

## THE WORLD IMAGE OF GERMANY

With 2 figures and 7 tables

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*Zusammenfassung:* Die Wahrnehmung Deutschlands in der Welt

Im Rahmen einer von der International Geographical Union geförderten und durch die National Geographic Society der USA finanzierten Studie wurden in den Jahren 1985 bis 1987 insgesamt 3568 Kartenskizzen der Erde gesammelt, die von Geographiestudenten des ersten Studienjahres an 75 Orten in 52 Staaten gezeichnet worden waren. Wie andere europäische Länder, so waren auch die beiden deutschen Staaten in der Regel den Probanden recht gut bekannt. Im Vergleich mit den europäischen Staaten ähnlicher Bevölkerungszahl und Flächengröße wurden indes West- und Ostdeutschland seltener in die Weltkarten aufgenommen, dies vor allem wegen ihrer wenig einprägsamen Umrisse und ihrer Lage im Inneren des Kontinents. Dieser Sachverhalt machte es notwendig, die Darstellungen, die allein die Bezeichnung „Deutschland“ verwendeten, mit denen zu vergleichen, die beide deutsche Staaten aufführten.

Selbst nach der mehr als vierzigjährigen Existenz zweier deutscher Staaten zeigt die Vorstellung von Deutschland als einem einzigen Land eine beachtliche Verbreitung. Diese Aussage wird durch eine Reihe von Befunden gestützt, die aus den Kartenskizzen entnommen werden können. So erscheinen Ost- und Westdeutschland mit nahezu gleicher Häufigkeit, was darauf hinweist, daß die beiden Staaten vor allem als ein Paar wahrgenommen werden. Darüber hinaus enthalten die Karten häufig nur die Bezeichnung „Deutschland“. An 47 der insgesamt 75 Befragungsorte bezeichnete mehr als die Hälfte der Studierenden, die überhaupt eine gewisse Vorstellung vom entsprechenden Raum besaßen, diesen als „Deutschland“. Selbst in den Ländern, in denen die Existenz zweier deutscher Staaten wahrgenommen wurde, gab es stets einige Studenten, die allein die Bezeichnung „Deutschland“ verwendeten. Auch andere ältere Ländernamen waren noch in den Kartenskizzen zu finden, doch nicht in derselben Häufigkeit wie „Korea“ und „Deutschland“. Aus alledem ist zu schließen, daß auch nach Jahrzehnten der Trennung in einen westlichen und östlichen Teil das Bild von einem einheitlichen Deutschland in der Welt lebendig geblieben ist. Nach der erfolgten Wiedervereinigung wird diese Diskrepanz zwischen Wahrnehmung und Realität aufgehoben sein.

Whatever difficulties do develop as a result of German reunification, there should be few problems adjusting people's images of Germany to fit the new reality. This conclusion is derived from a world sample of images of the world.

*The study*

University geography departments on all inhabited continents were visited by THOMAS F. SAARINEN or his research assistant, CHARLES MACCABE. Students in first-year geography classes were given a blank sheet of paper and asked to sketch a map of the world. At a later stage other cooperators in many countries sent in additional sets of sketch maps, which they had their students draw, following a standard set of instructions. Table 1 indicates the locations and numbers of maps collected and now entered into the computer. The total world set includes 3568 sketch maps from 75 sites in 52 different countries.

The major aim of the larger study was to explore images of the world. Is there a shared image or a series of parochial views of the world? The results could have significant implications for geographical education since the images are derived from education rather than personal experience in moving through the environment. Images of the world reflect the map models on which they are based.

The research is a derivative of the burgeoning interest in cognitive maps, a field whose scope and approaches, was first sketched out by DOWNS and STEA (1973); though the earliest use of the term is credited to TOLMAN (1948) and much of the early inspiration is traced to *The Image of the City* by LYNCH (1960). The present study extends the sketch map technique to the global scale and is one of the few cognitive mapping studies which has explored images

Table 1: Number of sketch maps of the world collected by continent (November 1985 - March 1987)

Zahl der gesammelten Kartenskizzen der Erde nach Kontinenten (November 1985 - März 1987)

Continental totals	No. of sites	N	%
Africa	13	656	18.4
Asia	24	950	26.6
Europe	13	706	19.8
Latin America	8	280	7.8
Anglo America	12	671	18.8
Oceania	5	305	8.5
World total	75	3568	100

of the world (WHITTAKER a. WHITTAKER 1972, SAARINEN 1973, BOSOWSKI 1981, OVERJODET 1984, SAARINEN 1988, SAARINEN a. MACCABE 1989). The major advantage of the sketch mapping method for this project is that, once the short and simple instructions are translated, it is easy to administer and it provides directly comparable products from countries of widely differing languages and cultures. In addition it serves well as a rough surrogate for world geographic knowledge (SAARINEN, MACCABE a. MOREHOUSE 1988). The sketch maps are holistic products which can be used to examine many questions. The world image of Germany is of great interest now because of the astounding recent developments in Eastern Europe. So it will be used to illustrate the possibilities of our unique data set.

For each map we entered in the computer the presence or absence of each country in the world. These were then aggregated to indicate the percent of the students from each site which included each country. These percentages could then be compared to the percentages for the entire world sample. The earliest indication that Germany was regarded as a single nation appeared as we began to tabulate the frequency with which each country was included on the world sketch maps. In order to reach an accurate count of the number of people including East and West Germany, it was necessary to adjust our totals. To the totals for "East Germany" and "West Germany" we added the number who used the label "Germany". By this means we could arrive at numbers which reflected the general level of awareness of each. Table 2 lists the 25 most frequently included nations on student sketch maps of the world. The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) ranks 17 and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) 22nd.

#### *Comparison with other countries*

Clearly East and West Germany are among the best known countries in the world. They appeared with almost identical frequency, on just under half of the maps, seventeenth and twenty-second in rank. They were exceeded only by the seven largest countries in the world; the economic giant, Japan; Mexico and South Africa, each at the apex of a major continent; two prominent world islands, Greenland and Madagascar; and four other West European nations, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and Spain. Size and shape, population and position, as well as economic importance are major factors which can be used to explain this list.

*Table 2: Frequencies and ranks for nations included on sketch maps of the world*

<i>Häufigkeiten und Rangfolge der in den Kartenskizzen genannten Nationen</i>		
Nation	% Included	Rank
Australia	91.14	1
Soviet Union	83.80	2
Canada	79.99	3
United Kingdom	79.71	4
United States of America	77.61	5
India	76.15	6
Japan	74.41	7
China	71.36	8
Italy	61.97	9
France	61.60	10
Mexico	60.15	11
Spain	59.81	12
Greenland	58.94	13
Brazil	56.95	14
South Africa	50.53	15
Madagascar	50.22	16
Fed. Rep. of Germany (FRG)	47.73	17
New Zealand	47.00	18
Chile	46.64	19
Egypt	46.47	20
Argentina	46.38	21
German Dem. Republic (GDR)	46.36	22
Ireland	44.14	23
Portugal	42.94	24
Norway	38.71	25

Many factors interact. There is no simple way to explain why some countries are included and others are omitted. On a world map, the countries which stand out and tend to be remembered are the largest ones, and the ones with salient shapes and positions. Countries of great size often have large populations, and may be of great economic, cultural, or historical importance as well. It is therefore not always obvious which factors, in which proportions, interact to bring a country to mind as the student sketches the map.

In certain cases, the critical factors are more easily discerned. They may be used as clues to help decipher the rest. For example, Greenland and Madagascar, probably do not come easily to mind because of their dynamic role in commerce or world affairs. More likely it is because of their imageability on a world map. Furthermore, many commonly used rectangular projections, such as the Mercator (ROBINSON 1990), exaggerate the size of not only Greenland but of other high latitude areas.

The prominence of so many relatively small European countries may be seen in this ranked list (Table

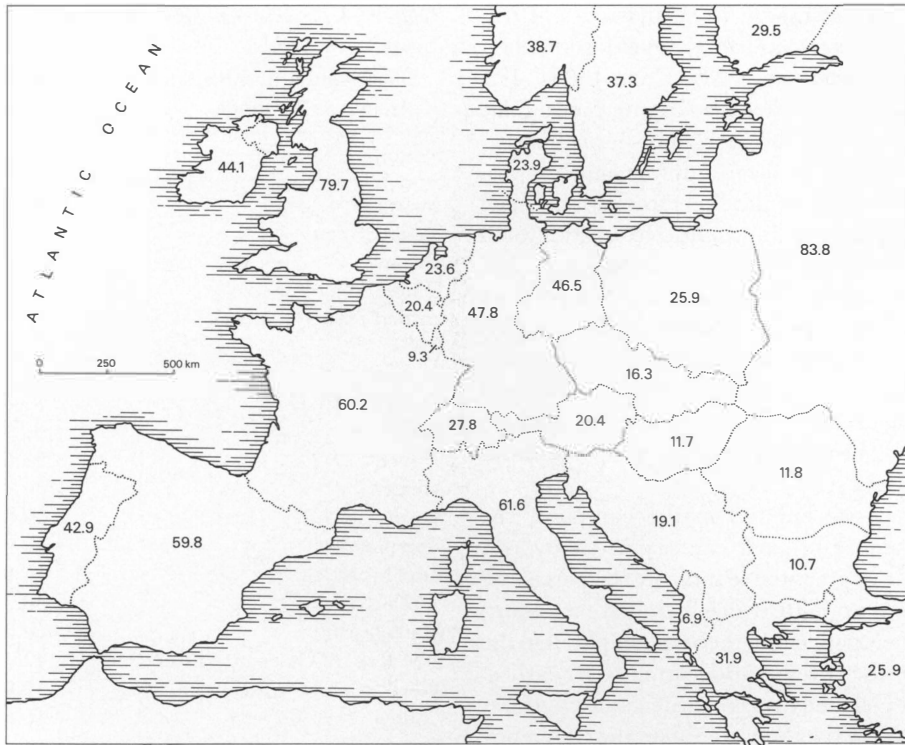


Fig. 1: Rates of inclusion of European countries by world sample (%)

Relative Häufigkeiten der Nennung der europäischen Staaten in der weltweiten Stichprobe (%)

2). It indicates that our current images of the world have a large cultural and historic component based on the types of maps in common use. When the concept of world maps developed during the European Age of Exploration, the world got in the habit of using European-derived maps and materials. All of the major countries in the European Economic Community are well known to the map sketchers and featured in their maps.

Interestingly, among the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Spain, and West Germany, it is the latter which projects the least clear image. The order in which they appear does not reflect their relative economic importance, nor is it simply a reflection of their past importance. Although such factors are important, the order is more easily explained by the shape and position of these countries on the world map. The United Kingdom, by virtue of its position as an island off the northwest coast of Europe is the most imageable and best known. Italy, with its distinctive boot shape, is next. Then comes France, an edge on the west coast of Europe, with its hexagonal shape easy to discern on 4 of 6 sides. Last of the four is West Germany, eclipsed even by Spain, another distinctive west coast peninsula. Nearly land-

locked, with unclear edges, the image of West Germany does not stand out as clearly on a world map. This unclear image also leads to frequent mistakes in the placement of East and West Germany.

Fig. 1 illustrates how the percentages of inclusions on the sketch maps vary on the continent of Europe. The importance of shape and position outlined above holds for the other countries. Iceland, and Ireland, small islands, are well known; and Portugal, on the west coast, exceeds most interior countries. Norway, on the edge, appears more often than its more populous and more economically important neighbor, Sweden. Greece and Turkey, on the Mediterranean coast, are more often included than any other Balkan countries. One of the most striking features of the map is the rapid drop-off in inclusion rates toward the interior and the east. In many cases the map of Europe ends just east of Germany, which a blank space until the U.S.S.R. is reached.

Starting with the United Kingdom the inclusion rate drops rapidly to France, and then to West Germany. It falls precipitously in Central Europa except in East Germany, which is included almost as frequently as West Germany. We would contend that this is because they are still thought of as one country.

Table 3: Frequency of inclusion of countries similar in population to the Federal Republic of Germany

Häufigkeit der Nennung von Staaten mit einer ähnlichen Bevölkerungszahl wie die Bundesrepublik Deutschland

Country	% of maps which include it	Population <sup>1)</sup> (in 1000s)
Vietnam	19.5	62,200
Philippines	27.2	61,500
Fed. Rep. of Germany	47.8	61,000
Italy	62.0	57,400
United Kingdom	79.7	56,800
France	61.6	55,600
Thailand	15.6	53,600
Egypt	46.5	51,900
Turkey	25.9	51,400
Iran	27.6	50,400

<sup>1)</sup> 1987: World Population Data Sheet. Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C.

When one is included the other is likely to appear as well.

The Eurocentric nature of current images of the world is again apparent when West Germany is compared with other countries similar in population (Table 3) and area (Table 4). In Table 3, showing the frequency of inclusion of countries similar in population to West Germany, it is clear that the European nations are better known than all the rest. The only one that comes close is Egypt, site of one of the world's oldest civilizations, at the top right corner of Africa, a prominent Moslem nation also well known to Christians. Turkey, Iran, and the Philippines are much less likely to appear, even though the two latter were often in the news during the year the maps were collected. Least likely of all to appear are the South East Asian nations of Vietnam and Thailand, the former fading back to obscurity after its long stint in the headlines.

Table 4 tells a similar tale. Again the European nations lead all the rest. The nations of Western Europe are more often included than any others of the same size. New Zealand, the distinctive Southern Hemisphere island nation is next, included almost as often as West Germany. The Eastern European nations follow with Yugoslavia, on the Mediterranean coast, more likely to appear than its landlocked neighbor, Romania. Even though Romania is the least-known European nation of its size, it is better known than the Asian and African countries. Only the Philippines is included more often, probably because of its prominence in the news at the time the sketch maps were collected. Laos, the other South East Asian nation on the list also is better known than

Table 4: Frequency of inclusion of countries similar in size\*<sup>1)</sup> to the Federal Republic of Germany

Häufigkeit der Nennung von Staaten mit einer ähnlichen Flächengröße wie die Bundesrepublik Deutschland

Country	% of maps which include it	Population <sup>1)</sup> (in 1000s)	Area <sup>2)</sup> (in 1000s km <sup>2</sup> )
Italy	62.0	57,400	301
Philippines	27.2	61,500	300
South Yemen	4.0	2,400	287
Burkina Faso	4.6	7,300	274
Oman	2.9	1,300	271
New Zealand	47.0	3,300	268
Gabon	2.9	1,200	267
Yugoslavia	19.1	23,400	255
Fed. Rep. of Germany	47.8	61,000	248
Guinea	4.8	6,400	245
United Kingdom	79.7	56,800	244
Ghana	8.1	13,900	238
Romania	11.7	22,900	237
Laos	9.0	3,800	236
Uganda	5.9	15,900	236
Guyana	10.3		214
Senegal	5.5		196

\*<sup>1)</sup> Includes those up to 1/3 larger and down to 1/3 smaller than West Germany

<sup>1)</sup> 1987: World Population Data Sheet. Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C.

<sup>2)</sup> 1983: Times Atlas of the World, Boston

those in Africa and South West Asia. Ghana, included on 9% of the maps, and Uganda, on 5.9%, are the most often included of this little known group of moderate-sized countries. The rest, including Burkina Faso, Gabon, and Guinea, South Yemen and Oman, are known by less than 5% of the world sample.

#### *The image of Germany as a single country*

So far the discussion has focussed on the relative frequency of inclusion of West Germany on student sketch maps of the world. To some degree, this is misleading because it is apparent that many of the students think of East and West Germany as a single country. This occurs despite the fact that for half of the current century East and West Germany have existed as separate nations. For virtually all of the map sketchers this would be for their entire lives.

We would now like to examine several new lines of evidence which indicate that Germany is still thought of as a single nation. The first is simply that East and West Germany are included on the maps as a pair. If one is included, the other is nearly always present.

Table 5: Relative frequency of inclusion of West and East Germany

Relative Häufigkeit der Nennung von West- und Ostdeutschland

	Equal	West Germany			East Germany		
		1 more	2 more	>2	1 more	2 more	>2
No. of sites	38	18	9	4	4	0	2
% of total	50.6	24	12	5.3	5.3	0	2.6

Table 5 indicates the relative frequency of inclusion of each in the 75 sample sites. In over half of the sites the numbers including West Germany are identical with those including East Germany. In over two-thirds the numbers for the two were identical or within one, and in over 90% of the sites the numbers were within two of being equal. The remainder tended to be from places far away from Germany in distance and/or culture. To some degree our method of counting tends to move scores in this direction since we scored both East and West Germany when only Germany was included. However this effect would not explain the equal inclusion when East and West Germany were used.

Fig. 2 illustrates some of the variations in the way the Germanies were typically labelled. In addition to using both East and West Germany (a), and Germany (b), there were at least three other common ways to indicate an awareness of the area. Sometimes there would be two countries labelled Germany and East Germany (c), which indicates the dominance in many people's minds of West Germany which is often equated with Germany. In other cases there would be no boundaries, but simply the name Germany in the approximate position (d). More explicit were those that indicated clearly the image of Germany as a country divided (e). In all cases these types of images could be seen on sketch maps from many different countries as is illustrated above.

In most cases when one of the pair was included more often than the other, it tended to be West Germany. This accounts for its greater prominence in the list of most frequently listed nations. One major exception was the sample of 62 from the U.S.S.R. in which the total including East Germany exceeded those including West Germany by 4. Other Eastern European countries in the sample did not include East Germany more frequently than West Germany. In the samples from Hungary and Yugoslavia both were included equally, and in the Polish sample West Germany appeared one more time than East Germany.

The next step is to look at the major split, between those who included the two countries, in one form or

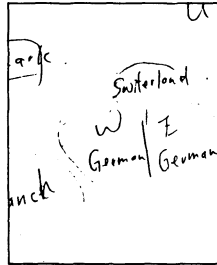
another, and those who included only one country. Astoundingly, considering the age of the map sketchers, at more than half of the sites, of those who were aware of the area, more than half did not label East and West Germany but only used the term, Germany.

Table 6 provides a sample showing the world wide variation in those who include Germany instead of East and West Germany on their maps. We use a table instead of a map because no apparent pattern is recognizable in terms of location. At first, we thought the nations closest to the Germanies would always include both Germanies while those further away in distance or culture would use the term Germany. No clear pattern emerged.

Although most European nations generally included both Germanies, there were major exceptions. Students from the United Kingdom and Italy, long-time trading partners with West Germany in the European Economic Community, were much more likely to label the area Germany than to include both East and West Germany. Even among the samples of the other European nations, which indicated a high awareness of East and West Germany, there were always a few who used the term Germany. In the entire world sample there were only two countries, West Germany and Hungary, in which all the students consistently labelled two Germanies. The West German sample included both countries but West Germany was labelled Germany in five cases as may be seen in Fig. 2c. In the world sample the percentage of students from each site who indicated an awareness of West Germany varied considerably, from less than ten percent in a few of the poorest samples to over 90 percent in some of the best. The others ranged everywhere between these extremes. Third World countries tended to be the least aware of Germany, while the European nations and others closer in distance or culture were more aware of the Germanies.

If we only consider the students who indicated an awareness of the area the figures are unmistakable. Most people use the term Germany instead of East and West Germany. In forty-seven of the seventy-five

(a) as East Germany and West Germany

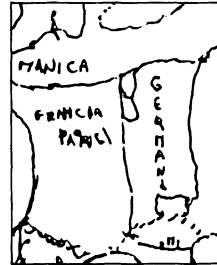


China

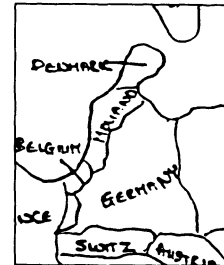


USSR

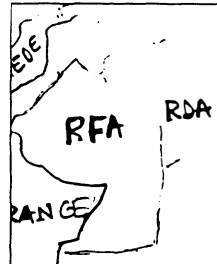
(b) as Germany



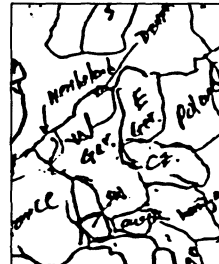
Italy



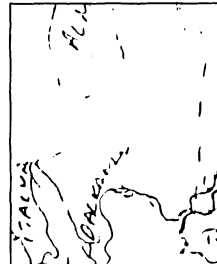
United Kingdom



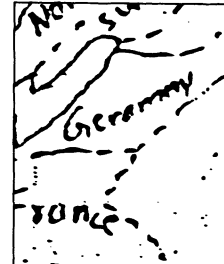
Togo



USA

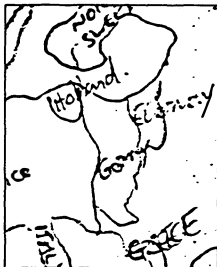


Turkey

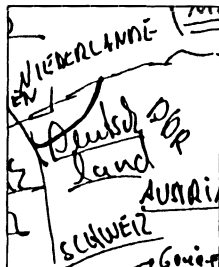


Sudan

(c) as Germany and East Germany

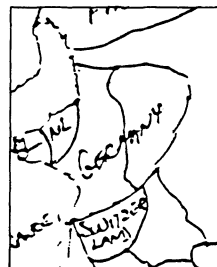


New Zealand

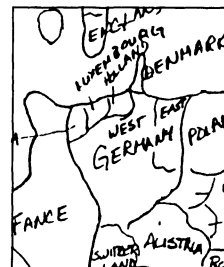


West Germany

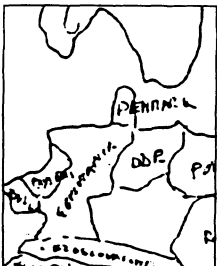
(e) as a divided country



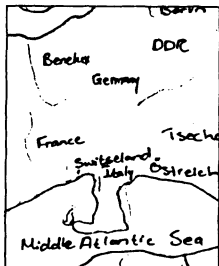
Australia



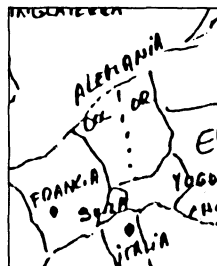
Canada



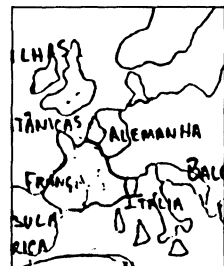
Italy



South Africa

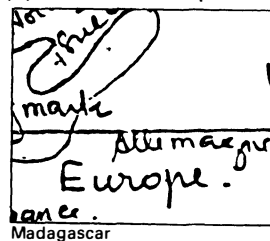


Austria

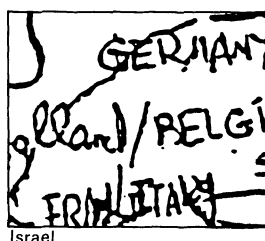


Brazil

(d) as unbounded space



Madagascar



Israel

Fig. 2: Common ways of depicting the Germanies  
Charakteristische Darstellungsformen der beiden deutschen Staaten

Table 6: Selected<sup>1)</sup> sample sites arranged in order of % including "Germany" instead of "West Germany"

Ausgewählte regionale Stichproben geordnet nach dem Prozentsatz der Nennung von „Deutschland“ anstelle von „Westdeutschland“

Site	N	% FRG <sup>2)</sup>	% Germany <sup>3)</sup>
Khartoum, Sudan	31	6.5	100
Taipei, Taiwan	68	42.7	89.7
Jerusalem, Israel	54	31.5	88.2
Quezon City, Philippines	52	36.5	84.2
Istanbul, Turkey	91	30.8	78.6
Oxford, United Kingdom	65	70.8	76.1
Pune, India	39	10.3	75
Stellenbosch, South Africa	50	56	67.9
Kuwait	39	15.4	66.7
Harare, Zimbabwe	31	61.3	63.2
Armidale, Australia	89	64	61.4
Beijing, China	26	19.2	60
Vancouver, Canada	85	77.7	56.1
Lome, Togo	71	47.9	55.9
Singapore	37	27	50
Mendoza, Argentina	30	83.3	48
Belo Horizonte, Brazil	38	18.4	42.9
Lisbon, Portugal	129	76.7	39.4
Tucson, U.S.A.	72	61.1	38.6
Trondheim, Norway	37	91.9	29.4
Paris, France	48	85.4	26.8
Ljubljana, Yugoslavia	45	71.1	12.5
Moscow, U.S.S.R.	62	75.8	2.1
Budapest, Hungary	22	95.5	0
Marburg, West Germany	36	94	0

<sup>1)</sup> Selected on the sample basis of every third site with minor adjustments to eliminate duplications for any country and sites with small samples

<sup>2)</sup> % FRG = number including FRG + number including Germany/number in sample

<sup>3)</sup> % Germany = (total number including Germany/total number including FRG + Germany) × 100

sites over half of the students who showed some awareness of the area used the term Germany. In only twelve percent of the sites did fewer than a quarter of the students use the term Germany to refer to both Germanies. In Paris, Trondheim, Teheran, and Tucson over a quarter of the students in our sample labelled the area Germany. In our samples from Karachi, Khartoum, and Columbia all included only Germany, no East and West Germany.

Why should so many of the sample persist in using the old name rather than accepting the new name and the new reality? Old names die hard. They persist long after the official change of names. Many countries are known by more than one name. In our sample we accepted many names which may no longer be the official designation but continue in use. Thus we have Russia and the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and Great Britain, Holland and the

Netherlands, or Formosa, Taiwan, and the Republic of China. In very casual references, as in conversations, all may be interchangeable, but to be exact, and to bring out special meanings, the correct one must be used. Beyond this people tend to be slow in adopting new names because the one they originally learned serves well enough. This is particularly true for name changes in places they do not regularly deal with. Thus in Asia, Ceylon was sometimes used instead of Sri Lanka, Palestine instead of Isreal, and Siam instead of Thailand. In Africa, where many name changes have taken place in recent decades, the maps may have many old names such as: Rhodesia for Zimbabwe, Tanganyika for Tanzania, Dahomey for Benin, or Upper Volta for Burkina Faso. The age of empires may be over but echoes remain on student sketch maps with British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, and British Honduras; instead of Guyana, Surinam, and Belize. Since the mapmakers in our sample were born after many of these name changes took place, they must have learned the old names from old maps or books or from teachers, formal or informal, who may have learned them from old maps or books.

The world's two divided countries, North and South Korea, and East and West Germany, are labelled, on student sketch maps, as Korea and Germany far more frequently than any other old names appear. North Korea (27.33%) and South Korea (27.44%) appear with practically identical frequencies, just like the two Germanies. These are special cases, suggesting something more than absentminded recall of old names. There seems to be considerable resistance, whether deliberate or unconscious, to forgetting the old names.

Table 7 compares the frequency of use of the terms Korea and Germany among those including the divided countries in some form on their sketch maps. In 6 sites, only the term Germany was used: no East or West Germany appeared. This compares with 12 sites using only Korea. At the opposite end of the scale there were 6 sites in which less than 10% of the

Table 7: Frequency sites use "Korea" and "Germany"

Häufigkeit der regionalen Stichproben nach der Nennung von „Korea“ und „Deutschland“

Comparative standard	Number of sites in which . . .	
	Korea	Germany
< 10% use single name	0	6
< 50% use single name	14	25
> 50% use single name	58	47
100% use single name	12	6

students used the name Germany instead of East and West Germany. In contrast there were no sites in which North and South Korea were used so commonly. In both cases the majority of the students who included the countries used the labels Korea and Germany. If it is important that images match reality, it would be quicker to reunite the countries than to wait for the old names to fade. This seems to be happening in the case of Germany. The major remaining mismatch between name and reality would be Korea.

#### *Summary and conclusions*

Examination of 3568 student sketch maps of the world from 75 sites in 52 countries indicates that the image of Germany as a single country remains strong after nearly half this century as East and West Germany. This conclusion is supported by several lines of evidence derived from the sketch maps. East and West Germany appear with nearly identical frequency indicating that they are thought of as a pair. The maps often only include the label Germany. Even among the countries in which many of the students are aware of East and West Germany, there are always some students who include the name Germany. Other old names also persist on the sketch maps, but not to the same degree as Korea and Germany. All this evidence makes it apparent that the world image of Germany remains vivid decades after the division into East and West Germany. If the reunification proceeds as expected the match between image and reality will improve.

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