the unification

As a political state, Germany did not exist before 1866. Following the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire in 1808 and the subsequent defeat of Napoleon in 1814, a loose confederation comprising 39 smaller states were established, with their rulers given sovereignty over their territories. Although Germany did not exist politically, however it exists culturally, with its geographical areas characterized by rich diversity but lacking the spirit of cultural identity and common language. However, Germany's cultural identity failed to have a strong connection with its political identity, resulting to its failed political transformation into a nation-state (Abrams, 2006: 56). In practice, the unification of Germany can be seen as a result of territorial and economic expansion of Prussia. For example, in 1864 Prussia demonstrated her military and diplomatic prowess over the Schleswig-Holstein question, defeating the attempt of Denmark to merge the two northern duchies into Danish kingdom. In the same year, Prussia defeated Austria in terms of economy through her exclusion from the Customs Union which eased free trade among her members.

Having achieved Prussian dominance, Bismarck however acknowledged that German unity has not yet been achieved; he strongly affirmed that war was a necessity to achieve political unification. In 1870 Bismarck took advantage of crisis over succession to the Spanish throne to push for his ultimate quest, and this resulted into a war. To further push for unification of Germany, Bismarck promoted the Hohenzollern candidacy, resulting to disagreement from France who interpreted Bismarck's move as a yardstick for Prussian dominance. Subsequently, France was further enraged by Bismarck's dispatch that reported the conversation between the Kaiser and the French ambassador. This prompted Napoleon III to declare a war on Prussia, a war they were defeated. The concern whether Bismarck intentionally planned German unification is still a long standing debate among historians over the decades (Abrams, 2006: 60). To be certain, Bismarck himself denied influencing the unification process in his remark:

"At least I am not so arrogant as to assume that the likes of us are able to make history. My task is to keep an eye on the currents of the latter and steer my ship in them as best I can". However, what seems certain is his proclamation that only by war fought in a common cause could achieve unification which he later demonstrated against Denmark, Austria and France. Furthermore, there is clear evidence that the ultimate goal of unification was to reach an end. This is because the unification process allowed Bismarck to preserve his political power by expressing his national interest. The unification of Germany can therefore be seen as Bismarck's skillful economy diplomacy towards promoting the interest of Prussia (Abrams, 2006: 60).

Germany did not gain her true identity as a nation-state for many decades until 1914 when the German citizens match together to defend their fatherland. Despite retaining its geographical and political entity, Germany remained heterogeneous in terms of region. Her new constitution affirmed its federal nature by allowing local rulers to have influence over internal affairs, including education, justice and local government. The predominant rural character of the country was retained in the south and eastern part while the northern part remained a stronghold of industrialization and urbanization. German unification was not a thing that was achieved altogether in 1871, but a process of political, economy and social development (Steinberg, 2011: 87).

In conclusion, the unification of Germany was referred to by many historians as the political and administrative amalgamation of Germany into a strong powerful state which officially happened in 1871. In his article "Unification of Germany and its emergence as a great power", juxtaposed with clear evidence the role of Otto von Bismarck in German unification. As an architect of a unified Germany, Bismarck's prowess and his belief in "Realpolitik" transformed Germany from a loose net of 39 states into the most powerful industrial state in the Europe. Germany's unification followed Prussia's victories over Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866 and France in 1870-71(Vaibhav, 2017: 7). Bismarck's autocratic leadership as seen by many historians helped in the formulation of stiff foreign and domestic policies, and by 1900 Germany became the largest economy house of Europe. The ultimate goal of Bismarck was to build a united Germany, with Prussia as its headquarter. To emphasize his stand on the unification process, Bismarck made his famous speech in which he stressed that if the unification process will occur, there is need for military force. After his speech,

he rejected the budget proposal and called for a strong bureaucratic action on taxes, which were used to expand and strengthen the Prussian armies in preparation for three wars known as "German wars of unification" (Rohl, 1967: 98).

#### 3.2. Bismarck and the German unification

Before 1850s, there were sporadic and unpredictable moves towards unification, with cultural heritage and alliance between liberalism and nationalism among the underlying impetus towards the process. This was evidenced by the popular uprising which overthrew the Munich and Vienna governments, and forced the election of the Frankfurt Assembly. This move was to establish a united Germany through a progressive constitution, only to find the armies of the counter-revolution, led by Prussia, too strong, thereby collapsing the entire process. From the late 1850s, the dominance and influence of Prussia increased with increase in economy and military might, resulting to constitutional conflicts between Prussia and Austria. This war was won by Otto von Bismarck who was appointed Minister and President of Prussia in 1862. In the next nine years of Bismarck presidency, Prussia was involved in three major wars during which the smaller German states were removed from Austrian presidency (Ramage, 1899: 298). The German Confederation was disintegrated and Prussia expands its forces and allies to establish a new and inclusive Germany. The unification events from 1863 to 1871 seemed to have led to unification of Germany, although there are a lot of disagreements among historians as to whether there were intentional.

In conclusion, German unification was achieved after three 'wars of unification' between 1864 and 1870, which eventually gave rise to a powerful German Empire with its headquarter in Prussia. Between 1871 and 1918 Germany had emerged as the strongest powerhouse in Europe, owing to her strong economy and military prowess. The establishment of a strong Customs Union, also known as Zollverein, paved way for further economic development and military might. Germany's cultural and political development was precipitated by the elimination of all non-German languages, ethnic groups and cultures. Germany's unification process was achieved through the effort of great leaders like Bismarck, and through this process, Germany's

emergence as European powerhouse reform the balance of power in Europe, which eventually contributed to the outbreak of World War I (Vaibhay, 2017: 8).

## 3.2.1. German nationalism and ideological background of the unification

There was no concept of German nationalism towards the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century. This was evidenced from the fact that most Germans like Johann Herder identified Germany with the old Holy Roman Empire, and perceived Germany to be a cultural nation characterized by its literature and language (Williamson, 2013: 4). However, following the defeat of Austria and Prussia and the occupation of some German territory by the French between 1806 and 1813, German nationalist movement came into existence. Some conservatives such as Friedrich Gentz were attracted by appeals for an uprising of the German Volk against the French occupants. After the liberation war and the disappointments of the Vienna agreement in 1815, the nationalist movement was kept alive by gymnastic societies and student brotherhood (Wehler, 1985: 397). While the gymnastic societies were set up to encourage a feeling of Germanness, the student brotherhood - formed at the universities - was formed to create a pan-German group that would follow the orientation of the nationalist and liberal orientation. The German nationalism became a powerful pan-European movement, and thus was inspired and strengthened by uprising against the Turks in 1820 and the Polish revolt of 1830. Other factors that triggered the nationalist movement was the integration of the Duchies of Schleswig into the Danish state. By 1848, about 250,000 Germans were already initiated into many nationalist movements (Wehler, 1985: 397). Up to 1870, German nationalism still exists, as was paired with Liberalism to demand for a united Germany. After the 1830 French revolution, the Liberals were able to utilize local uprisings to persuade the rulers to set up a constitution. At the Palatinate, a pressure group (*Pressverein*) set up by Johann Wirth campaigned for liberals across the German speaking territories. By 1832, this group grew to 5,000 members and later organized a large-scale political festival which triggered further nationalist movements.

At the end of 1840, Liberalism had become a popular nationalist movement, with two major divisions. The left wing was more interested in a strong parliamentary system, while the right wing were more pragmatic and looked forward to the state as

a potential ally against disruptive pace of economic and social change. Apart from the liberals, there is another nationalist movement that fought for German national unity, the Conservatives. Initially, the conservatives tend to be a more anti-modernist movement which totally opposed the nationalist development and that of the modern state (Williamson, 2013: 4). However, in 1840s there were indications that the conservatives and the liberals were drawing closer to each other. The conservatives recognized the need for a constitution and elected members of the parliament, a demand which later caught the minds of Freidrich Wilhelm IV and his councilors. At the time of conservative and liberal movement, there was a huge tension between Catholicism and Nationalism. The aftermath of the French revolution saw the Catholic Church became more critical of the modern state and liberalism. There was mixed reaction concerning German unity among these nationalist movements. On one hand, there were the conservatives who accepted the Catholic Church as the main opposition to liberalism. On the other hand, there were the Catholics who were in full support of the liberal demands for freedom and constitution, while there also the social Catholicism who demand controls on laissez-faire capitalism (Williamson, 2013: 5).

#### 3.2.2. Bismarck and "Blood and Iron" Policy

In many occasions, Bismarck had revealed his iron policies to achieve Prussian dominance. His stated this clearly in October 1862 when he bragged about how he had successfully deceived all politicians and how he gained dominance in student life: 'I intend to lead my companions here, as I intend to lead them in after-life (Pflanze, 1990: 179)'. Bismarck often perceived politics as a thing of struggle. He often refers to politics as the art of the possible and never see compromise as a satisfactory outcome (Pflanze, 1990: 183). He had defeated and destroyed his rivals through many autocratic approaches against the constitution, and thus had committed many war crimes. At the first stage of his political career, he had clash in the Landtag where he indicates his preference for conflict and violence. On 27thJanuary 1863, Bismarck in his speech told his deputies his perceptions about constitutionalism which he described as 'a series of compromises, if they are frustrated, conflicts arise. Conflicts are questions of power and whoever has power to hand can go his own way'. Throughout his political career, Bismarck always tried to preserve his royal absolutism on which his power rested. In his foreign politics, Bismarck never lost his temper nor

felt defeated. He rather challenged the smartest people he came across with and no King or Queen could get his way.

His domestic policies posed huge challenge, involving endless details and insoluble problems, with different actors and conflicting interests. He knew everything and had to make decision on everything. Although he was always sick and away for months, he got constantly impatient. More taxing in his domestic policies was his lack of strong principles on practical matters and his political positions on local government, trade, commercial regulations, legal codes and machinery of the modern states. He opted to complicate his life by agitating for *Kulturkampf* and at the same time provoking the conservatives, liberals, progressives and other nationalists. He practiced his autocratic approach to maintain a semi-absolute monarchy and to preserve the rights of a Junker who hated almost all nationalists, including the liberals, Jews, socialists, Catholics and democrats. In 1863 Bismarck proclaimed that the new Germany would constitute of a universal 'manhood suffrage'. In order to achieve this, he used the people to subvert the German authorities. At the time, he underestimated the power of Prussians because he could not see how they had changed over the centuries (Steinberg, 2011: 374).

The deepest and incomprehensible of Bismarck's reign lie in his own personality. Bismarck ruled Germany without a constitution by making himself a dictatorial old man, who happened to be a king. He brought the King from his kinsmen and put himself 'between man and wife and between father and son'. He ruled with his individualistic magic wand, creating trust from William I and his chief ministers. In the end, he achieved his quest but paid a price of physical symptoms, sleepless nights, stomach problems and anxiety. Throughout his twenty six years of rule, Bismarck lived in constant love/hate relationship. The terrible irony of Bismarck's political reign was attributed to his powerlessness. Contemporary historians labeled him a 'dictator' and a 'tyrant'. Probably, that could be the sole reason he insisted that any epitaph on his grave should reflect the truth about his political career: 'A faithful German servant of Kaiser Wilhelm I' (Steinberg, 2011: 378).

#### **3.2.2.1. Prussian-Danish War (1864-1865)**

The Germans were the primary occupants of Schleswig and Holstein and were under the rule of Danish king for centuries. Following the death of King Frederick VI of Denmark in 1839, crisis occurred on the succession of Holstein and Schleswig in which Danish laws conflicted with those of Holstein, thereby threatening the status of Schleswig. The population of Schleswig comprised Danish in the northern part, German in the southern part and mixed in the northern cities and the center (Abrams, 2006: 132). Denmark's nationalist proposed that national boundary, Eider River, should be established to detach Schleswig from Holstein. However, German nationalists were against this proposal and opted to confirm the association between Schleswig and Holstein in order to separate the two regions. Just few days as the new Danish King, Frederick proposed a constitution that would acknowledge Denmark, Schleswig and Holstein as independent states, however, with a single government. In response to this proposal, the duchies requested that Schleswig and Holstein be admitted into German Confederation as a single state. Following the German revolution in March 1848, the duchies revolted against Denmark, forcing the provisional Danish government to officially declare their independence and rallied support for German freedom and unity. On 27<sup>th</sup> March, King Frederick came up with a draft constitution that would draw Schleswig closer to Denmark than to Holstein. This resulted into first Schleswig war with Prussia. Following a seven-month truce, Prussian soldiers were withdrawn on 26<sup>th</sup> August. Conflict renewed after the expiration of the truce in 1849 and once again Bismarck advanced the Prussian army into Denmark in hesitation to acquire Schleswig and Holstein. Another six-month truce was signed on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1849 to restore the status quo; however, rebels in the duchies persistently resisted the Danish authority. On 8<sup>th</sup> May 1852, the Treaty of London was signed by virtually all the great powers of Europe. This treaty declared the unification of Danish kingdom as a permanent entity in the European balance of power (Abrams, 2006: 132).

Several constitutional efforts were made to address the Schleswig-Holstein crisis throughout 1850s, and finally Eider-Danes' policy was adopted; a Danish policy that annexed Schleswig with Denmark, leaving Holstein. Against this policy by Prussia, several meetings had been held with regional governments to address this

issue but failed to settle the dispute in conclusive manner. When Bismarck was appointed the Prussian prime minister, this dispute was still alive. Eventually, Prussia was plunged in a domestic struggle and contest with Austria for supremacy. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 1863, the British Prime Minister gave a warning to states threatening the integrity of Denmark (Kassner, 2012: 17). In August, Bismarck refused to take part in the congress of princes which Austria convened in consideration for the reform of Germany. Prior to this, there was existing nationalist breakout across Germany and Bismarck used this opportunity to interfere, an effort which was supported by the Liberals. On March 1864, Bismarck signed alliance with Austria, a move to fully invade Denmark properly, and to build a strong German Confederation.

This alliance was unusual given the great rivalry between the two Powerhouses. Prussia and Austria gave an ultimatum to Denmark in 1864 requesting for a withdrawal of the established constitution within 48 hours or face military action, an ultimatum which Denmark refused. On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1864, Austro-Prussian army laid siege on Schleswig, ignoring the federal troops in Holstein. This move initiated Prussia's disintegration from federal policy as Bismarck demonstrated his anticipation to achieve the take-over of the duchies to Prussia (Kassner, 2012: 17).

Within few days of the initial war, the Danish army retreated, a move to change its both offensive and defensive action. However, following a two-week siege, Prussian army claimed a significant victory when the captured the Danish stronghold at Dybbol on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1864. However, Denmark prove stronger at the coast side, preserving their successful blockage of German ports, although this small triumph was only an ice-berg compared to the Austro-Prussian victory along the border. Before Bismarck could actualize their victory, Prussia was faced with a European conference in London on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1864 (Halperin, 1973: 85). However, the conference was delayed by effort to bring a truce, and by Bismarck's deliberate plan to postpone the opening ceremony until all territories of the duchies are captured by Austro-Prussian army. Napoleon brought a proposal to consult the wishes of the population but Bismarck changed the proposal to separation of Holstein and southern Schleswig from Denmark (Steinberg, 2011: 89). Although Bismarck could not execute this proposal without violation of Austro-Prussian alliance in March, he however began to work towards that effect privately. The London conference came to an end on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1864

with conclusive plan. The war continued at the end of June and facilitated Bismarck's idea to hide the Schleswig-Holstein question from international discourse. From the onset of the war, attitudes of Austria and Prussia towards the duchies were conflicting and dispute seemed inevitable. Eventually, Denmark was defeated and the Gastein convention on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1865 settled this seeming dispute by assigning the domestic affairs of Holstein to Austria and that of Schleswig to Prussia. This settlement was short-lived as seven weeks territorial war resurfaced between Austria and Prussia (Steinberg, 2011: 89).

#### **3.2.2.2.** Austro-Prussian War (1866)

After the defeat of Denmark, Bismarck was heavily criticized for attempting to persuade many strong European countries into a preconceived diplomacy. Some historians debated that the most noticeable characteristics of Bismarck's first year as prime minister were his insignificant actions and lack of understandings of what work best for Prussia (Crankshaw, 1981: 45). Since early 1850s, Bismarck had analyzed the rivalry between Austria and Prussia and had affirmed that Austrian dominance in Germany could only be broken through the assistance of France and Russia (Stone, 2015: 155). In 1862, his intention to establish Prussian hegemony in North Germany started to manifest. However, his assumption of French support was trembled when Napoleon affirmed his neutral stand should war breakout between Austria and Prussia. On perceiving this, Bismarck changed his itinerary and gave Austria the option of 'conservative alliance' which would guarantee her interest in Italy and Near East and therefore concede Prussian hegemony. However, Austria insisted on her proposal for the reform of German Confederation. Once again Bismarck disowned the establishment of the Prussian hegemony and offered Vienna and St. Petersburg a proposal to accept the revival of Holy Alliance of 1815. Still Austria rejected this proposal and made an attempt to seize the initiative by tabling another plan for the reform of German Confederation Prussia (Crankshaw, 1981: 45).

An attempt to neutralize Bismarck's opposition was made by the Austrians through the invitation of the princes to a conference without holding any ministerial meeting for preparation. Bismarck induced William to snub the meeting and then organized a central parliament which was elected by the entire German states. This

destroyed the proposals of Austria coupled with the fact that the smaller states were not ready to do anything without Prussia. Another factor that destroyed the Austrian initiative was Napoleon's sudden call for European congress to revisit the official agreement of 1815, and the increasingly awful situation in Schleswig-Holstein. Bismarck continued to advocate the need for Prussia to annex the territories to prevent a preferable Danish sovereignty which could oppose Prussian interest in the Confederation and Zollverein. Being aware of the importance of this cause, he ordered the Prussian army to establish plans for invasion of Schleswig-Holstein in 1862. However, this action was made practically impossible by the increasing Confederate involvement. Throughout December 1863, Prussia and Austria tried to abate the Confederation's eagerness of Augustenburg. The two states agreed to temporary occupation of Holstein. This dual power had little alternative but to invade Schleswig. On 17 January 1864, both Austria and Prussia signed a convention that would advance their troops into Schleswig. While Bismarck had no exact plan for action, he had basic aims of which he never gave up. His new course was the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein and eventual establishment of German hegemony in the North (Pflanze, 1990: 201).

At this point Austria was the major challenge to Prussia in an attempt to annex the Duchies, however, Bismarck was not in haste to force the annexation as time is on Prussia's side. Eventually, Austria went bankrupt and was occasionally threatened with war by Italy. They were also isolated in Europe and were further excluded from the Zollverein. This prompted Bismarck to sustain Prussia's alliance with Italy with hope that Austria's position would induce the Emperor to accept Prussia's demands. In August 1864, Bismarck and William met with the Austrian Emperor and his foreign minister (Count Rechberg) where a verbal agreement was reached to enable Prussia gain the Duchies in exchange for Venetia. However when Rechberg produced a draft of the agreement, monarchs of both parties rejected it. The intentions of Bismarck towards annexation of Schleswig-Holstein were too ambiguous (Taylor, 1955: 56). There is uncertainty on his intentions to commit Prussia to obligations. However, clear evidence indicates that he tried to ensure continue cooperation with Austria for the time being (Pflanze, 1990: 205).

Throughout 1864/65 the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein remained undecided as Prussian and Austrian relationship dwindled. Rechberg, the Austrian minister, had resigned as a result of failed agreement and subsequently replaced by Count Mensdorff-Pouilly. The new foreign minister agreed to anti-Prussian line of his department (Taylor, 1955: 89). In November, Bismarck was given a choice by Mensdorff to choose between the recognition of an independent Schleswig-Holstein under Augustenburg or accepting Austrian consent to annexation with territorial concessions in Silesia and Hohenzollern region of Wuttemberg. The future of Schleswig-Holstein still remained undecided until February 1865, when Augustenburg recognition by Prussia was challenged with unacceptable terms which would have a de facto Prussian annexation. Austro-Prussian cooperation was only possible based on acknowledgement of Austria to let Prussian hegemony stand. However, Emperor Francis Joseph was not willing to make any concession. Bismarck noticed this crude logic and offered the Austrian ambassador two options: an alliance or war to the knife. However, the ambassador failed to improve the relation between the two rival states, and consequently, Bismarck considered isolating Austria in preparation for war. Throughout 1865/66 conflict worsen in the Duchies, with the Prussians gaining the support of Augustenburg while the Austrians pursued the same course in Holstein. At the Prussian Crown Council on 28 February 1866, an agreement was reached to go to war with Austria (Taylor, 1955: 89).

At this point, Bismarck stressed that Prussia should be declared the leader of German nationalism; a proclamation which he was conscious that the main issue was to control Germany instead of Schleswig-Holstein alone. On 8 April 1866 Bismarck concluded plans to form alliance with Italy for a period of three months (Pflanze, 1990: 81). Attempt of another alliance was made by Bismarck to woo nationalist opinion when a proposal was made by Prussian representative at Frankfurt. Throughout April and May, Prussian, Austrian and Italian armies began to deploy their arsenal, however Bismarck held fast to his options even at this stage. Many historians argued that Bismarck sought for mediation to avoid the civil war by involving the Gablenz brothers to help in the division of Germany into Austrian and Prussian spheres of control. This they believe that Bismarck wanted a solution to German unification. However, Austria rejected the Gablenz idea and was ready to fight. On 1st June 1866 Vienna broke the Gastein Convention and pleaded to the Confederation to work out

the future of the duchies. Prussia strike back and inhabited Holstein which the Austrians moved out without firing a shot. The Austrians advance their final steps to war and called upon the smaller states for help. However, the fear of Prussian dominance obstructs this alliance. Austria then moved to secure French neutrality by promising to surrender Venetia to Italy and to accept French satellite state (Pflanze, 1990: 98).

Prussian on the other hand retaliated by declaring the Confederation dissolved and sent notice to neighboring states (Saxony, Hanover and Hesse-Kassel) to demobilize their army in preparation to join the new *Kleindetsch* state which Bismarck earlier proposed to establish. However, these neighboring states rejected the notice and Prussian army advanced to occupy all the three states. Austria on the other hand promised to help any state invaded by Prussia. On 20th June 1866, conflict erupted between Prussia and Austria over the control of Schleswig and Holstein. Bismarck who masterminded the conflict already knew that Russia, France and Italy would not take part. However, Italy and some smaller German states backed Prussia while Austria on the other hand was backed by central German. Contrary to many beliefs that Austria would claim victory due to its military prowess, Prussia crushed Austria and retained the control of Schleswig and Holstein. After the war, Bismarck organized a peaceful treaty with Austria to remain Prussia's strong allies. There was amalgamation of Prussia and Northern German states to form North German Confederation in 1867, a Confederation which gave rise to new powerful state that govern themselves under the influence of the German Emperor states (Vaibhav, 2017: 8).

# 3.2.2.3. Franco-Prussian War and the proclamation of German Empire (1870-1871)

The question on the extent of Bismarck's involvement in Hohenzollern candidacy, which precipitated Franco-Prussian war, remained unanswered over the decade. Although some information concerning his involvement was fully revealed in 1890s, however, relevant analysis was only possible in 1945 when some important files fell into the hands of German allies and were subsequently published in 1957 (Bonnin, 1957: 32). Bismarck's idea to involve in Spanish politics occurred following

the controversial Madrid coup in 1868 in which the provisional Spanish government sought the replacement of the Bourbons with a new ruling dynasty, an event that was fully welcomed by Bismarck. On this note, Bismarck received several warnings from the French ambassador coupled with threats of war. However, it became apparent that Bismarck wanted the war with France to occur, as evidenced by his information to Major Max von Versen claiming that complications with France were actually what he wanted (Halperin, 1973: 54). Probably, Bismarck has more intent on averting defeat than on provoking wars. On 31st July 1870, Bismarck left the shore of Berlin with the King for the seat of war. Throughout the next few months, Germany was governed from French soil. Bismarck. As soon as the war was declared, Bismarck had three main focus: to ensure that the war could be fought and won in diplomatic isolation; utilizing the paroxysm of patriotism to complete his unification question; and devise a peace agreement that would abolish hostilities while providing Germany with a secured western boundary. Bismarck never forgot he was a military man; he was delighted with his military attire than his civil rank. Despite not being a combatant, his pride however became something to share after the war (Halperin, 1973: 56).

A rapid victory became apparent on the French side. The French soldiers comprised of formidable armed forces with highly effective riffle and mitrailleuses. However, the initial mobilization of French army proved disordered that plans for offensive strike across the Rhine had to be ceased for a time being in an attempt to hold a defensive tactics from Metz to Strasburg. Von Moltke responded by sending his soldiers to Lorraine, hoping he would put the French army in circle (Abrams, 2006: 87).. The French failed to fall into this setup but the Prussian army moved slowly and eventually managed to lay siege to the French army. On 17<sup>th</sup> August, the headquarters came up with the fighting front, fully prepared with their armies (Becker, 2008: 109). At one instance, Bismarck was in serious danger considering the fact that his two sons were serving in the Prussian army, serving in the same uniform which their father was entitled to wear. The eldest of his son, Count Herbert, was severely injured and had to be taken home. Bismarck accompanied the king Gravelotte to Sedan where Napoleon and his over 104,000 French soldiers were defeated and taken prisoner. Subsequently, Empress Eugenie fled to England for asylum (Abrams, 2006: 87).

The war was not yet over; Government of National Defense was quickly established with an aim of continuous battle. In October, Metz and Paris were under siege but two Prussian armies were held hostage in Paris and the Government of National Defense prepared for a people's war. This tactics became dangerous to Prussia because the longer the conflict, the more France acquiring allies. As a result of this, Bismarck lost little opportunity to establish a peace talk with both Napoleon and officials of the Government of National Defense. Eventually, the French general came out with his sword placed in the hands of the King of Prussia. The defeat of Sedan was through a military event, but an agreement had to be reached between Moltke and Wimpffen. However, Bismarck was present during the agreement in case of any political questions. During the agreement, Wimpffen and Moltke agreed that no conditions could be given except the unconditional surrender of the whole soldiers, with the higher ranking officers the only people to hold their swords. Against their wish, Moltke assured Wimpffen and his soldiers that they could never escape unless if they want the war to begin again (Steinberg, 2011: 231).

As stated earlier, the ultimate goal of Bismarck was the unification of German states. By end of 1870, Bismarck initiated the coercion of all German states that fought against Prussian in the Austro-Prussia war, in a bid to form a formidable force in Europe. This new power undermined the European centralization of power established by the Vienna Congress in 1815. As a result, France demanded for redress in the form of territorial gain but Bismarck refused these demands. In retaliation to this, France strongly opposed the idea of Bismarck to annex southern German states, leading to a war in which France suffered defeat against Prussian-assisted German states. At the end of the war, French territories were taken over by Prussia. The formal German unification as a political and administrative integrated nation occurred on 18 January 1871 during a treaty signed between France and Germany. Prussia subsequently emerged as a strong German Empire in terms of economy, military and development (Vaibhav, 2017: 4).

Many historians have argued that the final German unification was as a result of the increasing diplomatic and military shake-up rather than the war itself (Taylor, 1955: 76). Other historians also indicated that Bismarck utilized the Franco-Prussian war as an opportunity to finalize his quest on German unification which he assumed

would take many years to be achieved (Hamerow, 1972: 23). Despite the fact that the war was initially precipitated by pressures from the nationalist, unification was however a product of recognition by two major southern states: Bavaria and Wurttemberg. After the defeat of Sedan, Bavaria accepted to join the North German Confederation, and despite recognizing that the southern states need to be convinced rather than conquered, Bismarck still threatened Bavaria with economic and political isolation. He further provided a hint of termination of the Zollverein treaty with Bavaria, and then invited the remaining southern states to Versailles in October to discuss the final unification. During this process, Bismarck coerced the Bavarians to embrace a more accommodating viewpoint, and utilized the differences among the southern states for separate negotiation. The southern states accepted to unite at the end of November, and King Ludwig of Bavaria was persuaded to invite William to accept his Emperor's title. All necessary legislation process had been concluded and passed to southern and northern parliaments, and on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1871, the German Empire was established in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles (Hamerow, 1972: 26).

### 3.3. Bismarck's foreign policy after the unification

Bismarck's prominence had borne out of his success in diplomacy. His address to the Schleswig-Holstein question, his course for German supremacy, and his treatment of the Hohenzollern candidacy were his successful foreign policies, which were achieved against all odds (Blickle, 1992: 24). The success of Bismarck on the above events was precipitated by three factors: (1) he had a motive and appreciation of the international processes; (2) he kept his long-term goals, which enabled him to unfold his diplomatic talents; and (3) the impact of the masses through their public opinion. Despite the conditions attached to foreign diplomacy, Bismarck always adopt subtle measures to achieving his aims. Another factor that enabled him to carry out his foreign policies was his close relationship with Wilhelm I, alongside with his ability to manipulate public opinion (Steinberg, 2011: 21).

Throughout the reign of William I, German foreign policy was solely handled by Bismarck. Although German diplomats were widely across Europe, Bismarck's autocratic rule destroyed their initiative, making his diplomatic system to be adopted, in consistent with the remark of one of his biographers: 'a one-man band' (Palier, 2010)

: 219). His views were often opposed but his autocratic opinion helped him in overcoming the opposition (Berdahl, 1972: 78). The year 1871 went down in history as a natural turning point in Bismarck's foreign policy, following three wars in eight years. Between 1862 and 1871, Bismarck has created a new Germany, but he needed peace to preserve his effort. In doing this, he needs to reassure the European powers that Germany had no intention or desire to create a *Grossdeutsch Reich* which would include millions of German citizens who lived outside Germany (Brandenburg, 1929: 234).

#### 3.3.1. International Alliance Policy (1872-1890)

After the peace deal with France in 1871, Bismarck embarks on consultations to restore peace and relationship with Austria, which they were willing to come to terms. A year later, Bismarck and Wilhelm I met with Alexander II of Russia in Berlin to formally come to agreement of maintaining status quo. This formal agreement also precipitated military agreements between Germany and Russia and between Austria and Russia in 1873 (Lee, 1999: 80). The result of these negotiations was the Three Emperors' League, whose main function was to display monarchical unity and maintain the status quo. In Bismarck's perspective, the Three Emperor League symbolized unity among European states and served as an avenue to prevent possible Austro-Russian conflict over the Balkans. The German-French crisis, which was as a result of the fall of Thiers, soon tested the effectiveness of the newly formed Emperors' League. Their weakness forced Bismarck to re-inspect Germany's mutual integration with Russia and Austria. This re-inspection became more pressing when a violent uprising against the Turkish government broke out in 1875. Restoring Austro-Russian relationship became Bismarck's urgent task (Lee, 1999: 80).

#### 3.3.1.1. Alliance of the Three Emperors 1872

Before the unification process, Germany has taken part in three territorial wars; with Denmark (1864), Austria (1866), and France (1870-71). Throughout Bismarck's career, Germany had relatively remained peaceful, although his era witnessed hectic diplomatic activities. The ultimate focus of Bismarck's diplomacy was Austria, Russia, and Italy. In 1872, he championed the league of three Emperors with Russia and Austria (Rittberger, 2001: 236). The idea was to sustain the status quo,

and form alliance in the elimination of socialism and build for peaceful coexistence (Harnisch, 2012; Tewes, 1998). This idea looked vulnerable due to the fact that the alliance was not a military one. In view of this, Bismarck moved for international conference in Berlin, which examined the settlement imposed on Turkey by Russia, and strived to meet the needs of the participating countries (Crawford, 2007: 254). The most surprising thing about Bismarck's foreign policy is that the controversy generated is far less wide than his domestic policy. Bismarck's popularity has always depended on his diplomatic attainment: his strive for Germany's supremacy; and his treatment of Hohenzollern candidature (Harnisch, 2012: 265).

Following the 'wars of unification', Bismarck mainly concern was on French isolation. The military and economic revival was presumably prevented by the Treaty of Frankfurt and the instability of French domestic politics. The Three Emperor League was sometimes perceived as an attempt to put France in isolation, but initially, it was seen as an outcome of mutual Austro-Russian distrust. In the eventual tripartite discussion, Bismarck diminished Russia's suspicious and motivated discussion on the preservation of the status quo in the Balkans. Following a series of summits that produced series of agreements, Bismarck rejected plans for a Russo-German military entente and as a result, the League was nothing but an empty frame (Geiss, 1976: 30) in which the three countries indicated their desire for peace and mutual consultation before taking any unilateral decision in the event of war. The conservative and antirevolutionary sentiment of the League made the historian William Langer to label it as 'a new Holy Alliance against revolution in all its forms' (Langer, 1931: 27), but there is every likelihood that Bismarck valued the League as an avenue of putting the French government in isolation and enabling Germany to avoid having alternate choice between Russia and Austria. (Berdahl, 1972: 81).

The League's weaknesses were first put to test by a sudden violent with France in 1875 in which the French government paid their indemnity and rebuild their army with full force and without hesitation. This alerted Bismarck as he resort to crude display of military force that inspired series of threatening pages in the German press. Although a seeming war was abated, however, Bismarck's weak itinerary enabled France to escape temporal isolation and exposed the weakness of the League of the Three Emperors (Langer, 1931: 27).

#### 3.3.1.2. The bilateral alliance between Germany and Austria (1879)

The struggle for the domination of the Balkans by the Austro-Russian struggle became one of the prominent problems in European diplomacy. As one of his greatest achievement, Bismarck maintained a strict but neutral policy with Russia and Austria. In 1876, Germany's position on possible war between Russia and Austria was tested by the Russians; however, Bismarck had to take sides, with the hope that peace would be preserved. In his expression, Bismarck made it clear that Germany would not allow Austria's position to be weakened nor the balance of power to be upset (Abrams, 2006: 245). The European powers, especially the Britain, were concerned of these emerging problems; thus, a congress was scheduled to address the balance of power in the Balkans and to settle existing differences (Crawford, 2007: 278). Following a secret agreement between Britain, Turkey and Russia on the division of Bulgaria in May 30, 1878, and an Austro-British agreement on June 6<sup>th</sup> of the same year to create Bosnia and Herzegovina, the stage was clear for the Berlin congress in June 13, 1878. The schedule of the congress in Berlin indicated Germany's initial superiority in Europe and that of Bismarck's eminence (Evans, 1978: 43).

The role of Bismarck at the Berlin congress was that of an umpire rather than that of an honest broker as it was traditionally believed. Bismarck's major interest and motives were to preserve peace and support Britain's agreement with Russia and Austria. He however, showed no concern for the Balkans. The Berlin conference saw the division of Bulgaria into two parts as already agreed by Britain, Austria and Russia. Though Russia lost no territory as a result of the division, however, they were infuriated and criticized Bismarck for their defeat (Gerwarth, 2005: 76). Considering a potential threat to the European balance that emanate from Russo-Turkish rivalry, Bismarck diverted his alliance to Austria in October, 1879. The alliance with Austria changed Bismarck foreign policy, from a policy of a free hand to that of a solid and determined commitment (Gerwarth, &Riall, 2009: 34). Indeed the alliance resulted to a complicated system in which Bismarck sustained Germany's predominant position and peace in Europe.

After the Berlin congress, there were a number of incidents which further propagated the Russo-German separation. First, German representatives at the

congress all voted for Austria against Russian interest. Secondly, the Russians considered the Austro-German agreement on the repudiation of Article 5 of the Treaty of Prague in 1866 as a payment of services rendered at the congress. Finally, there was a swift German and Austrian relationship that inspired the public, particularly the press, which the Russians felt bitter about (Harnisch, 2012: 23). This relationship, coupled with higher German tariffs on Russian grains, resulted into political rivalry between German and Russian government (Kassner, 2012: 28). The dual alliance which served as Bismarck's alliance system lasted until November 1918. During this dual alliance system, Bismarck's restraining control and existing international pressure paved way for peace.

Bismarck's dual alliance was never anti-Russian, rather, an expectation of confrontation by Russian government to sue for peace (Feuchtwanger, 2014: 67). Apart from the dual alliance, two more alliances were established to round up Bismarckian alliance system, including the Austrian-Serbia alliance in June 1881, and the Austro-Rumanian alliance in October 1883 which Germany later joined (Hutto, 2014: 18). Bismarck was perturbed by Russian rivalry because of his renewed foreign agitation in France, where Paul Deroulede' League voiced revenge against Germany and alliance with Russia. In June 1887, Bismarck mounts pressure on the Russian government to come to an agreement (known as Reinsurance Treaty) of neutrality. The agreement was not by any means related to war against France or by Russia against Austria (Kasson, 1886: 225). Bismarck's interest in supporting the treaty was precipitated by his desire to keep Russia away from France and to pull her close to Germany.

The benefits and limitations of the Reinsurance Treaty have been exaggerated by many historians. According to history, the mutual friendship between Russia and Germany reduced as a result of Bismarck's directive of November 1887, which prevented the granting of loans from Russia and acceptance of Russian securities in Germany. Bismarck was said to have taken this position because of the belief of many leaders (e.g. Moltke, Waldersee etc) that German-Russian conflict was inevitable, the decision which prevented the war. Despite the fact that Bismarck opposed many foreign policies from European countries to prevent war, however, his denial of funds to Russia satisfied German allies who moved for the decision, and this

strengthened the political support he needed. There are so many motives for Bismarck's foreign policy, including his ability to predict consequences.

Overall, he was able to accurately evaluate economic constraints, although he often believed that his political and economic ideology could be separated (Steinberg, 2011: 261). Besides his rigid economic policy on Russia, Bismarck's colonial policy in 1880s was also a complicated one. Indeed his foreign policy had been successful from 1870 upwards until public opinion began to slowly oppose his policies in December 1882 when Prince Hohenlohe-Langenburg and Johannes Miquel found the German Colonial Society. Like that of other countries, German economic and financial dealings began to, certain degree, depend on overseas trade and investment as a new and possible way to generate profit. Bismarck adopted a moderate protective tariff in 1879 to curb the economic depression of 1873 and recession of 1882. However this change economic policy neither satisfied the business community nor prevented the consequences of the recession. Due to increased in pressure for establishment of colonies, Bismarck believed that prosperity and stability would be achieved if he won foreign markets. Finally, the German colonial empire came into existence in a period of high imperial rivalries among European powerful states. In order to maintain German supremacy, Bismarck utilized these rivalries to avoid confrontations, and also move his support side-by-side, from one European power to another, bearing in mind that colonial process was inferior to Germany's major interest (Steinberg, 2011: 261).

# 3.3.1.3. The Triple Alliance (Germany - Austria – Italy, 1882)

The alliance of the Three Emperors did not stabilize Russo-German mutual integration. However, to preserve it, Bismarck had to avoid Pan Slav violence threats. When Italy proposed their alliance with Austria, Bismarck took the opportunity to establish a Triple Alliance with strengthened Austria indirectly. On the other hand, Italy benefited in the alliance in that both Germany and Austria promised to assist her in the event of French attack, and consequently promised to offer support with her military prowess. The major benefit of the Triple Alliance to Bismarck is that the fear of Italian attack on Austria had been removed. Austria on the other hand was further consolidated through the alliance of with Serbia and Rumania in 1882 and 1883

respectively, an alliance which Bismarck fully accepted to form defensive relationship against Russian (Taylor, 1954: 277). At the same time, Bismarck attempted to fuel the growing economic rift between Germany and Russian by rejecting demands from Russian *Junkers* and *industrialists* for further increase in tariff, although the tariffs were later increased in 1885 and 1887. The Triple Alliance means that Germany had achieved Bismarck's purpose of being 'one of three in a Europe of five great powers' (Williamson, 2013: 101). Furthermore, the alliance means that Bismarck has achieved his aim of building a complex web of alliances. Although the alliance was not a reflection of strong system, it was rather one of the perfect relationships ever created by Bismarck (Lerman, 2004: 214). Ultimately, Bismarck used this opportunity to ensure that each member of the alliance was dependent on Germany, and also firmly tied to Berlin.

In March 1890, a struggle between Emperor William II and Bismarck broke out on some internal issues, and then the struggle extended between them on Foreign policy, because Bismarck wanted to renew the agreement with Russia in order to secure it from his side and to prevent any conflicts between them and Austria in the Balkans. He also wanted to avoid any a rapprochement between Russia and France, but William II was not confident on the part of Russia. The differences between Caesar and Bismarck began to increase until Bismarck had to submit his resignation and the emperor accepted it on March 20, 1890, and Bismarck's resignation was in circumstances that Europe was the most in need of diplomacy (Abdul Manal, 2015: 8).

#### CONCLUSION

Germany has encountered many centuries of immigration, conflict and reconciliation, with repeated change in her constituent parts and territories. The unification of Germany which was achieved after the three wars of unification between 1864 and 1870 gave rise to a powerful German Empire, with Prussia as the headquarter. Germany's cultural dominance was achieved through the Germanization of all non-German languages and ethnic groups, which in turn promoted German culture in the German Empire. Germany under Bismarck was well reformed and emerged as a powerhouse in terms of military, economy and culture. This changed the balance of European power until the World War I when this power was snatched from Germany. Following the unification and consolidation of German Empire, the remainder of Bismarck political career focused of the preservation of peace across Europe, which he achieved with his great foreign diplomatic plan. His diplomatic policies, including formation of alliance and limited wars were successes that contributed in his recognition as Prussian Iron Chancellor and lifted him to international scene. Under him, a unified Germany emerged. There is no doubt that his unification achievements were worthy of praise. His diplomatic policies reformed the international system and promoted peace across Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In many ways, Bismarck was an ideal leader because he has never lost sight of his interest in power throughout his political career. He practically understood the tenets of power and how it underpinned the human society. Bismarck's power was never steady throughout his reign, and his position could not be compared to a real monarch or Napoleon. His power was exceptional in imperial Germany. However, it was evident that Bismarck ruled Germany without a constitution, and this made many German and European historians to label him 'The Mad Junker'. Bismarck himself revealed his iron policy when he bragged about he successfully deceived all politicians and how he gained dominance in student life: 'I intend to lead my companions here, as I intend to lead them in after-life'.

Throughout his political career, Bismarck always tried to preserve his royal absolutism on which his power rested. In his foreign politics, Bismarck never lost his

temper nor felt defeated. He rather challenged the smartest people he came across with and no King or Queen could get his way.

He had defeated and destroyed his rivals through many autocratic approaches against the constitution, and thus had committed many war crimes. At the first stage of his political career, he had clash in the *Landtag* where he indicates his preference for conflict and violence. On 27th January 1863, Bismarck in his speech told his deputies his perceptions about constitutionalism which he described as 'a series of compromises, if they are frustrated, conflicts arise. Conflicts are questions of power and whoever has power to hand can go his own way'.

Bismarck's domestic policies posed huge challenge, involving endless details and insoluble problems, with different actors and conflicting interests. He knew everything and had to make decision on everything. Although he was always sick and away for months, he got constantly impatient. More taxing in his domestic policies was his lack of strong principles on practical matters and his political positions on local government, trade, commercial regulations, legal codes and machinery of the modern states. He opted to complicate his life by agitating for *Kulturkampf* and at the same time provoking the conservatives, liberals, progressives and other nationalists. He practiced his autocratic approach to maintain a semi-absolute monarchy and to preserve the rights of a Junker who hated almost all nationalists, including the liberals, Jews, socialists, Catholics and democrats. In 1863 Bismarck proclaimed that the new Germany would constitute of a universal 'manhood suffrage'. In order to achieve this, he used the people to subvert the German authorities. At the time, he underestimated the power of Prussians because he could not see how they had changed over the centuries.

The deepest and incomprehensible of Bismarck's reign lie in his own personality. Bismarck ruled Germany without a constitution by making himself a dictatorial old man, who happened to be a king. He brought the King from his kinsmen and put himself 'between man and wife and between father and son'. He ruled with his individualistic magic wand, creating trust from William I and his chief ministers. In the end, he achieved his quest but paid a price of physical symptoms, sleepless nights, stomach problems and anxiety. Throughout his twenty six years of rule,

Bismarck lived in constant love/hate relationship. The terrible irony of Bismarck's political reign was attributed to his powerlessness. Contemporary historians labeled him a 'dictator' and a 'tyrant'. Probably, that could be the sole reason he insisted that any epitaph on his grave should reflect the truth about his political career: 'A faithful German servant of Kaiser Wilhelm I'.

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