

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-54387

Title: How significant was Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 in influencing the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919?

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	✓			
Techn. Quality	✓			
Clarity		✓		
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Dr. ABDUL HASEEB MIR

Date: 18-10-2025

Reviewer's Comment

This paper is a well-researched and lucidly written historical study that examines the long-term political and strategic consequences of the Franco-Prussian War and their influence on the Treaty of Versailles. The manuscript demonstrates impressive chronological analysis, connecting 19th-century power shifts with 20th-century diplomatic outcomes. It reflects a mature understanding of European geopolitics and convincingly shows how the memory of 1871 shaped the punitive nature of Versailles. With a few refinements—particularly in analytical synthesis and referencing style—the paper merits publication.

Detailed Review Report

The manuscript titled “How significant was Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 in influencing the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919?” presents a sophisticated exploration of continuity in European political history. It bridges two seminal conflicts—the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War—arguing that the humiliation of 1871 profoundly influenced French attitudes at Versailles. The author’s objective is clear and intellectually compelling, supported by detailed factual evidence and logical argumentation.

The introduction effectively sets the historical context, identifying the Ems Telegram and diplomatic manipulations by Bismarck as triggers of the Franco-Prussian War. The explanation of how Prussian victory led to German unification and altered European balance of power is accurate and well-articulated. The transition from the Treaty of Frankfurt to the psychological and political conditions that led to Versailles is coherent and persuasive. The paper demonstrates a strong command of military, political, and technological factors that shaped both conflicts.

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The section on pre-war tensions and Prussian military advantages is particularly strong. The discussion of the Dreyse Needle Gun, Krupp artillery, and the integration of railways as strategic innovations is evidence of solid research. The comparison with French limitations is presented with analytical clarity. The use of military and technological history sources gives the argument empirical weight. However, the author may enhance this section by briefly assessing whether technological supremacy alone explains Prussian success or whether strategic leadership and mobilization systems were equally decisive.

The paper also excels in its treatment of symbolism and psychology. The discussion of the Hall of Mirrors coronation in 1871 as a moment of French humiliation provides an excellent link between the two treaties. The interpretation of Clemenceau's motivations in 1919—rooted in his personal memory of defeat—adds a human and political dimension to the argument. The author appropriately emphasizes that the harsh reparations and territorial terms of Versailles were in part a reflection of deep-rooted revanchism originating from 1871. This is an insightful and mature historical inference.

The comparison between Bismarck's Realpolitik and the strategic miscalculations of Kaiser Wilhelm II during the First World War is a commendable analytical highlight. It effectively contrasts two eras of German leadership and demonstrates the shift from calculated diplomacy to reckless militarism. However, this section could be strengthened by situating Bismarck's restraint and pragmatic policies within a wider historiographical debate—perhaps citing differing scholarly interpretations of his legacy.

The methodological structure is sound. The paper follows a clear historical-analytical framework supported by strong secondary references. The use of diverse academic and digital sources (Britannica, Cambridge University Press, Oxford Bibliographies, and EBSCO Research Starters) demonstrates breadth, though consistency in citation formatting should be improved to meet formal journal standards. Chronological clarity is maintained throughout, with logical transitions from 19th-century causes to 20th-century effects.

The conclusion provides a balanced synthesis, restating that the Franco-Prussian War set in motion geopolitical forces that shaped Europe until the mid-20th century. The author rightly notes that France's experience of defeat, humiliation, and territorial loss framed its desire for retribution in 1919. This section could, however, integrate a brief reflection on how these punitive measures indirectly paved the way for the Second World War—strengthening the cause-and-effect chain the paper already establishes.

Stylistically, the writing is articulate, precise, and accessible, demonstrating excellent command of historical language. The narrative flows logically, supported by a rich variety of examples and historical details. Minor improvements in paragraph transitions and reference uniformity will further polish the manuscript. There are no significant grammatical or structural weaknesses.

Overall, the paper stands out as a well-researched and analytically sound work, showing both historical insight and narrative coherence. It effectively connects Prussian military success and German unification to the evolution of postwar diplomacy and punishment mechanisms in Versailles. With minor editorial refinements, it will make a valuable contribution to academic discussions on European history and international relations.

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Recommendation

Accept post inclusion of the above suggested details.