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Stress, Political Instability, and Differences between British and Franco-German Twentieth Century Philosophy

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It is demonstrated that the dominant philosophical perspective in Britain was clearly different from that in France and Germany during the twentieth century. British philosophy was less ideological than Continental philosophy. It is demonstrated that the history of Britain in this period induced lower levels of uncertainty when compared to France and Germany. In particular, it would have produced lower levels of uncertainty in the childhoods of the British philosophers. It is argued that this plausibly explains some of the philosophical differences between these countries, as ideological fervor is predicted by stress and a more broadly neurotic personality.

Key Words: Analytic philosophy, Continental philosophy, Stress

It is widely accepted amongst philosophers that twentieth century British philosophy is distinct from the dominant philosophical schools in Germany and France. Termed 'Continental Philosophy,' the dominant viewpoint in France and Germany was characterized by a rejection of scientism, an acceptance of historicism, and an ethical mission. The dominant British school is termed 'Analytic Philosophy.' It modeled philosophy on science to a greater extent, rejected historicism, and tended to reject moral absolutes in favor of carefully establishing a shared vantage point from which an ethical case could logically

follow. In this article, we will try to explain why the dominant philosophy in Britain was so different from the dominant philosophies in France or Germany. It is question-begging to put these differences down to historical differences, either in the development of the nation's philosophy or its broader political and social system, because this simply raises the question of why there were historical differences.

We define the word 'dogmatic,' for the purposes of this discussion, in the purely psychological sense. A person is high on dogmatism if he asserts propositions to be true despite there being relatively little evidence for them. The more confidently he asserts these propositions, the more dogmatic he is. Ideologies can be described as dogmatic in the sense that they are constructed around moral or historical absolutes. A form of philosophy can, therefore, be described as 'dogmatic' if it is constructed around such absolutes and less dogmatic if there are no absolutes or if these absolutes are cautiously held to. Thus, asserting that, 'We have a moral duty to do unto others as we would have them do unto us' is more dogmatic than carefully establishing that this might be a reasonable starting point for pursuing an ethical discussion but accepting that there are problems with it. We hypothesize that Britain developed a dominant philosophy that was less dogmatic because its people were subject to lower levels of stress during the twentieth century. By contrast, France and Germany developed a philosophy that was more dogmatic and closer to the archetype of ideology because its people were subject to higher levels of stress. Specifically, we argue that those who were the leading philosophers in these countries during the twentieth century would have suffered from higher levels of stress during childhood.

We have chosen to focus here on twentieth century philosophy. It could be argued that British and Franco-German philosophy diverged in the late eighteenth century. Even at that point, Franco-German philosophy tended towards absolutist schools, which assumed that knowledge could be reached by contemplation and that there were certain foundational truths. By contrast, British philosophy followed a more empiricist method, in line with such figures as David Hume, and Analytic philosophers generally have a greater respect for science than do Continental. It has been argued that, with the union of Scotland and England in 1707, Great Britain, as an island, became uniquely politically stable, in part because there was no longer any realistic threat of foreign invasion. Indeed, it has been suggested that this is one of the reasons why the Industrial Revolution occurred in Britain; the country was safe and stable, and this encouraged investment and innovation (Clark, 2007). Accordingly, though we will not concentrate on this, the historical divergence in dominant philosophy between

Britain and Continental Europe could be regarded as congruous with our thesis insomuch as it would seem to reflect lower levels of stress in Britain even prior to the twentieth century, and an apparent relationship between this and a form of philosophy that was rather different from that practiced in France or Germany.

1. Continental Philosophy versus British Philosophy

The term 'Continental philosophy' is generally used as shorthand for a number of related schools. These include German idealism, existentialism, structuralism, Western Marxism, and postmodernism (Glendinning, 2006). Rosen (1998, p.65) argues that the resemblance between these schools can be identified by the following criteria:

1. A rejection of the view that science and the empirical method are inherently the most accurate or only ways of understanding natural phenomena. Instead, they must be understood as products of the circumstances of their development.
2. A tendency towards historicism: the view that all phenomena are determined by their historical and cultural context. Accordingly, it moves towards interpretivism and relativism, rejecting universal or reductionist theories.
3. An emphasis on meta-philosophy. Philosophers in this school question the traditional notions of the nature of philosophy.

Moreover, these perspectives all reflect the Kantian view that reality is best understood by philosophical reflection rather than exclusively through empirical inquiry, meaning there are certain foundational truths which can be reached via the intellect. These schools are especially dominant in France and Germany (e.g. Freundlieb, 2003, p.10).

Analytic philosophy, which is the dominant tradition in the English-speaking world (Searle, 2003 or Freundlieb, 2003, p.10), is characterized by:

1. A respect for science and an emphasis on tackling discrete problems.
2. A rejection of historicism in favor of the objectivity of mathematics and logic, meaning that a problem can be highlighted by the careful examination of concepts as we understand them now.
3. A general acceptance of the traditional nature of philosophy.

There is much debate on how useful it is to distinguish between these two kinds of philosophy and over the usefulness of the terms. As such, there are a number of arguments against making the distinction to which we need to respond.

Firstly, it might be noted that the Vienna Circle originated in Austria and significantly influenced British Analytic philosophy. This is quite true, but the Vienna Circle appear to have been something of an anomaly within Austrian

twentieth century philosophy, as it is otherwise mainly Continental (e.g. Haller, 1986). Moreover, nobody is suggesting that there are not points of overlap between British and Franco-German philosophy or between Continental and Analytic philosophy. The question is whether there are also points of divergence.

Secondly, it might be argued that the 'Continental' and 'Analytic' schools are highly internally complex, meaning that the division between them involves simplification. In attempting to make sense of the world, scientists are faced with a mass of information. The only way they can understand it, or make successful predictions about it, is by dividing it up into a system of categories, in other words a taxonomy. This inherently involves simplification, playing-down the internal nuances within the categories and drawing dividing lines. However, it is justified if so-doing permits correct predictions to be made. Clearly, from a pragmatic perspective we could not live if we could not create taxonomies of this kind because we could never make correct predictions about anything.

Thus, although there are philosophical disadvantages to dividing between 'Continental' philosophy and 'Analytic' philosophy, the advantage is that in general, we will be able to correctly predict that, for example, a Continental philosopher will be rather more interested in metaphysical questions than an Analytic one. In addition, any category division is at its most successful in allowing predictions to be made at its extremes. Thus, we can make clear predictions about the preferences of the extreme extravert or introvert (see Nettle, 2007) but this becomes rather fuzzier the more moderate the degree of extraversion becomes. In much the same way, we would predict that philosophers who were clearly Analytic would strongly disagree with those who were clearly Continental. This was exemplified in 1992 when a number of Cambridge philosophers opposed the motion that Cambridge University grant French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) an honorary PhD on the grounds that his work was not truly philosophy (Sims, 1997). This kind of antipathy is what we would expect if the division between the schools was useful because it evidences that, at the extremes at least, they involve clear and significant differences.

At this point, it is also worth mentioning that the Continental school, in particular, might be argued to have a high degree of internal variance. But the fundamental question is 'Are there points of commonality that the Continental philosophies have that the Analytic ones do not?' We have argued above that this is the case and thus no matter how complex the Continental school is it is useful to render it a category in contrast to the separate category of the Analytic school, even if the latter is less internally diverse. In much the same way, we might argue that it is meaningful to divide between 'English culture' and 'Finnish culture', despite the latter being less internally diverse (see Dutton 2009).

Thirdly, it might be argued that it is difficult to pin down certain Analytic philosophers, such as Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), as being solely Analytic. Russell, for example, also engaged in moral philosophy and political activism. However, there is no contradiction between being an Analytic philosopher and an ethicist as many ethicists are Analytic. Indeed, we can map the distinction we have drawn onto moral philosophy. Deontological ethicists argue that there are a set of rules to which we must adhere in everyday action and, so, a set of dogmas by which we must abide. This can be contrasted with 'Consequentialism' or 'pragmatic ethics.' These argue that it is the consequences of one's actions which should be the main grounds upon which to judge whether they are right and, as such, one must carefully reach a shared vantage point with one's interlocutor on this basis. In this way, consequentialism is less dogmatic because it is more open to new ideas and evidence and, indeed, it is open to the possibility of carefully establishing a rule (based on a vantage point).

It is possible to add some quantitative rigor to this qualitative, geographic distinction. For our data, we have drawn upon Brown et al.'s (2001) *One Hundred Twentieth Century Philosophers.* Written by a team of leading philosophers, it lists the twentieth century philosophers accepted by other philosophers as being the most influential. It also states their specific philosophical influences and schools, to the extent that this is agreed upon. These allow us to categorize them as either 'Continental' or 'Analytic.' We cross-referenced this with Duignan's (2009) *The 100 Most Influential Philosophers of All Time* and found that they broadly agreed. For example, all but one (Bernard Williams) of Duignan's 5 twentieth century British philosophers, all but one (Simone de Beauvoir) of his 5 French philosophers, and all of his 5 German philosophers are included in Brown et al. (2001).

There are limitations to this methodology. Obviously, it is reliant on trusting that the philosophers who have written these volumes have carefully and in an unbiased way discerned who are the most influential philosophers over the twentieth century. It might be argued that it is extremely likely that any given philosopher may have certain biases in favor of or against certain philosophers and, therefore, we must be careful in trusting their judgment. However, there are a number of ways in which our methodology obviates this problem. Firstly, we can rely to some extent on the phenomenon known as the 'wisdom of the crowd.' Aristotle was the first to argue that taking the aggregate answer of a large number of people to a question about world knowledge is beneficial and that the method also works with gaining the correct estimation of quantity. In this regard, Brown et al. (2001) draw on the views of 40 different philosophers some of whom are Analytic and some of whom are Continental in their thinking. Thus, although we

cannot entirely eliminate bias, the fact that philosophers of different viewpoints have reached this conclusion regarding which philosophers have been most influential means that it is likely to have some validity.

Secondly, we can use the criteria of multiple attestation. We have two independent sources and their conclusions cross-over. The degree of 'influence' a philosopher has is inherently difficult to quantify and, accordingly, we would suggest that, though it is imperfect, the methodology we have employed is the best available to us. It is, of course, true that the influence a philosopher has in his lifetime may differ from the influence he still has over philosophy 100 years later, when the dominant ideology may have evolved. Accordingly, limiting our inquiry to the twentieth century allows us to control for this problem to a great extent. Likewise, if a potentially brilliant thinker is born into a pre-modern environment he is unlikely to be recognized at all. However, this would seem to further demonstrate that, in order to have impact in a particular time and place, a philosophy will have to reflect to at least some extent the culture of that time and place.

Drawing upon Brown et al. (2001), and focusing on British, German, and French philosophers, we drew up an *N* of 44 philosophers who were agreed to be either Analytic or Continental, and whose nationality was clear. In each case, our sources stated which philosophical schools the philosophers were involved in and, in almost all cases, these are either recognized as being 'Analytic' or 'Continental.' We discuss below the instances in which it was not possible to clearly classify a philosopher.

There are different ways of defining nationality, in particular the distinction between ethnic nationality and civic nationality (see Vanhanen, 2012). The tables are based upon civic nationality. Philosophers born in an expatriate community are counted as part of the expatriate nationality, but this will be noted. It will also be noted if they are part of an ethnic minority within their country. If a philosopher was born in one country but mainly worked in another they have been placed under their native country. We define 'German' as anybody who would have had German nationality between 1900 and 2000.

Ten philosophers were excluded on the grounds that their nationality or philosophical tradition was unclear: (1) Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) (German, though spent most of his life in Austria, Continental). (2) Julia Kristeva (b.1941) (Bulgarian, though works in France, Continental). (3) Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) (Lithuanian, though worked in France, Continental). (4) Karl Popper (1902-1994) (Austrian, became British as an adult, Analytic). (5) Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) (Austrian, moved to Britain aged 19, Analytic). (6). Luce Irigaray (b.1930) (Belgian, worked in France, Continental). (7). A. C. MacIntyre (b.1929)

(Analytic, but also a religious theologian, British). (8). Iris Murdoch (1919-1999) (Multiple influences, British). (9). Simone Weil (1909-1943) (Mystic and theologian, French-Jewish). (10). A. N. Whitehead (1861-1947) (Analytic but also advocated Process Theology, British).

Table 1. *The most influential British philosophers, 1900-2000 (N = 14).*

Name	Continental/ Analytic	Lived
Gertrude Anscombe	Analytic	1919-2001
J. L. Austin	Analytic	1911-1960
A. J. Ayer (Jewish)	Analytic	1910-1989
Michael Dummett	Analytic	1925-2011
Peter Geach	Analytic	1916-2013
R. M. Hare	Analytic	1919-2002
G. E. Moore	Analytic	1873-1958
Frank Ramsay	Analytic	1903-1930
Bertrand Russell	Analytic	1872-1970
Gilbert Ryle	Analytic	1900-1976
P. F. Strawson	Analytic	1919-2006
F. H. Bradley	Continental	1846-1924
R. G. Collingwood	Continental	1889-1943
J. M. E. McTaggart	Continental	1866-1925

Table 1 shows that 78% of the most influential British philosophers active in the twentieth century were in the Analytic tradition. Even if we include all of those whom we have rejected as ambiguous (due to their philosophical influences being mixed) then we have an *N* of 17, of which 64.7% are definitely Analytic. In addition, it can be seen that overall, the British Continental philosophers are of an earlier generation. The average year of birth of the 11 Analytic philosophers was 1906 and the median was 1898. For the three Continentals the average and median were 1867.

Table 2 shows that 93% of French philosophers in our period of analysis are Continental. If we include the ambiguous Simone Weil, then they are 86% Continental. The average year of birth of a Continental philosopher is 1901 while the median is 1894. It can be seen that the single Analytic philosopher is of an earlier generation.

Table 2. *The most influential French philosophers, 1900-2000 (N = 14).*

Name	Continental/ Analytic	Lived
Gaston Bachelard	Continental	1884-1962
Henri Bergson (Jewish)	Continental	1859-1941
Albert Camus (Algerian, Spanish)	Continental	1913-1960
Jacques Derrida (Algerian, Jewish)	Continental	1930-2004
Michel Foucault	Continental	1926-1984
Etienne Gilson	Continental	1884-1978
Jacques Lacan	Continental	1901-1981
Jean-Francois Lyotard	Continental	1924-1998
Gabriel Marcel	Continental	1889-1973
Jacques Maritain	Continental	1882-1973
Maurice Merleau-Ponty	Continental	1908-1961
Paul Ricoeur	Continental	1913-2005
Jean-Paul Sartre	Continental	1905-1980
Pierre Duhem	Analytic	1861-1916

Table 3. *The most influential German philosophers, 1900-2000 (N = 16).*

Name	Continental/ Analytic	Lived
Nicolai Hartmann (German minority, Latvia)	Continental	1882-1950
Martin Heidegger	Continental	1889-1976
Karl Jaspers	Continental	1883-1969
Herbert Marcuse	Continental	1898-1979
Hannah Arendt (Jewish)	Continental	1906-1975
Walter Benjamin (Jewish)	Continental	1892-1940
Franz Brentano	Continental	1838-1917
Ernst Cassirer (Jewish)	Continental	1874-1945
Wilhelm Dilthey	Continental	1838-1911
Hans-Georg Gadamer	Continental	1900-2002
Jurgen Habermas	Continental	1929-
Max Scheler (Jewish)	Continental	1874-1928
Paul Tillich	Continental	1886-1965
Rudolf Carnap	Analytic	1891-1970
Gottlob Frege	Analytic	1848-1925
Moritz Schlick	Analytic	1882-1936

Table 3 shows that 82% of the most influential German philosophers in our period of analysis can be classified as Continental. The average year of birth for

the Continentals was 1883 as was the median. For the Analytic philosophers, these values were 1873 and 1882.

2. Dogmatism and Philosophy

Continental philosophy is, in effect by definition, more dogmatic than Analytic philosophy. It inherently involves moral and historical absolutes. But is Analytic philosophy equally 'dogmatic'?

Gellner (1959) highlighted what he termed the 'ideology' behind 'ordinary language philosophy' in his book *Words and Things.* This was not an attack on Analytic philosophy per se; indeed Bertrand Russell wrote an approving foreword to the book. Gellner actually defended the logical positivism associated with Russell and A. J. Ayer. Gellner criticized other 'linguistic philosophers,' such as J. L. Austin, arguing that their insistence that philosophy should focus solely on isolated linguistic problems unfairly undermined attempts to develop a consistent worldview, as well as ignoring the scientific emphasis on achieving, through the unity of knowledge, a more accurate understanding of the world. In essence, Gellner argued, linguistic philosophers spent their time focused on trivial, linguistic problems, having taken linguistic philosophy to an extreme in which nothing else was deemed relevant. In addition, he maintained that philosophy at Oxford University in the 1930s treated linguistic philosophy as a kind of revelation that was not to be questioned.

However, it can be replied that this does not mean that Analytic philosophy is as 'dogmatic' as Continental philosophy. Firstly, all Continental philosophies can be regarded as inherently ideological whereas Gellner merely highlights a single group within Analytic philosophy. Secondly, it might be argued that the philosophers Gellner criticizes have taken Analytic philosophy to an extreme in which they accept its ideas for emotional reasons, and thus dogmatically and without question. In any taxonomy there will be those who are closer to the dividing line than others but this does not mean that we cannot say that, overall, 'category x is closer to category y than category z.'

The salient issue is which system is inherently more likely to lead to dogmatism. The answer would seem to be Marxism because it is, fundamentally, built on dogmas. Linguistic philosophy, and by extension Analytic philosophy, only elicits dogmatism in the same way that any theory does; it is not inherently dogmatic. Scholars decide a particular theory is correct and invest in it being correct and proceed, thereafter, to look for confirmations of that theory ('confirmation bias') until the theory becomes completely untenable in the face of the evidence (see Stanovich & West, 2008). For this reason, any theory might be

seen as dogmatic in this sense, but with Continental theories the theories themselves are inherently dogmatic.

3. Philosophy and Environment

We must now attempt to understand what environmental factors lead to differences in dogmatism. This can be approached through many different disciplines and we must also consider different kinds of dogmatism. We might argue that there are three inter-related forms of dogmatism pertaining to Continental philosophy. (1) The assertion of moral absolutes; (2) The assertion of historical absolutes and a broader systematic worldview; (3) The implicit acceptance of something akin to God. This last point may appear rather controversial, but if the concept of God is defined very broadly, it can be reduced to something like an agent behind the events of the universe (see Boyer, 2001). Overtly, many ideologies, such as Marxism, are materialistic and reject the existence of God. But, if it is asserted, for example, that the world reflects the inevitable unfolding of history, then we have introduced a kind of fate, a world that unfolds in an inevitable way. Accordingly, if there is nothing beyond History then History has been reified and has become a kind of hidden hand behind events, akin to God.

Bruce (2002) argues, summarizing the field of the sociology of religion, that people appear to become more (dogmatically) religious at times of social change, such as the Industrial Revolution and the migration it led to. Fundamentalism, he argues, increases at times like this and it tends to be high among migrants and religiousness increases during times of war. Fundamentalism is a highly morally dogmatic form of religion, which is based around following certain absolutes, including in terms of religious practice. From both a sociological (e.g. Hammond & Hunter, 1984) and an anthropological (e.g. Dutton, 2008) perspective, it has been noted that dogmatic religiousness and levels of religious experience increase at universities that are highly transitional and in which students find their identities challenged by greater exposure to people from different cultures, areas, and religious backgrounds. In other words, environments that are uncertain seem to increase dogmatic religiousness. Again, this form of religiousness involves an increased moral absolutism and a strong likelihood of very strongly accepting religious dogmas, when compared to more liberal versions of the religion. Many studies have found that people are more inclined to have religious experiences and even join New Religious Movements at times of uncertainty and change, such as in the wake of a divorce or family death (e.g. Rambo, 1993).

In essence then, the significant environmental factors behind dogmatic religiousness—which makes people more certain of dogmas regardless of the

evidence and also more engaged in a religious-moral mission—are dramatic change and uncertainty. These are both causes of stress (Jones et al., 2001). Stress can be defined as feelings of strain and pressure. The body responds to stress by preparing the body for 'flight' mode. Thus, it releases adrenaline, increases blood pressure, quickens the heart rate and, in essence, renders a person more emotional in their reactions (e.g. Jones et al., 2001). It has been suggested that a number of evolutionary mechanisms explain the development of religious thinking. Firstly, there is the feeling of being watched. This has been found to make people more pro-social and, accordingly, those who felt that a supernatural entity was watching them, in prehistory, would have been more pro-social and less likely to be expelled from the band, increasing their completed fertility.

However, there is a strong case for arguing that there are other mechanisms behind the development of religion and the different mechanisms explain different aspects of religiousness. These include the evolutionary benefits of paranoia. To assume that anything we cannot comprehend, such as a sudden noise, has an agent behind it would have been of survival value. Accordingly, it has been argued that we are evolved to hyper-detect agency, leading to religious belief. Equally, stress would be reduced by the knowledge that the entire world makes sense and, due to there being a God, we will never truly die and our lives have eternal significance, meaning everything will be okay. This would help to explain the dogmatic aspect of religiousness (see Boyer, 2001). A person who is highly stressed reaches a point, it is argued, where the body reacts with a religious experience, even if only in the form of certainty that God exists, and this reduces stress and thus slows down the process by which the highly stressed body will eventually deteriorate (Boyer, 2001). These evolved instincts would be more likely to express themselves in times of extreme stress, meaning that the distressed would not only be more 'religious' in the lexical sense but also more prone to dogmatism (and thus absolute principles) and the adoption of comprehensive 'world views.' Clearly, these would be closer to Continental than Analytic philosophy.

Psychologists have reached the same conclusion about the causes of dogmatic religiousness. Religion reduces existential uncertainty and thus reduces feelings of anxiety (e.g. Inzlicht et al., 2009; Peterson, 1999). This view is supported by evidence that certainty of religious belief increases when perceived control is threatened. It has been found that just before a national election, when government stability is low, people are more likely to believe in a controlling god, compared with immediately after an election, when governmental stability is higher (Kay et al., 2010). So, people who are more stressed tend to be more

religiously dogmatic than people who are less stressed. This is congruous with research which has found a positive association between the personality characteristic Neuroticism — defined as 'feeling negative feelings strongly,' a measure of which is experiencing stress (Nettle, 2007) — and political authoritarianism (e.g. Ray, 1972), and stress and the adoption of authoritarian nationalism (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2009). Likewise, dogmatism and Neuroticism have been found to be positively correlated (e.g. Gilliland et al., 1979; Smithers & Lobley, 1978). Neuroticism also predicts temporary religious fervor during times of stress (Hills et al., 2004). Thus, we conclude that there is a sound case for arguing that dogmatism in general is underpinned by stress. Moral dogmatism, as reflected in fundamentalism and authoritarian nationalism, is either directly associated with stress or with the personality characteristic which relates to proneness to stress. Moreover, fervent belief in God is specifically associated with stress and we have seen that Continental philosophies involve an aspect of thought which has points of commonality with the concept of God. As such, we would expect this to be reflected in philosophical differences — in relation to the dominance of Analytic or Continental philosophy — between countries or, at least, countries that are relatively similar on other variables, such as Britain, France and Germany (see below).

It might be suggested that rather than a stressful environment (characterized by political instability) leading to ideologically-influenced philosophers, the causal direction is the opposite: the presence of ideologically-driven philosophers in a country itself leads to political instability. It is possible that a symbiotic relationship exists, and that ideologically-driven philosophers increase political instability. For example, Hitler might be regarded as a philosopher in the Continental tradition who increased instability and it could be argued that Jean-Paul Sartre or Michel Foucault, by questioning traditional ideas and power structures, achieved this to a lesser extent. Still, it is unlikely that causation runs only in this direction. To argue so would raise the question of why the philosophers were ideologically-driven. A reasonable answer would be the philosopher's experience of stress, and this would be heightened by political instability. As such, to insist that political instability played no part in the development of the philosophers' thought processes would be to posit an unlikely coincidence.

Secondly, it might be suggested that though it can be accepted that ideologically-driven philosophy is a product of stress, it is unclear how Analytic philosophy relates to this factor. Our answer is that it reflects a relative lack of stress. A body of research indicates that the ability to think logically is predicted by high intelligence (see Lynn & Vanhanen, 2012). Indeed, 'intelligence' is generally understood as the ability to reason; to think logically. However, stress

interferes with this ability. This is evidenced by the fact that high Neuroticism reduces performance on scholastic tests which strongly test intelligence (e.g. Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2006), and that anxiety significantly reduces performance on IQ tests (Cizek & Burg, 2006). Accordingly, stress would appear to reduce the ability to reason or, at least, reduce the ability to apply reason in an unbiased fashion, rendering one susceptible to fallacious arguments and dogmatism. It has been shown that political extremism (and thus ideological fervor) is associated with lower intelligence than political centrism (e.g. Deary et al., 2008) as well as with higher Neuroticism (MacLean, 2009).

Indeed, Simonton's (2009) analysis adds considerable credence to this viewpoint. Simonton summarizes many other studies that are all consistent in finding that scientists have lower levels of Neuroticism than artists while natural scientists have lower levels of Neuroticism than social scientists. Neuroticism is a measure of how easily one suffers from stress (Nettle, 2007). Even within academic subjects, Simonton finds, for example, that scholars whose approach is more logical are lower in Neuroticism than those whose approach is more dogmatic, intuitive and emotional. In addition, those who are more logical are less likely to hail from broken or unhappy homes and are less likely to have experienced parental death in childhood. In other words, scholars who are less scientific are more likely to be prone to experiencing stress and are more likely to have had objectively stressful lives. Philosophy is one of the subjects whose practitioners Simonton's study examines and it is not noted to be an exception to this rule, though he does not specifically discuss the results. In addition, Simonton shows that artists have lower Conscientiousness (impulse control), lower Agreeableness (altruism) and lower Extraversion (experience of positive feelings) than scientists, though they are also lower on autistic traits. This would imply that philosophical logicians would be less emotional people than Continental philosophers, as they would be less neurotic and have higher impulse control.

Thirdly, following on from Simonton's study, it might be asked whether stress directly leads to a change in worldview or whether there is some kind of time-lag? Based on the evidence we have accrued from studies of religion, there is evidence for a direct relationship: stress is likely to make people more dogmatic and ideological. However, if it were this simple then the popularity of Continental philosophy, for example, should be noted to fluctuate in Britain over the course of the twentieth century and, in 2015, the philosophies of Britain, France and Germany should, perhaps, be quite similar. Accordingly, if we follow a purely environmental explanation it may be that childhood differences in stress are the main cause of the difference. This would be congruous with Simonton's findings that academics who take a more logical approach have generally had less

stressful childhoods than those who follow a less logical approach. As such, there would be a lag separating stress-inducing events in a country from their being reflected in that country's dominant philosophy. Quite why stressful events should be fairly immediately reflected in religious and population dogmatism but only later among scholars is unclear. One possibility is that scholars are highly intelligent and, as such, their high intelligence protects them against the adoption of illogical perspectives (see Dutton, 2014). Another is that they will carefully analyze all the available information before cautiously reaching a conclusion. This may mean that their points-of-view are more stable, and so resistant to environmental stressors. However, if they have been traumatized as children they will have developed more profound emotional-cognitive biases than those which would occur as a consequence of stressful incidents in adulthood (Roy, 2002). We have seen that the adoption of fervently ideological perspectives or (among scholars) intuitive thinking is associated with Neuroticism, and many studies have shown that childhood trauma increases scores on Neuroticism (e.g. Roy, 2002; Moskvina et al., 2007; Schwandt et al., 2013).

However, it is possible to simply take issue with the question more generally. We would expect a number of factors to be influencing differences in British and Franco-German philosophy, of which environmental stressors would only be one. These would include genetic differences in personality (which we will discuss) and simply more superficial differences in philosophical history. Accordingly, it does not follow that just because a stressor increases at a particular point in a particular country, its dominant philosophy will change, even with a time lag. This would depend on the strength of the factor in relation to the other factors. But, over a longer period of time, even if the effect size of stress was weak we would expect to see a pattern which would reflect differences along these lines. This is what we will show exists.

4. Differences in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century British and Continental History

The above research implies, as already noted, that religiousness, ideological fervor, and academic movement away from the scientific ideal are predicted by uncertainty and therefore stress. It might be argued that we must distinguish between 'philosophers' and 'ordinary people' in making such an analysis. Although France and Germany may have been more stressful than Britain in this period perhaps life was less stressful for their philosophers. This seems unlikely. Philosophers must think critically, and the consequences of offending those in power would be far more severe in dictatorships. Philosophers are just as likely to be affected by political instability as any other relatively educated person in a

society, more so in that educational achievement is negatively associated with measures of political instability (see Lynn & Vanhanen, 2012). Moreover, there is simply no evidence that philosophers in Germany or France were specifically protected from restrictions on free speech, financial crises, or family members having to join the army. So, this theory seems most improbable. Therefore, we hypothesize that Continental philosophy is more dogmatic than British philosophy because France and Germany, in the twentieth century, suffered greater uncertainty - and thus greater stress - than did Britain.

We will test this hypothesis by using commonly accepted measures of political stability, as accepted by political scientists. Though many measures can be employed, the most widely accepted include internal and external conflict (usually wars and invasion), the ability of the government to retain power (government stability), orderly political transfers (lack of coups), political assassinations, and whether or not the government was a dictatorship (e.g. Akongdit, 2013, p.23). As such, we will examine these in our countries between 1900 and 2000.

A. *Totalitarian Government.*

Germany: Dictatorship from 1900-1918, and 1934-1945. *West Germany*: Democracy 1945-2000. *East Germany*: Dictatorship 1945-1989. Democracy: 1989-2000. As such, West Germany was a dictatorship for 29% of the twentieth century while East Germany was a dictatorship for 73% of the twentieth century.

France: Dictatorship 1940-1945; for 5% of the twentieth century.

Britain: Democracy for the whole of the twentieth century so it was a dictatorship for 0% of the period.

B. Coups or Serious Attempted Coups

Germany experienced coups or serious attempted coups 5 times: 1918, 1920, 1923, 1934, 1945, 1989 (*East Germany*). *France* experienced 2 coups (1940 and 1958). The UK experienced zero coups in this period. Ireland is physically and culturally separate from the rest of the UK, so we do not count this. But if we do count the battle for Irish independence as a coup (as the Republic of Ireland was part of the UK until 1922) then the number in Britain is still only 1.

C. Invasion of the Country

Germany was invaded in 1918, and towards the end of World War II (2 times). *France* was invaded in 1914 and 1940 (2 times). *Britain* was not invaded in the twentieth century (0 times). We do not count the German invasion of the Channel Islands during World War II or the Argentine invasion of the Falklands in 1982, as these are tiny outposts.

D. Changes of Government

Changes of government is a more difficult measure because the system in Britain - First-Past-the-Post - produces a two-party system and strong governments. There is a small third party in parliament and, occasionally, minor parties. However, the research cited above implies that changes of government lead to stress and, as such, the fact of changes of government is the important issue. We focus, of course, on West Germany after 1945, because East Germany was not a democracy. We focus here on changes in the party heading the coalition, where coalition governments are the norm and we begin in 1919, when Germany became a democracy.

Germany: 16 changes of government 1919-2000.
France: 53 changes of government 1919-2000.
Britain: 13 changes of government 1919-2000.

E. Political Assassinations

We define political assassinations as the assassination of politicians or prominent political activists from that country for political reasons. Our data here are from Wikipedia. We acknowledge that this is less than ideal but it is the only clear list we could find by country. In each case, we have independently checked the information.

Germany: 95, including at least 85 politicians and their associates on the 'Night of the Long Knives' in 1934, plus 10 additional political assassinations.
France: 17.
Britain: 6. It should be noted that 7 assassinations occurred in Northern Ireland, exclusively involving Northern Irish people. Northern Ireland is essentially a British colony on the periphery of the UK, so we do not count these nor any assassinations in the Republic of Ireland before 1922.

This finding allows us to make a clear and testable prediction. Politically stable countries will tend towards Analytic philosophy while politically less stable ones will tend towards Continental philosophy, at least when intelligence and population size are controlled for. We would need to limit our analysis to Europe (or related countries) because it will be problematic to apply the categories beyond Europe. We would need to control for intelligence because this is negatively associated with religiousness and extremism (see Dutton, 2014). Finally, we would need to control for population size as it may be that small countries ape the intellectual currents of larger and powerful neighbors. This would be in line with Simmel's (1957) 'Trickle Effect' at the group level, whereby those who lack power imitate the fashions of those who have power but do so in

a selective or partial way, reflecting, to some extent, their socially-predicted differences in taste and thus their personality.[1] Following this, the dominant native philosophies of small countries, in such a position, could be rather unpredictable. Alternatively, small countries may react in the opposite way and deliberately reject the intellectual currents of a powerful neighbor, in order to establish a sense of independence. Accordingly, such countries would not be especially reliable tests of the hypothesis.

5. Limitations

There are a number of alternative explanations for our findings which need to be examined. It is appreciated that the following may seem like a relatively random series of possibilities but, within necessary space limitations, we are attempting to pre-empt and respond to as many potential difficulties as possible.

Firstly, it might be argued that differences in a nation's average intelligence explain the differences that we have observed, as intelligence would negatively predict religiousness and would negatively predict ideological involvement. In addition, it has been found that scientists have higher average intelligence than academics who are not scientists (Dutton & Lynn, 2014). However, the available research indicates that there are no significant differences in average intelligence between the countries which we have examined (see Lynn & Vanhanen, 2012).

Secondly, it might be argued that genetic differences in modal personality between the three countries help to explain our findings. Certainly, the three countries are genetically distinct (e.g. Nelis et al., 2009). Based on twin studies, personality factors are 50-66% heritable (Lynn, 2011). Meta-analyses have also shown that religiousness is around 0.44 heritable (e.g. Dutton, 2014). Alford et al. (2005) have found that 43% of the variability in political perspective was determined by genes, while Eaves and Eysenck (1974) found political perspective to be 0.65 heritable. Accordingly, we would expect to find genetic differences (no matter how slight) in average personality between Britain, France, and Germany. If these exist, they would help to explain differences in the dominant philosophy between these countries to some extent.

The problem is that this is quite difficult to test, and extant data is unclear or contradictory. In psychology, it is widely accepted that personality can be assessed through the 'Big 5' personality characteristics. These are Extraversion (feeling positive feelings strongly), Neuroticism (feeling negative feelings strongly), Conscientiousness (impulse control), Agreeableness (altruism) and

[1] For a discussion of social class differences in average personality see Lynn (2011).

Openness-Intellect (creativity, unusual psychological experiences and intellectual curiosity). For example, Eysenck & Barrett (2013) applied the EPQ (a personality questionnaire) to 35 countries (N = 40,000) and gave average male Neuroticism scores as France 9.43, Germany 9.17 and UK 9.80. These are very small differences. Many attempts at cross-cultural comparisons on the Big 5 personality factors are problematic due to small or incomparable samples (e.g. Schmitt et al., 2007). Moreover, it can be argued that personality questionnaires are problematic when different cultures are compared due to cultural differences in how statements such as 'I often lose my temper' might be construed. In a large scale meta-analysis, Lynn (1971) brought together many proxies for anxiety and arousal in different countries, and found rather different results. He found that Southern European countries generally have higher anxiety than Northern European countries, but that there were two clear exceptions. The highest anxiety countries (from higher to lower) were Japan, West Germany, Austria, France, Italy, and Belgium. Countries found to have moderate anxiety levels were the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden. The countries with the lowest anxiety were Australia, Canada, the USA, New Zealand, Britain, and Ireland. So this would seem to contradict the EPQ findings and would suggest that British people have lower anxiety than the Germans and French, which, if true, would seem to be reflected in their dominant philosophy. It might be argued that Lynn's measures are more reliable than those adopted by Eysenck and Barrett because Lynn's measures eliminate the cultural problems that bedevil attempts at using personality tests across different cultures.

Thirdly, it might be argued that differences in religiousness explain our data. Bruce (2002) has suggested that Protestantism leads to a more scientific environment than Catholicism. It opens up knowledge by translating the Bible into the vernacular, encouraging literacy and analysis of the Bible, and encouraging individualism — focusing on the individual relationship with God — rather than obedience to church ritual. So, it could be argued, this would be reflected in the dominant philosophy. This seems unlikely. France is Catholic while Britain is Protestant, so it could be employed to explain the difference between these two countries. However, much of Germany is Protestant and yet Continental influence is strong there. Accordingly, although religious differences may be relevant they do not appear to be a parsimonious explanation. In addition, Bruce's argument can be seen as less than parsimonious because it would only explain the rise of rational thinking in modern Europe. We are left wondering why, in certain periods, similar rational thinking has risen in Ancient Greece or the Middle East. Sandall (2001) argues that rational thinking is associated with times of relative peace and this would connect all these intellectual periods as well as post-Medieval Europe.

A period of peace and prosperity would also imply a reduction in stress. Another explanation, though this does not exclude the first one, is that the Black Death was highly eugenic, boosting European intelligence such that it overwhelmed emotional drives to some extent, leading, ultimately, to a more efficient society and a reduction in stress (Dutton, 2014). This event should be taken together with a broader process in pre-industrial Europe known as the 'survival of the richest' whereby those who were richer (something predicted by intelligence) had higher fertility, increasing average intelligence every generation until the rise of the Industrial Revolution, a substantial rise in living standards and a reduction in stress.

Fourthly, it might be argued that our argument suffers from confirmation bias and that it would be strengthened if broadened to other countries. One problem with doing this is that population size may be an influence on philosophical development. As stated, it may be that small countries will tend to ape the philosophy of larger, though less stable, neighbors because they are exposed to their philosophy, possibly for linguistic reasons, or willfully reject it or ape it but in a complex and unpredictable way.

As such, it is best to test the hypothesis with relatively large countries with similar average IQs. Italy (population 59,000,000 in 2013) is generally recognized as a politically unstable country (see Lynn & Vanhanen, 2012) and, accordingly, we would expect its philosophers to be mainly Continental. As it has a population comparable to the UK and France, we can legitimately examine it using Brown et al. (2001). There are only two philosophers mentioned, Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) and Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). Both are Continental. Spain (population 46,000,000 in 2013) has two philosophers in the volume, Jose Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955) and Miguel de Unamuno y Jugo (1864-1936). Both are Continental. This is unsurprising as the country is relatively unstable and was a dictatorship for much of the twentieth century (Lynn & Vanhanen, 2012). Poland (population 38,000,000 as of 2014) only has one philosopher in Brown et al. This is Roman Ingarden (1893-1970), who is Continental, as we would predict considering the twentieth century history of Poland. The USA is ranked as relatively politically stable throughout our period of analysis (Lynn & Vanhanen, 2012) and has a large population of around 300,000,000. Of 6 philosophers listed in Brown et al., 5 - Donald Davidson (1917-2003), William James (1842-1910), Saul Kripke (b.1940), C. S. Peirce (1839-1914) and W. V. Quine (1908-2000) - are Analytic. Only Roderick Chisholm (1916-1999) is Continental. Drawing the line in terms of which countries are commensurate in terms of population and can thus be compared is difficult. But the populations in Europe among countries with comparable IQs

jump from Poland at 38,000,000 by half down to the Netherlands at just 16,000,000 so this seems a reasonable border.

6. Conclusion

We conclude that the differences in philosophical perspective between British philosophy and Franco-German philosophy are unlikely to be a coincidence and cannot simply be put down to historical differences within philosophical traditions. Continental philosophy can be cautiously described as more dogmatic than British analytic philosophy. Ideological fervor is predicted by anxiety and stress, and specifically by social chaos. These have been far more prevalent in France and Germany than in Britain during the twentieth century and neatly explain the difference in dominant philosophy between these countries. The conclusion is rendered more persuasive by our having further tested it with other countries of similar population and average intelligence and by our having eliminated a number of alternative hypotheses. Indeed, we have even found evidence that it works with a number of smaller countries. We have made a clear, testable prediction and have shown that it is borne out. This research can be built upon by extending the analysis into national differences between specific disciplinary philosophies, such as education, law or politics. It would also be useful to gather comparable data on national personality types and discern the relationship this has with the dominant philosophical school.

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