

Citizenship and National Belonging as Cultural Practices

Once best known for its dividing wall—perhaps the most famous symbol of the Cold War—Berlin today is best described as a city in transition. Unified Berlin has a population of 3.4 million, 466,500 of whom are foreigners (Statistische Bundesamt Deutschland 2007). Home to the federal government since 1999, the city has undergone massive transformations and is still struggling to define its identity. By 2000, whole city districts were fully unrecognizable to visitors who had come to Berlin even five years earlier: construction cranes stretched across nearly every horizon in the center city, and the neon signs of international clothing chains and restaurants lit up the ground floors of modern skyscrapers that had sprouted in the former “no-man’s land” between east and west. Berliners experience more interaction between east and west Germans than their fellow citizens, and while the percentage of ethnic minorities is lower than in many other west German cities, such as Frankfurt or Cologne, young Berliners still experience a great deal of interaction with people of other ethnicities and backgrounds. Like other European citizens, Berliners today are learning to navigate a new European currency, vote in European elections, and live and work with ease across borders. And they do so in a country that has experienced nearly constant political change over the course of the past century, making Germany an ideal place to study nations and nationalism (Lepsius 2004, 481).

Berlin, in other words, is an excellent place to look for transformations in conceptions of citizenship and national belonging. But the changes happening in Berlin are not entirely unique, especially when compared with the rest of Europe. Increasing migration, coupled with

higher birth rates among many immigrant groups, is changing the cultural and ethnic landscape of most European countries. Streetscapes that used to be peppered with church steeples now make room for the minarets of mosques, as the largely secular but staunchly Christian nature of many cities and towns in Europe is gradually shifting to include significant Muslim populations. In many parts of Germany, young people today are as likely to snack on a Turkish *Dönerkebab* as they are a traditional German *Bratwurst*.

The influence of immigrant groups aside, globalization processes have introduced cultural products, languages, and practices far removed from traditional national customs. The proliferation of multinational corporations, global markets, and the spread of fast food restaurants, pop music, hotel chains, and brand-name clothing have taken capitalism beyond national borders, as anyone who has popped into a Starbucks in Zurich for a mocha latte or shopped at a Benetton store in Berlin can readily testify. Meanwhile, the European Union is growing in power and prominence, as a European currency gains in strength and national citizens become used to the idea of living, working, and traveling across borders with ease. Questions of national culture, religion, diversity, and belonging, in other words, have been forced into the public eye throughout Europe, as Europeans learn to negotiate new ways of thinking about citizenship and national belonging during a period of historic and unsettling change.

The transition to a multicultural Europe has not been an easy one. The murder of a Dutch filmmaker and subsequent anti-Muslim violence in Holland, deliberation about the proposed entrance of a predominantly Muslim nation (Turkey) to the European Union, debates about Muslim headscarves in German and French schools, and increasing neo-Nazi violence in Germany and elsewhere have all been the subject of dinner table conversations and civic classroom discussions throughout Europe and across the globe. At the heart of these conversations are several questions. How should national (and transnational) communities be defined and understood? Who counts as a German, or a Frenchman, or a European? What does it mean to belong?

Violent incidents in many parts of Europe illustrate the potential consequences of failing to adequately attend to these questions. The potential for youth—whether immigrant or native born—to become disaffected and disconnected from the nation was illustrated all too well by the recent “home-grown” terrorism in the United Kingdom.

The violent reactions of skinhead and neo-Nazi groups to immigrants and racial or religious minorities in a variety of European countries are equally troubling. Yet there has been no unitary response to these challenges. Political parties running on antiforeigner platforms have gained significant percentage points in several European countries. Prime minister Tony Blair responded to the terrorist attacks in London with a newfound assertion of British values, arguing that living in Britain means agreeing to “share and support the values that sustain the British way of life” (Manji 2005). In France, policymakers have taken a protectionist stance, turning to the legal system to find ways to protect the French language and prohibit the display of Muslim headscarves and other religious symbols in schools (Bowen 2006). Macedonians utilize the media, crafting a new popular children’s television program featuring a cast of Albanian, Macedonian, Turkish, and Gypsy children to confront challenges of ethnic difference and conflict. Throughout Europe, policymakers, educators, politicians, and others are being forced to make decisions about how to balance the ethnic, racial, religious, or ideological differences of minority groups with the national identities and claims of the broader community.

In some ways, of course, these challenges are nothing new. National populations have likely always been less homogenous than they have imagined themselves to be. As Edward Said (1993, 331) argued, “We are mixed in with one another in ways that most national systems of education have not dreamed of.” Centuries of migration and immigration have blended populations across borders such that the creation of national identities, as is now widely recognized, is based not on actually existing ethnicities, but on an imagined sense of community with others who share customs, language, traditions, culture, or residence within a given set of borders (Anderson 1991). But in other ways, new patterns of diversity are posing a different set of challenges from those which national populations have confronted in the past. This is especially clear in Europe, where immigrants today are more likely to be from outside of Europe and from predominantly Muslim societies than has been the case in the past.

In Germany, reactions have been polarized. Declining birth rates, coupled with increased immigration and naturalization of foreigners from non-European countries, have transformed both the national and local communities throughout the country. German youth today are growing up in a nation in which Germanness has become diffi-

cult to define. About 8 percent of the German population—6.8 million people—are foreigners, over half of whom have lived in Germany for a decade or more. Nearly two million are Turkish, almost six hundred thousand of whom were born in Germany but are Turkish citizens (Statistische Bundesamt Deutschland 2007). Unlike other guest workers and immigrants from southern Europe, most (but not all) of Germany's Turkish community is Muslim, adding a new cultural and religious dimension to immigration and integration. Tensions are not only between "ethnic" Germans and "non-ethnic" Germans, however.¹ Hundreds of thousands of Turks in Germany are of Kurdish descent (Canefe 1998, 533), for example. Continuing cultural and ethnic conflicts between Kurds and Turks in Turkey are often reflected in patterns of tension and conflict within Germany's foreign population.

Like many other European countries, the German population will become more and more multicultural over the next several decades, even if immigration is severely restricted. Germans are aging rapidly, and the foreign population in Germany is significantly younger, on average, than Germans (Statistische Bundesamt Deutschland 2007). In addition to the sizeable Turkish population, a large number of refugees fleeing violence in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere sought asylum in Germany during the 1990s, until a reform in the German Basic Law led to a reduction in applicants (Heiderich and Rohr 2000, 14; Hogwood 2000, 130–31; O'Brien 1992, 380; also see Isoplan 2002, 12). But it is not just ethnic minorities who are complicating the notion of Germanness. The fall of the Soviet Union and the transformations in the rest of Eastern Europe prompted a major influx of "ethnic" German returnees from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet States, as hundreds of thousands arrived at the German border seeking citizenship and a better economic future (O'Brien 1992, 380; Rotte 2000). Meanwhile, however, millions of second- and third-generation Turks and other immigrants whose families had come to Germany in the 1960s as guest workers were living in Germany as noncitizens. It was this paradox that fed public debate about the reforms in citizenship and naturalization law in the late 1990s discussed later in this chapter.

Of course, statistics and trends can't even begin to tell the entire story of who is considered to be "German" today. The numbers don't indicate how many millions of Germans have foreign ethnic backgrounds, are multiracial or multiethnic, or have more than one citizenship (legally, this is forbidden in Germany, but in practice, many people hold more

than one passport and citizenship). Moreover, “ethnic” Germans are dispersed well beyond the borders of Germany. As Peter O’Brien (1992, 378) points out, no other “state in Europe has so many of its people (perhaps 8 million) living in so many foreign countries.” The complex layers of German national identity are further complicated by the indelible mark that the Holocaust and World War II have left on German national identity. Discussions of German identity are so fraught with the past that it is difficult for Germans to talk unselfconsciously about issues of diversity and difference in contemporary Europe. What could a multicultural Germany look like? How might it take shape?

While some have been outspoken advocates for minority rights and eased restrictions on naturalization, others have rejected the notion of a multicultural national community, clinging instead to an ethnically restrictive definition of national belonging. Antiforeigner attacks and violence from skinheads, neo-Nazis, and hooligans have persisted. But there have also been vocal counterprotests from anti-right-wing groups and broad citizen coalitions who have been horrified by the violence. In the early 1990s, hundreds of thousands of Germans across the country poured into the streets for candlelight vigils after several violent and deadly attacks against foreigners.

This book is about how a younger generation of Germans is learning to negotiate conceptions of citizenship and national identity in changing historical circumstances. Although many of these changes are not unique to Germany, the particular constellation of transformations in Germany makes it an especially good place to study these changes. Since Germany is a core part of the European Union, the changes Germany is experiencing are indicative of the transformations in Europe as a whole. But Germany is an ideal location to study citizenship and national identity for reasons peculiar to Germany, too. National identity and, in particular, national pride have been extremely difficult issues for Germans. In post-unification Germany, national pride has been largely perceived as illegitimate, in large part because pride is inextricably linked to Germany’s role in World War II and the Holocaust. Efforts to invalidate national pride through the school system are deeply intertwined with educators’ concerns about rising right-wing violence over the past decade, as well as increases in right-wing extremist participation among working-class youth in particular (Miller and Ready 2002; Paul 1995, 40; Steinmetz 1997). The growth of the extreme right-wing among German adolescents is particularly troubling because the edu-

cation system has made explicit efforts to create a tolerant, engaged, democratic citizenry in the post-World War II era. Because of this, German schools are a site well suited for the examination of the cultural processes involved in the shifting negotiations of national identity across generations.

*Generations as Agents of Change in Citizenship
and National Belonging*

Scholarship on national identity is in complete agreement that national identities are powerful forms of membership. They incite wars and revolutions and inspire individuals to sacrifice their lives in battle, or at least to care about the welfare of fellow citizens whom they have never met. In contrast to earlier scholars who believed that nations and national identities were based on primordial or natural attachments (Geertz 1973), most scholars today recognize that these powerful attachments do not exist automatically. Instead, they must be imagined by the individuals living within a given set of borders. This “imagining” of the national community gets help from institutions such as the state, the public school system, and the media, of course, but in the end, individuals must collectively agree to the notion that they belong together under one national umbrella. This collective agreement is what we refer to as the “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) of the nation. Although the idea that nations are imagined communities has been widely recognized by scholars, however, we have paid less attention to the ways in which nations can be “re-imagined.”

What happens when nations are faced with transformative change—such as that taking place in Europe today? How do individuals recreate and re-imagine their national identities to incorporate transnational memberships or new patterns of national diversity? I believe that nations are not only imagined, but that they are also continually re-imagined by successive generations. But to understand how this takes place, we need to add a cultural dimension to the study of citizenship, which has been dominated by the study of structures and institutions—examinations of laws, policies, and official parliamentary debates. This means studying citizenship and national belonging as *practices* in addition to *statutes* (C. Miller 1999). While the study of policies and laws about citizenship is important, we also need to investigate how citizenship and national belonging are understood and practiced by ordinary citi-

zens. Only by examining citizenship and national belonging as cultural practices can we account for change in the conceptions of nationhood across generations.

To do this, I talked to 119 working-class youth and 31 of their teachers, in interviews and focus groups in three vocational schools in Berlin, primarily during an intensive thirteen-month period in 2000–2001, a two-month period in 2002, and a two-month period in 2004. I observed over 170 hours of classroom instruction in these schools and spent countless hours hanging around school cafeterias, faculty meetings, teachers' lounges, and other school social and academic spaces. I examined the schools' curriculum, textbooks, and instructional materials, read the daily German newspapers, and analyzed public and political debates about citizenship, nationhood, foreigners, and the radical right.

The story that I set out to uncover, as I began this research, was not about generational differences. As is so often the case in ethnographic field research, what I found in Berlin—that a younger generation is actively transforming the meaning of being German—occurred to me gradually. When I first began talking to teachers and principals about the possibility of conducting case studies in their schools, what interested me most were the differences among three groups of students. The three schools I ultimately selected for case studies—a construction school, an information technology school, and a school for hotel and cooking trades—were chosen to create maximal variation among the students on some variables, such as future position in the global economy, while maintaining as much constancy as possible on others, such as blue-collar versus white-collar occupations (see appendix A). But by the time I was halfway through the research, it became clear that the similarities among these groups of students were much more intriguing than their differences. Even more fascinating, though, was an apparent divergence between students' conceptions of national belonging and those of their teachers. Gradually, it began to dawn on me that I might be observing generational transformations in the meaning of being German.

Vocational schools provide a unique opportunity to study differences in conceptions of citizenship and national identity—and the teaching of citizenship education—for groups of young people with significantly different employment prospects and relationships to the “new” global economy. At the time, I was interested in knowing whether young

people training for global occupations, such as information technology, differed in their views about European and national identity when compared to their peers who were studying for occupations with clear local connections, such as construction. There is no better place to investigate these comparisons than in the German vocational system, which likely has the most highly structured occupational credentialing system in the world.

Vocational schools in Germany educate two-thirds of German youth aged sixteen to twenty for one of 356 state-certified occupations. The schools are clustered by career field (such as banking, hospitality, information technology, or construction), and academic classes are further structured by occupation. In other words, students attend all of their academic classes with other students training for their exact occupation. Due to the fairly structured and rigid nature of the German economic and occupational system, they have a reasonable expectation of remaining in that career field for the better part of their lives, although the system recently has made efforts to become more flexible (see Miller-Idriss 2002). This structure makes it possible to observe classroom instruction among groups of adolescents who are all training to be masons, chimney-sweeps, bank tellers, hotel clerks, or any one of the 356 occupations in the system. In effect, this creates a unique opportunity to observe classrooms—and interview students from those classrooms—where all of the students not only generally share similar social class backgrounds, but who are, by design, destined for similar social classes and share similar employment prospects.

I was particularly interested in the comparison between future information-technology workers and future construction workers. Information technology fields experienced a major growth period in the 1990s. Desperate for skilled employees, German companies began calling for relaxed immigration policies for computer specialists. This led to the implementation of the so-called “Green Card,” an American-style work visa designed to grant faster immigration and work permits to foreign computer and information technology specialists. The national vocational school system has added new occupational specializations in information technology fields to respond to industry demands. Employment prospects are strong in most of the fields offered, especially in the information technology (IT) branches. Many apprentices report they expect to have their choice of job offers upon graduation. With job opportunities fueled in part by a global and transnational economy, I

expected these apprentices to express European and transnational identities.

The field of construction, on the other hand, was faced with a startling paradox by the time I began my research. Despite its rank as the city in Europe with the most on-going construction, an astonishing decline in employment left some forty thousand German construction workers unemployed in Berlin by the end of the decade. A swelling pool of illegal workers from eastern and southern Europe, combined with an influx of foreign firms, has drastically limited the chances for German workers in construction. Although their peers a decade earlier had been virtually guaranteed jobs, by 2000 most of the young men (and the few women) in the construction school were headed straight for unemployment. The impact of the job market on students' and teachers' moods and motivation at the school was tangible. Many of the youth I observed in the hallways, the cafeteria, the courtyard, and later, in classrooms, displayed the shaved heads that often signify right-wing radical membership. Even when employed, construction workers are, by design, grounded in fairly local contexts. Combined with the threat to their livelihood from foreign firms and workers, I expected these youth to express strongly local and national identities, rejecting global and transnational memberships.

But by the time I returned to Berlin in the late summer of 2000 to study these comparisons in greater depth, unemployment was second to another, more pressing, concern for teachers at the construction school and other schools throughout Berlin and Germany. My arrival coincided with a wave of press coverage and public discussion about an increase in right-wing violence in Germany that year (*Berliner Zeitung* 2001; Homola 2001; Hops 2001; Krupa 2001; Schwennicke 2001; *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2001; *Tagesspiegel* 2001a, b, c).² Day after day, as I traveled around the city on the subway searching for an apartment and waited in the myriad of bureaucratic lines that accompany a move to Germany—police registration, visa and residence permits, health insurance applications—the headlines in the daily papers I read warned of the growing problem of right-wing extremism among Germany's adolescents.

Although some critics argued that the increased media attention to right-wing extremism and radicalism was due to a *Sommerloch*—literally, a summer “hole” in other news to report—the racist and xenophobic violence nonetheless raised obvious concerns for educators,

who have struggled to respond to the growth of right-wing subcultures among young people born well after the end of National Socialism.³ With several studies reporting higher rates of violence in the east, accusations flew, as fingers were pointed at socialization processes in families, at social and economic conditions, and at schools. Although it likely came as no surprise to them, the teachers at the construction school had particular cause to be concerned. Construction apprentices exhibit some of the highest antiforeigner sentiments of all apprentices (Schnabel and Goldschmidt 1997).

At times, it was difficult to separate the media and public discussions of the right wing from a series of other debates that erupt periodically in Germany about who belongs in the German nation. As the twenty-first century dawned, public outrage about the waves of right-wing violence and brutal hate crimes against foreigners that took place in the early and late 1990s was still close to the surface. But this outrage was accompanied by nearly constant political and public debate about proposed legal and constitutional reforms in citizenship, naturalization, immigration, and asylum-seeking policies.

*Citizens and Foreigners: Who Belongs
in the German Nation?*

The public debates about Germanness, national identity, and diversity revolve around the question of how Germanness should be determined—and reveal the multiple narratives which coexist in Germany around the contested terrain of nationhood. Are blood and ethnic heritage more important, or is culture and cultural assimilation? Who is a German citizen, and who is eligible for membership in the community of citizens? Like any other highly politically charged topic, there is a range of responses to such questions. Two positions in particular have emerged as especially vocal and polarized in Germany (Rätznel 1990, 45).

Conservatives and right wingers, on the one hand, talk about the need for a “guiding” German culture (*Leitkultur*) in assimilation processes and call for reduced immigration, increased assimilation among those immigrants already in the country, and a protection of national languages, among others. German national culture and identity are to be protected against the threat of linguistic, ethnic, and cultural dilution. Conservative politicians argue that the immigration “boat” is

already full and that German jobs should go to German workers. At its most extreme, radical right-wing groups who call for an end to immigration argue that Germans will end up like Native Americans, as foreign immigrants take over the country and force native Germans onto reservations.

Leftists and social liberals, on the other hand, argue against the notion of any form of national identity, linking it with the rampant nationalism and fascism of the Third Reich. Huyssen (1995, 77) calls this view the “leftist taboo on nationhood, the antinationalist consensus so central to the self-understanding of the Federal Republic of Germany since the 1960s.” In this view, there can be no common German culture, no national pride, and no unifying sense of Germanness (see Rätzzel 1990). At its most extreme, this position “reject(s) any notion of national identity” and holds that “only that which is not-German is ‘free of an ideological taint,’ worthy of admiration” (Peck 1996, 488).⁴ Elements of this taboo on nationhood coalesced, by the turn of the century, in a prevailing national narrative interdicting pride, which I describe in greater detail in chapter 3 by tracing a heated public debate that emerged in the spring of 2001 in Germany about whether it is acceptable to be proud of being German.

In fact, for the vast majority of Germans, neither of these claims to the future of Germany (and Germanness) is adequate. But this dynamic—between the antiforeigner right and the antinationalist left—turns out to have striking parallels in the dynamic I observed between young, working-class vocational school students and an older generation of teachers.

The fact that such broadly different responses to the question of Germanness and immigration exist illustrates the ways in which multiple versions of the nation coexist and potentially compete for dominance. Nationhood, in other words, is dynamic and contested. For ordinary Germans trying to navigate these questions of Germanness in their daily lives, understandings of who belongs in Germany—and indeed, of what a “German” is—have become increasingly complicated in the past decade. During the 1990s, a linguistic transformation in discussions about foreigners took place in Germany. In a meeting at a research institute early on in my preliminary research in 1999, I used the word for foreigner and was quickly interrupted by my host. “The whole question of who is a foreigner,” he argued, “is complicated.” He described the contradictions present in calling a third-generation Turk who was

born and raised in Germany, who speaks fluent German and may have little or no connection to Turkish culture, a “foreigner,” while “ethnically German” immigrants arriving with no German language skills and little or no connection to Germany can essentially pick up a German passport at the border (also see Bade 1996; White 1997).

In the course of less than a decade, in fact, a new vocabulary had emerged to talk about “foreigners” in Germany. Instead of the term “*Ausländer*,” which implies a belonging to another land, many Germans increasingly use the term “*ausländische Mitbürger*” — foreign cocitizen — to refer to second- and third-generation immigrants.⁵ But distinctions among foreigners and Germans are even more complicated than this; Germans distinguish between discussions of *Aussiedler* (Germans who had settled out, mostly immigrants with “ethnic” German heritage from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet States), *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans), *Spataussiedler* (late resettlers), *Übersiedler* (generally used to refer to former East Germans who had emigrated to West Germany), *Ausländer* (foreigners), *Mitbürger ausländischer Herkunft* (fellow-citizens of foreign ethnic heritage), or even *einheimische Ausländer* (native foreigners).⁶

As these semantic distinctions illustrate, by the late 1990s, discussions about Germanness and foreigners had become complicated enough that the stage was set for reform in citizenship and naturalization law.⁷ Although changes in German citizenship law had begun soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Baumann 1999, 69; Rätzl 1990, 43), by the end of the decade German citizenship law continued to be largely based on the Reich Citizenship Law of 1913, which firmly established German citizenship along *jus sanguinis* (based on blood) principles (Bade 2001, 29–35). This law automatically granted citizenship to anyone with proven German “blood,” regardless of where they were born. This policy can be contrasted with citizenship and naturalization policies based on *jus soli*, or principles of birthplace or territory, such as those of France and the United States.

A reform in 1999 in Germany made a decisive move toward a *jus soli* policy (Miller-Idriss 2006a). The new law automatically grants eligibility for German citizenship to all children born in Germany after the first of January 2000, provided that one parent has legally resided in Germany for at least eight years and has a secure resident status. The reforms also reduced the required legal residency for naturalization applications from other immigrants from fifteen years to eight, among other changes (*Ausländerbeauftragte des Senats von Berlin* 2000). Although

the reforms made a notable step away from a *jus sanguinis*-based citizenship policy toward one rooted in the principles of *jus soli*, significant elements of the blood-based version of citizenship still remain in German law. Article 116 of the German constitution continues to define a “German,” not only as someone who holds German citizenship, but also as someone who “belong[s] to the German *Volk*” (Storz and Reisslandt 2002, 27). It is still much easier for “ethnic” German returnees or other individuals of ethnic German heritage to gain German citizenship than it is for “non-ethnic” Germans. Nonetheless, the reforms marked a clear shift in official German narratives about national identity, formally rejecting a conception of Germanness based on descent or ethnicity. As minister of the interior Otto Schily (SPD) detailed in a 1999 press release:

With the reform of the citizenship law, Germany acknowledges a realistic conception of the nation. It was always an illusion to think it possible to found the idea of the nation on the basis of ethnic homogeneity. . . . The notion that a nation could be defined above all by blood ties (*Blutverbundenheit*) belongs to the tragic errors of our past. (Baumann, Dietl, and Wippermann 1999, 49)

Studying Generations in Theory

In this book, I use the term *generation* to refer to groups of people born roughly at the same time who have experienced similar social and historical events during childhood and adolescence in ways that affect their interpretation of and interaction with cultural, social, or political phenomena later in life (Mannheim 1952; Pilcher 1994). This usage of *generation* is different from the notion of generations bound by kinship (Pilcher 1994), in which generations are defined by the child-parent-grandparent relationship within individual families (see, e.g., Welzer, Moller, and Tschuggnall 2002). Instead, generations here are bound by formative experiences in childhood. Thus, they “situate the life history in a group context” (Borneman 1992, 48), connecting individuals’ daily interpretations of their experiences with others in their cohort.

Despite widespread interest in generations (or cohorts) among sociologists who study outcomes such as political and social attitudes, educational attainment, or memories of the past (Schuman and Rieger 1992; Schuman and Scott 1989; Griffin 2004), there has been surprisingly little attention paid to the role of generations in *creating* social

change—that is, in how generations themselves help to transform society. This was Karl Mannheim’s original interest in generations—namely, the ways in which new generations’ reactions to cultural, social, or political phenomena and events produce social change—or what Harold Marcuse (2001, 290) calls the “natural process of history.” Generations react differently to the same phenomena and events, Mannheim claimed, because their reactions are grounded in key socialization experiences in their youth—the key period of which he specifies as ages fifteen to twenty-five, the most important period of political socialization for generations (Levy 1999, 15). This age range corresponds nearly exactly with the group of vocational school students I interviewed and observed for this book. Late adolescence and early adulthood is such a key period, Pilcher (1994, 488–89) explains, because variations in the “socio-historical world that predominated in their youth” mean that each generation develops “a distinctive historical consciousness which leads them to experience and approach the same social and cultural phenomena differently.”

The affinity that members of a generation have for each other does not imply that they act or react to events as a monolithic entity, however. Individuals vary in their actions and reactions to events based on variations in prior socialization, by other roles and identities in their life, such as gender, racial and ethnic identity, or parenthood, and by their peer groups, marriage partners, or other formative experiences in their lives. Indeed, such variation among members of a generation means that they can be further divided into generational *subgroups*, or what Mannheim (1952) terms generational *units*. In this book, I am studying two generational subgroups—namely, middle-class educated teachers, and their working-class students—which I discuss at greater length below.

The lack of attention to the role that generations may play in creating social change is not only a theoretical gap. Mannheim’s key theoretical treatise on generations, as Pilcher (1994) points out, lacks empirical foundation. Other scholars have taken up the question of how generations might play a constitutive role in social change (Cherrington 1997) but without focusing on the nation directly, or have looked in depth at the differences in interpretations of national and state narratives across generations (Borneman 1992), but without delving into the potential impact of such differential interpretations on social change. The question of what the relationship between generations, nationhood, and social change might look like in practice remains unanswered.

Studying Generations in Practice

While theoretically it makes sense that membership in a particular generation may affect an individual's interpretation of events and experiences later in life, studying how these processes happen in practice is challenging. In part, this is because—like other social categories—it is difficult to draw firm boundaries around particular generations. By their very nature, generations are fluid and overlapping, with no clear lines of demarcation to indicate where one generation has stopped and another has begun. There is thus a degree of arbitrariness in categorizing someone born in 1955 in one generation, for example, while a sibling born in 1957 might belong to the next generation. As Rosow points out, generations are “clearest at their centers, but blurred and fuzzy at the edges” (Rosow in Pilcher 1994, 487).

Moreover, there is tremendous variation within generations. As Dirk Moses (1999, 114–15) details in his discussion of the 45er and 68er generations in Germany, great caution should be taken not to essentialize all members of a birth cohort. Thus, when discussing a particular generation's approach to a social or political phenomenon or event, it is likely that an active and vocal minority within that generation comes to represent the entire group, while the “disinterested masses” remain either silent or unheard (Moses 1999, 115). As Marcuse (2001, 290) explains, for the 68er generation in Germany, youth did react in a variety of ways to their parents' explanations of the Nazi atrocities, either embracing, ignoring, or rejecting the older generation's accounts; but those who rejected their parents' explanations “were the most outspoken.”

Thus, the year in which an individual is born can have a tremendous impact on that individual's experience later in life—on whether a young man is drafted during wartime or, born just a year or two later, remains an observer from the safety of his parents' home, for example. This is what Bude (1992, 80–81) describes when he refers to the “coincidence of cohort” for Germans coming of age before and during World War II. And despite these difficulties of creating specific demarcations around birth cohorts, some form of boundaries needs to be drawn in order to study generational effects. In this book, I have done so in the following ways, in reference to three generations of Germans:

The oldest generation, many of whom have already passed away by the writing of this book, were teenagers and young adults during World War II. They were not interviewed for this study, but are relevant be-

cause it is in reaction to this generation that the current older generation of teachers formed their sense of national identity and belonging. Previous scholars (see especially Moses 1999) have labeled this generation the *45ers*—Germans born during the 1920s, for whom 1945 marked the turning point in their lives.

The middle generation, or what I call in this book the “older” generation, are Germans born between the late 1930s and the mid-1950s, who came of age in the late 1960s and 1970s. Moses (1999) identifies this generation (the *68ers*) as Germans born between 1938 and 1948; I extend the birthdates on both ends to include participants born between 1936 and 1955. Germans call this group the “Generation of 68,” or simply the *68ers*, in reference to the social protests and student movement which were this generation’s most formative youth experience (see, e.g., Schneider 2001).

What I call the “younger” generation in this book are Germans who were born in the late 1970s and early 1980s, whose formative youth experiences took place during the 1990s—a decade of phenomenal transformations in and challenges to German identity. Buttressed on one end by unification in 1990 and on the other end by radical changes in German citizenship law in 1999, the 1990s were marked by constant political and public discussions about Germanness, including but not limited to the status of asylum-seekers, the east-west relationship, the role of Germany in the European Union, the permissibility of national pride, the introduction of a “Green Card” for certain immigrants, the increasing migration of “ethnic” German returnees from eastern Europe and the former Soviet States, the expansion of citizenship rights to “nonethnic” Germans, and the increasing participation of youth in neo-Nazi and right-wing extremist groups. I interviewed members of this generation who were born between 1975 and 1983 and were aged seventeen to twenty-five at the time of my interviews. They fit into the category of what Jeffrey Arnett (2000) refers to as “emerging” adults, as well as into the age range (fifteen to twenty-five) that Karl Mannheim states is key for the political socialization of generations.

The fact that there is wide variation in how members of each of these generations relate to the nation is worth repeating. The small number of Germans I interviewed from the younger and older generations cannot be said to speak for all members of their respective generations, who of course express opinions reflective of a broad political, economic, and social spectrum. Rather, as I explain above, this book reports on an in-

stance of two generational subgroups interacting—namely, a working-class, largely conservative, younger generational subgroup and a college-educated, largely liberal, older generation. This particular interaction of generational subgroups is an especially significant one, however, because it is replicated repeatedly in vocational schools across the country each year. These two generational subgroups, in other words, come into frequent and regular contact with each other, and thus German youth in other parts of the country are likely to find themselves in a similar configuration of generational subgroup interaction when compared to the students in my study. The findings in this study ought, then, to be relevant to instances where similar kinds of generational subgroups interact across social class and political lines, whether in Germany or elsewhere.

Although each generation is composed, then, of multiple subgroups which represent a broad spectrum of political, social, and economic opinions, there are moments when a particular subgroup's opinions come to represent the broader generation's viewpoint, even as alternative and contradictory views coexist with this viewpoint. For example, the antinational approach that the older generational subgroup in this book holds is reflected within the older generation more broadly, in statements made by the president, in television talk show programming, and in textbooks, as I discuss later in this book. While it is not the only viewpoint within the 68er generation, it is certainly one of the most vocal. It is this broad reflection within a generation that I refer to when I say that each generation in this book has a particular relationship to the nation. Specifically, the 45ers *ignored* the nation in the wake of World War II and the Holocaust; the 68ers *rejected* the nation as part of their efforts to call their parents' generation to account for their participation in National Socialism; and the younger generation—or at least the particular generational subgroup that I studied—is *reclaiming* the nation in an effort to establish what they feel is a “normal” relationship to the nation. I take up these generational trends throughout the remainder of this book.

The Research Questions and the Data

As my formal data collection and fieldwork began in the fall of 2000, I had identified a few key questions to guide my investigation into conceptions of citizenship and national belonging. Some questions viewed

the German case as an instance of a larger phenomenon: given a state of increasing diversity within countries, how are nations and communities coming to live with difference? Increased migration has been met with stricter immigration policies in some countries, at the same time as naturalization requirements have been eased and multicultural curricula introduced into public schools elsewhere. In other places, changes in patterns of diversity or in political leadership have led to deadly ethnic, ideological, or religious conflict, ethnic cleansing, and right-wing extremist violence against foreigners. A second and related question relates to the implications of these sweeping changes for national identity. How are the collective identities of national communities affected by increasing diversity and cultural change? Theorists have been divided on this point. While some have argued that national identities and meanings are eroding in favor of global or “postnational” citizenship (see, e.g., Falk 2000; Soysal 1994, 1996), others have pointed out that the proliferation of ethnic and nationalist conflict demonstrates the increasing importance of local identities (Sandel 1992, 5). As Hall (1996, 343) explains, “So at one and the same time people feel part of the world and part of their village. They have neighborhood identities and they are citizens of the world.”

Other questions focused on the German case more specifically. I wanted to know how young Germans today conceive of citizenship and national identity. Do all young Germans see themselves as the “citizens of the world” that Hall expects, or does this depend on the role that the global economy plays in their lives? Because the existing literature on citizenship tends to focus heavily on structures and institutions—such as laws, policies, and regulations and how they determine membership—I deliberately set out to investigate the meaning of citizenship and national belonging as these young working-class Germans experience it in their everyday lives. I also aimed to understand how vocational school civics teachers address these concerns in their classrooms and to observe how these topics were discussed by students.

Some clarification of terms may be useful here. I use the terms “German youth,” “German young people,” and “young Germans” throughout this book. In fact, the subset of young Germans I interviewed are largely working-class young people, and the reader should bear this in mind, although for brevity’s sake I do not always include the term “working class.” I identify the young people who I interviewed as “working class,” although there is quite a wide variation among them in terms of their

expectations for future employment and income. Some are likely to earn as much or more than university-educated Germans—especially those training in the high-tech, information technology fields. Others, such as the construction apprentices I interviewed, have almost no chance of obtaining a job at all upon graduation, and know they are headed into unemployment and uncertain futures. Rather than defining this group as “working class” by their income levels or employment chances, they are defined negatively (Lamont 2000, 10) by the types of universities they did *not* attend (and are generally ineligible for) and the kinds of professions to which they will *not* have access. These apprentices are training for blue-collar occupations; by and large, they will be prep cooks rather than sous chefs; they will be telecommunications wiring technicians and repairmen rather than computer consultants; they will be masons and roofers and technical drafters, not architects.⁸ Moreover, the structure of the vocational training system—and the reliance of the German economy upon it—means that without lengthy retraining, these students can expect to remain in these occupations throughout their lives (Hamilton 1990; Miller-Idriss 2002).

From May 1999 until June 2004, I traveled back and forth between Berlin and the United States to collect the data upon which this book is based. A preliminary trip to Germany in the summer of 1999 and a pilot study in January–February 2000 helped refine my questions, test instruments, and select the schools which would ultimately make up the case studies for this book. Primary data collection took place in Berlin between August 2000 and August 2001 and during two two-month follow-up trips in the springs of 2002 and 2004. During the 2000–2001 school year, I interviewed sixty German vocational school students, aged seventeen to twenty-five.⁹ That same year I conducted over 170 hours of classroom observation, primarily in civics (*Sozialkunde*) and related courses. I triangulated classroom observations by conducting interviews with twenty-two teachers, scheduled as soon as possible after classroom observations.

A year after our first interview, I conducted fifteen follow-up interviews with eight of the original student participants, reviewing the transcripts of the original interview and teasing out the key influences that these young people identified as having had a significant role in developing their opinions—such as parents, siblings, school, peer groups, music, or others. During the same trip, I also conducted twelve focus group discussions with an additional fifty-nine youth from the three

schools, asking a subset of the same questions I had posed in interviews. Finally, I returned in 2004 to reinterview an expanded group of twenty-five teachers. All interviews and focus groups were conducted in German by myself. A fuller explanation of my research methodology and data collection strategies is detailed in appendix B.

During the interviews with students and their teachers, my intent was to examine the meaning of citizenship and national belonging. This approach draws on previous work by cultural sociologists and anthropologists, such as Sewell (1980, 10), who reminds us that “the whole of social life, from such symbolically elaborate practices as religious festivals to such seemingly matter-of-fact activities as building houses or raising crops, is culturally shaped.” My research approach was grounded in an attempt to draw out the culturally shaped meaning embedded in Germans’ everyday lives, interpret it, and approach a level of understanding about it (Sewell 1980; also see Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Geertz 1973).

During the interviews, I asked participants how they would define the term “citizenship” to an alien who had just landed in a spaceship, and asked what it meant to them to be a citizen in Berlin, in Germany, and in Europe. During student interviews, we talked about the relative importance of these three areas of belonging when compared with the rest of their lives, including their families, friends and peer groups, school, extracurricular activities, and religious memberships. I asked participants how they felt about Germany and how they would define the German nation or Germans in general, and what makes a “good citizen” or a “bad citizen.” We talked about their feelings about foreigners in Germany, and about the radical right. They told me their opinions about naturalization and immigration policy and talked about what they would do differently if they were in charge of defining policy. I talked with students about how they felt about school and their civics class in particular, and I asked teachers whether they thought their students viewed any of these issues in ways that were different from their own opinions. I was especially interested to find out how young working-class Germans incorporate, reject, or modify elements of public and state narratives in their definitions of citizenship and constructions of national belonging, and ultimately, whether there were differences between students’ and teachers’ conceptions.

By coding and organizing the elements that participants discussed when they defined citizenship, the criteria they named when they dis-

cussed “good” and “bad” citizens, and the conditions they believed should be required for naturalization, I was able to come to an understanding of how these individuals think about citizenship and national belonging.¹⁰ As Lamont (2000, 4) explains, this method “has power because it lets us see into the theories that people use to make sense of their lives, into the taken-for-granted categories they mobilize when interpreting and organizing the differences that surround them, without predefining specific dimensions of identity as particularly salient.”

As my data collection progressed, I found myself casting an increasingly wide net to answer questions that emerged from interviews and school observations. Conversations and documents gathered from policymakers, researchers, and representatives of government agencies, union offices, and think tanks helped flesh out my understanding of the German school system, the labor market projections for the occupations for which these students were training, and processes of teacher training, curriculum reform, and apprenticeship placement, among others.

All of this research took place in German, which is not my native tongue—although I am comfortably fluent in it. Nonetheless, it is important to note that any investigation of citizenship and nationality by an outsider in Germany faces some linguistic barriers. The German word for citizen, *Staatsbürger*, does not convey quite the same meaning within the German language as *citizen* in English or *citoyen* in French. In fact, at least three terms capture the concept of citizenship: *Staatsbürgerschaft*, *Staatsangehörigkeit*, and *Volksangehörigkeit* (Brubaker 1992, 50; Preuss 2003, 38). I used the term *Staatsbürgerschaft* in interviews, both on the advice of native German speakers and because the concept is the most general term for citizenship. As Ulrich Preuss (2003, 38) explains, “Despite this variety of terms the central term for what is called citizenship, *citoyenneté*, *cittadinanza*, and so on, in other languages is *Staatsbürgerschaft* in German.” *Staatsbürgerschaft* is the term that refers to a national policy of membership.

The German language does have a word to denote a deeper sense of national belonging. The term *Volk* refers to a connection to others based on ethnic heritage, descent, and culture. I will argue throughout this book that understandings of citizenship are tightly interwoven with conceptions of national belonging. Despite the linguistic differentiation in German between the term for citizenship (*Staatsbürgerschaft*) and the term for a national people (*Volk*), as a concept and a policy, I argue

here that citizenship is not merely a technicality or a piece of paper for most Germans; rather, it operates in much the same manner in Germany as it does most anywhere else. It regulates patterns of inclusion and exclusion, deciding who is allowed to reside within the borders of a given country, participate politically, and enjoy the benefits of political and civic membership, from social welfare to health care, visa-less or eased entry to other countries, and restricted employment in certain governmental sectors, among others. Determining who has access to such privileges is more than just a matter of policy—it is deeply intertwined with conceptions of who belongs to the national community.

Finally, the reader should note that I focus in this book on instances in which the nation is deliberately discussed and defined, whether through interviews where specific questions about the nation were posed to respondents or during classroom observations where I focused on instances in which the nation—or related topics such as national pride—were a specific topic of discussion. In so doing, I neglect the wide variety of more mundane ways in which the nation is evidenced in the everyday life of schools and classrooms (see, e.g., Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008)—in rituals, ceremonies, everyday interactions and announcements, or in the titles of textbooks, guest speakers' lectures, and class field trips or international exchanges with other schools in Europe. The importance of such types of the construction of nationhood has been well established by others (see, e.g., Billig 1995), and I urge future scholars to expand upon my work here by designing empirical studies to specify more quotidian and “banal” instances of the construction and transformation of nationhood across generations.