Part 3

Germany

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International boundary
Regional boundary
Capital city
Largest cities (by population)
North Sea
Baltic Sea
DENMARK
Hamburg
Elbe
Berlin
NETHERLANDS
Cologne
GERMANY
Rhine
BELGIUM
Frankfurt
LUX
CZECH REPUBLIC
Stuttgart
Danube
FRANCE
Munich
AUSTRIA
LIECH.
SWITZERLAND

The Context of German Politics 3.1

USUALLY THE QUADRENNIAL EUROPEAN SOCCER TOURNAMENT, THE Euro Cup Championship, trumps any economic or political news. For millions of fans there is nothing more important than the summer games. Supporters travel throughout the continent to back their national teams with flag-waving and boisterous cheers. The games, as one journalist observed, "have often served as a safe outlet for channeling nationalist passions into Europe's favorite pastime."[1]

The June 2012 pre-match rally in Gdansk, Poland, however, was different. Germany and Greece were about to meet in an important quarterfinal match, but the rally had little to do with soccer. Waving the black–red–gold national flag, the German fans shouted out to their Greek counterparts, "Without Angie you wouldn't be here!" They were referring to the multibillion euro payments Greece had been receiving since 2010 from the European Union and above all its strongest member, Germany, led by Chancellor Angela Merkel. Waving their own blue–white national banner and pounding their drums, Greek fans responded with their own bailout-based chant: "We'll never pay you back."

In other countries similar sentiments were expressed. Some newspapers in Italy featured stories of the "Fourth Reich" complete with caricatures of the chancellor wearing a Prussian military helmet. Although not without its own major economic problems, Germany had emerged from the severe recession of 2008 and 2009 in better condition than any of her European neighbors. Its 2013 unemployment and growth rates are among the strongest in Europe. But this success has brought with it new problems.

The euro crisis, which began in 2009, has put the Federal Republic into the center of the greatest challenge the continent has faced since the end of World War II. At issue is Germany's perceived role as the leader of the thrifty, hard-money northern European countries who demand that Greece, Spain, Portugal, and the other spendthrift countries pursue a strict austerity policy of spending cuts for social programs, paring down the state bureaucracy, and privatizing public assets. One German newspaper even suggested that Greece sell its many scenic islands and even the Acropolis to repay its debts to Germany. Other southern European countries such as Spain, Portugal, and even Italy have reacted to their debt problems by blaming Germany and its continued demands for belt-tightening for their economic woes.

All of this attention and criticism is new for postwar Germany. For most of its 65 year-old history, the Federal Republic, mindful of what Germany did to Europe in the past, has steadfastly avoided the political center stage. It has eagerly deferred to the United States, France, and Britain in defense and foreign policy questions. A "culture of reticence" and close cooperation with its allies in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been the leitmotif of the Republic's approach to the world. It was content to be an economic heavyweight but a political lightweight.

It is now clear that in the twenty-first century this traditional reticence and avoidance of leadership is impossible. Germany is now Europe's indispensable nation. No solutions to the myriad of problems confronting the European Union and the eighteen-member eurozone, the countries that have adopted the common currency, are possible without German initiative and support. The Federal Republic did not seek out this new role, nor is it completely comfortable with it. Indeed a small but influential group of business leaders and scholars have proposed that Germany leave the eurozone and abdicate its responsibilities. Its highest court, the Federal Constitutional Court, has also expressed concern that one of the core principles of the postwar system we examine below, federalism, could be compromised by the new level of Germany's involvement. Supporters of the euro argue that its survival and indeed the fate of the entire European project are now in Germany's hands. Almost 65 years after the end of the greatest catastrophe in European history, Germany, the cause of that catastrophe, is now considered the key to the solution of the euro crisis.

This rise of German power is one of the most important international developments since the end of the Cold War. Clearly, the study of German politics has become more important than ever and critical for an understanding of modern European politics.

The unified Federal Republic, formed in 1989 and 1990, is—unlike France, Great Britain, Italy, or Sweden—one of Europe's newer states, even though Germans certainly rank among Europe's oldest people and are the most numerous people in western and central Europe. Unified Germany is also Europe's largest federal state. As Europe strives for an ever closer union, Germany's experience with federalism gives added weight to its importance in the councils of the European Union.

The collapse of the East German state in 1989 and 1990 and its incorporation into the Federal Republic is just one more example of the frequent changes that have characterized Germany's history. Indeed, the study of modern German politics offers an exceptional opportunity to examine the problems associated with political change and development. Few societies have experienced such drastic changes in their political system. In little more than a century, Germany has assumed the form of an empire (1871–1918); an unstable democratic republic (1919–1933); a totalitarian dictatorship (1933–1945); a military occupation (1945–1949); two separate states (1949–1990); and, since 1990, a single federal state. Germany and the Germans have, therefore, experienced most of the major political and ideological movements in modern history. The development of the Federal Republic since 1949 illustrates the extent to which a country can largely overcome its political heritage and change its political culture. In fact, few modern democracies have been as stable and legitimate as the one examined in the following chapters. The success of West Germany and its attraction to East Germans was an important factor in the deterioration of the East German communist regime. West Germany's record as a model democracy and peaceful neighbor since 1945 enabled the 1989–1990 unification to take place with the support of the European and international communities. How can all these changes be explained?

Historical Context

Europe has known German-speaking people and German political units for almost 1,000 years. Nevertheless, the Federal Republic is only sixty-five years old—a time span hardly comparable to that of most of its European neighbors. Although a relatively young state,

the Federal Republic claims to be the legitimate successor to the Bismarckian Second Reich, the Weimar Republic, and the Third Reich. This claim also makes the Federal Republic heir to the German political tradition, a tradition characterized by national division and frequent change. Before there were "Germans," Europe was populated by numerous Germanic tribes: Saxons, Franks, Bavarians, Swabians, Silesians, and Thuringians, to name a few. But no single state has ever united all of Europe's ethnic Germans. The 1949 to 1990 division between West Germany, East Germany, and the "eastern territories," now part of Poland and the Russian Federation, was only one more variation in an ongoing theme in German and European history. The political division of the German nation has been the rule rather than the exception.

The Empire (1871–1918)

Until 1871 Europe's German-speaking people were divided into many small principalities, a few moderate-size kingdoms, and two large, yet divided, major powers: Austria in the southeast and Prussia in the north. The German Reich, or Empire, proclaimed in 1871, was a Prussian-dominated structure that did not include Austria. Nevertheless, it was by far the most successful unification effort in German history. This empire was largely the work of Otto von Bismarck, the Prussian prime minister and first imperial chancellor, or head of government, and was brought about through classical European power politics. Prussia, under Bismarck, fought successful wars against Denmark (1864), Austria (1866), and France (1870) to become the dominant power in northern and western Germany.

National unification did not, however, represent any success for German liberalism. Nationalism, which historically has been closely associated with liberalism in countries such as France and the United States, has been an illiberal force in the German political experience. The empire was established through the fabled "blood and iron" policies of Bismarck and not by Germany's parliamentary liberals. After 1871, most of them, in fact, deferred to the "Iron Chancellor" and became more national than liberal.

During the imperial period, Germany became one of the world's great powers. Industrialization and urbanization advanced rapidly, as did the Reich's military power. Yet the industrialists and other members of the expanding middle class did not challenge the political authority of the traditional Prussian ruling elites: the military, the bureaucracy, and the landed nobility. German industrialization occurred almost simultaneously with the formation and consolidation of the Reich. Germany was faced with the management of two revolutions—a national and an industrial. The result was what Max Weber has termed a *Nobilitierung* of the German middle classes.[2] The middle class, that group that in England and France demanded political power commensurate with its economic power and in so doing spearheaded the development of parliamentary democracy, in the German case sought to imitate the traditional ruling elites—nobility, Junkers, military—that it should have been conflicting with. Instead of contending against the traditional feudal elites, Germany's new middle-class sought to emulate them. Germany had become a modern society ruled by premodern, traditional elite. The empire was an authoritarian political structure with some democratic features. Although the kaiser (emperor), the hereditary head of the Hohenzollern dynasty, appointed the chancellor and his government, a freely elected parliament held the power of appropriations and could exert some influence and control over the executive. The upper house, however, which represented the states and could block

most lower-house initiatives, was effectively dominated by Prussia. And in Prussia the voting system still gave a disproportionate influence to the upper-middle and upper classes. Military and foreign policy as well as internal security remained very much the province of the traditional Prussian elite. Parliament could not, for example, prevent Bismarck's campaigns of suppression against Catholics and socialists.

None of Bismarck's successors was able to maintain the delicate foreign and domestic equilibrium that characterized Germany from 1871 to 1890. In creating the Reich, Bismarck and the Prussians made many enemies in Europe, especially France, which lost the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine after the 1870 Franco–Prussian War. To the east, Russia feared German power. Bismarck was able to avoid a Franco–Russian alliance, but his successors were not. With Kaiser Wilhelm—a romantic nationalist—on the throne, Germany after Bismarck sought to acquire overseas colonies and, through the expansion of the fleet, to challenge British naval superiority. By the turn of the century, this aggressive post-Bismarck foreign policy had managed to provoke France, Great Britain, and Russia to ally against the Reich.

Internally, the paradox of a rapidly modernizing society controlled by premodern political elites continued to produce socioeconomic and political tensions. The expanding working class provided a solid electoral base for the Social Democratic Party (SPD), but the party was unable to achieve political influence commensurate with its growing numerical strength. The middle-class parties that also grew throughout the empire were unable and probably unwilling to oppose the militarist and imperialist policies of the kaiser and his chancellor. Indeed, Germany's middle-class parties often deferred to the traditional Prussian elites and supported measures such as the naval arms race with Great Britain. Unlike their counterparts in Great Britain and France, the German middle classes did not exert a moderating influence on policy. Militant nationalism was one means by which the traditional elite could unify a divided society and maintain its power position.

The empire so carefully constructed by Bismarck did not survive World War I. As the war dragged on after the failure of the initial German offensive, the many tensions and contradictions in the socioeconomic and political structures of the empire became apparent. Socialists, liberals, and Catholics began to question a conflict that pitted Germany against countries such as Great Britain and the United States, whose democratic values and constitution they hoped to achieve someday in Germany. A victory on the battlefield would strengthen a regime these groups had opposed in peacetime.

As the war continued, severe rationing caused by the Allied blockade, mounting casualty lists, and the pressures of wartime production began to take their toll on civilian morale, especially among factory workers. When the army's 1918 spring offensive failed, the military, which in the final years of the war actually made most important economic and political decisions, advised the kaiser to abdicate and the parliamentary leadership to proclaim a republic and negotiate a peace with the Western powers.

The Weimar Republic (1919–1933)

In January 1919 Germans elected delegates to a constituent assembly that met in the city of Weimar to formulate a new constitution for the postwar republic. The delegates, many of whom were distinguished legal scholars, produced a model democratic constitution, one of the most advanced in the world. It contained an extensive catalogue of human rights and provided numerous opportunities for popular participation through referendums, petitions, and the direct election of a strong president.

The republic, however, began under very unfavorable circumstances. After the departure of the kaiser, some German Marxists attempted to duplicate the Bolsheviks' success in Russia. Workers' and soldiers' councils were established in several cities, and Bavaria experienced a short-lived socialist republic. Eventually, a coalition of moderate Social Democrats, liberals, and conservative nationalists crushed these abortive efforts at a communist revolution. As a consequence, the working class remained divided throughout the Weimar Republic between the SPD, which supported the parliamentary system, and the Communist Party, which sought its overthrow. These events also established a pattern of political violence that was to continue throughout the period. In addition, the republic was identified from the beginning with defeat, national humiliation, and ineffectiveness.

Meanwhile, the conservative nationalists, urged on by the military, propagated the myth that Germany had not really lost World War I, but had been "stabbed in the back" by the "November criminals," identified as socialists, communists, liberals, and Jews. Large segments of the bureaucracy and the judiciary also were more attached to the authoritarian values of the empire than to those of the republic, and they acted accordingly.

The republic's brief history was characterized by a steady polarization of politics between left and right. In the early elections of the 1920s, pro-Republican parties—Social Democrats, the Center (Catholic) Party, and the Democratic Party (liberals)—had a solid majority of seats. By the early 1930s, the pro-Republican share of the vote had dropped from about 65 percent to only 30 percent. The Nazis on the right and the communists on the left together held more than half of the parliamentary delegates. With most voters supporting parties opposed to the republic, it became impossible to build a stable governing coalition. Policymaking became increasingly the responsibility of the president, who made extensive use of his power to issue executive decrees without regard for the wishes of the fragmented parliament.

The worldwide depression of 1929 dealt the republic a blow from which it could not recover. By 1932 more than a third of the workforce was unemployed, and the Nazis became the largest party in the parliament. The public wanted an effective government that would "do something." The democratic parties and their leaders could not meet this demand.

The Third Reich and World War II (1933–1945)

The only party that thrived on this crisis was the Nazi Party, under its leader, Adolf Hitler. The Nazis, or National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), was one of many nationalist and völkisch (racialist) movements that had emerged after World War I. Hitler's leadership ability set it apart from the others. A powerful orator, Hitler was able to appeal to a wide variety of voters and interests. He denounced the Treaty of Versailles, which had imposed harsh terms on Germany after World War I and the "criminals" who signed it for Germany. To the unemployed, he promised jobs in the rebuilding of the nation (rearmament and public works). To business interests, he represented a bulwark against communism. To farmers and small businessmen, caught between big labor and business, he promised recognition of their proper position in German society and protection against Marxist labor and "Jewish plutocrats."

In January 1933 President Paul von Hindenburg asked Hitler to form a government. The conservatives around the president believed they could easily control and "handle" Hitler once he had responsibility. Two months later, the Nazis pushed an Enabling Act

through the parliament that essentially gave Hitler total power; the parliament, constitution, and civil liberties were suspended. The will of the Führer (leader) became the supreme law and authority. By 1934 almost all areas of life had become "synchronized" (gleichgeschaltet) to the Nazi pattern.

There is little doubt that most Germans, at least until the start of World War II, supported Hitler. A survey conducted in 1951, six years after the war, found that a majority of citizens under forty-five years of age still believed that the prewar years of the Third Reich (1933–1939) were the "best" that Germany had experienced in that century.[3] Those years were ones of economic growth and at least a surface prosperity: unemployment was virtually eliminated; inflation was checked; and the economy, fueled by expenditures for rearmament and public works, boomed. That during these "good years" thousands were imprisoned, tortured, and murdered in concentration camps and hundreds of thousands of German Jews were systematically persecuted was apparently of minor importance to most citizens in comparison with the economic and policy successes of the regime. Indeed, most Germans, at least between 1933 and 1939, were willing to give up the democratic political order and the liberal society and accept the regime's racism and persecution of political opponents in exchange for economic prosperity, social stability, and a resurgence of national pride.

As for World War II in Europe, it was, in the words of Helmut Schmidt, a former chancellor of the Federal Republic, "totally started, led, and lost by Adolf Hitler acting in the name of the German people."[4] The world paid for this war with a total of about 60 million dead, including 8 million Jews and other political and racial victims murdered in concentration camps. The most ruthless and inhuman Nazi actions were directed against European Jewry. From the beginning of the Nazi movement, the Jews were regarded as the prime cause of all the misfortune, unhappiness, and disappointments endured by the German people. Hitler in his autobiography, *Mein Kampf,* written in the early 1920s, repeated in print his oft-spoken conviction that Jews were not humans, nor even subhumans, but rather "disease-causing bacilli" in the body of the nation that must be exterminated. Unfortunately, at the time few Germans took his ranting seriously, yet Hitler and the Nazis remained committed to this policy after they came to power. From 1933 on, first in Germany and then throughout the conquered lands of Europe, the Nazis systematically began a process that denied the Jews their dignity, economic livelihood, humanity, and finally, by the early 1940s, their right to physically exist.

The "final solution" to the "Jewish problem" was the murder of millions of Jewish men, women, and children, first by special SS (Schutzstaffel) killing units, German military personnel, and militarized police detachments and later at extermination camps especially constructed for this purpose in isolated sections of Europe. Hitler and other leading Nazis were able to carry out this Holocaust in part because of deeply rooted traditions of anti-Semitism in Germany and other parts of Europe. As recent research has shown, many "ordinary" Germans who were neither Nazis nor members of the SS willingly participated in the torture and murder of innocent Jews. They believed, as did Hitler, that Jews were a mortal threat that had to be eliminated.[5]

Only the total military defeat of the Third Reich in May 1945 by France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States, and forces from other allied nations prevented the Nazis from totally exterminating European Jewry. The remnant that remained amounted to less than 10 percent of the prewar Jewish population of Europe. The Federal Republic has accepted legal and moral responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi era. Even though it is, of

course, impossible to atone for the Holocaust, since the early 1950s the Federal Republic has paid almost $90 billion in reparations to the state of Israel and Jewish victims of Nazism.[6]

For many Germans, the real distress began after the war. During the war, the Nazis, mindful of the effects of Allied blockades during World War I, had gone to great lengths to ensure a relatively well-fed, housed, and clothed population. But military defeat ended this supply of foodstuffs, raw materials, and labor from the occupied territories, which had been ruthlessly exploited by the German armies. After 1945 the Germans found themselves in the same position as the populations in other European countries. In 1945 and 1946, the average caloric intake was set at only one-third of the daily requirement. In large cities such as Berlin and Düsseldorf, 80 percent to 90 percent of all houses and apartments were uninhabitable; in Cologne, a city with a population of 750,000 before the war, only 40,000 people remained during the winter of 1945–1946. Heating fuel was also in critically short supply. Before the war, the coal mines of the Ruhr produced an average of 400,000 tons a day; in 1945–1946, they produced only 25,000 tons a day.

The end of World War II meant the end of Germany as a political entity. The victorious Allies returned some of the territory conquered by the Nazis to its prewar owners (Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Poland, and Yugoslavia) and divided the remainder into zones of military occupation. But by the late 1940s, the onset of the Cold War had dashed any hopes that the wartime coalition could agree on a single postwar German state. In 1949 the US, British, and French zones of occupation became the Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany, with its capital in the small city of Bonn on the Rhine River. In the same year, the Soviet zone of occupation became the German Democratic Republic (GDR), or East Germany, with the Russian sector of Berlin as its capital.

The Federal Republic

During the past sixty-five years, the Federal Republic has developed into a strong, dynamic democracy. Unlike the Weimar Republic, the Federal Republic has, since its earliest days, been identified with economic prosperity and foreign and domestic policy successes. There is also convincing evidence that a consensus on democratic values and norms has developed during this period. The vast majority of the population supports this system and believes in its fundamental norms: individual freedom, the rule of law, civil liberties, free political competition, and representative institutions. In this sense, Germany and the Germans have changed.

The history of the Federal Republic can be divided into four rather distinct phases. The first is the formative period (1949–1966), which was characterized by an emphasis on economic reconstruction and the stabilization of the new political system both internally and externally through German participation in the European Community and the Atlantic Alliance (NATO). This stabilization occurred within the context of the Cold War. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the republic's first chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, dominated politics during this period.

The second phase, from 1966 to 1982, was an era of reform dominated by the Social Democrats and their first two chancellors, Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt. Here the emphasis was on reform: internal and external. Internally, a variety of economic, social, and cultural changes were enacted. The welfare state was expanded to become one of the most generous in Europe—it was time for the workers to get their share of the wealth created during the booming 1950s and 1960s. This period also witnessed the launch of the greater mass

political participation that continued throughout the 1970s. The student protest movement, the "extra parliamentary opposition" spawned by dissatisfaction with the 1966 "grand coalition" between the CDU–Christian Social Union (CSU) and the SPD, and the beginnings of a grassroots citizens' action group movement (Bürgerinitiativen) were all expressions of this growing politicization. In foreign policy, the Social Democrats initiated a new approach of reconciliation with its communist neighbors in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The third phase, the unification or Kohl era, covers the period from 1982 to 1998. Helmut Kohl, together with his Free Democratic partners, promised a Wende, or fundamental change, especially in the republic's domestic policies. Social programs were cut, incentives to business were increased, and government budget deficits declined. This approach was a modest German version of the supply-side economics practiced by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain and President Ronald Reagan in the United States. But the new government also attempted to turn the country away from what it regarded as the excessive permissiveness and liberalism of the social–liberal era. Traditional values of family, country, thrift, work, and duty were emphasized—at least by Kohl. Yet the trends toward increased politicization and mass protest evident since the late 1960s continued. In 1983 the first new political party in almost thirty years, the Greens, entered the national parliament. Its success was attributable above all to the "new politics" of environmental protection, women's rights, and disarmament. During this phase the Federal Republic also assumed a higher profile in international relations. In 1989 West Germany strongly opposed the policies of the United States on the modernization and deployment of new short-range missiles in West Germany.

After 1990 unification or "putting Germany back together again" became the focus of politics.[7] By 2010 over two trillion dollars had been poured into the economic and social reconstruction of the five new eastern states that joined the Federal Republic.

The final and present phase is one of increased European and international responsibilities. For the first time in its history, the Federal Republic, largely by virtue of its size and strong economy, has become Europe's reluctant hegemon, the indispensable nation. No major policy proposal can be made or implemented without German support. German opposition in turn is strong enough to veto any decision. This strong economic position represents a dramatic turnaround from the country's condition earlier in the twenty-first century. Germany by 2005 was at the bottom of the European economic leader board. Between 1995 and 2005, it had the lowest growth rate in western and central Europe.[8] By 2005 unemployment and public debt had reached record levels. In this period the unstable economic situation was also reflected in increasing voter volatility. In 2005 voters compelled the two major parties, now reduced to less than 40 percent of the vote each, to form a grand coalition, the first such alignment since 1966. The grand coalition, which took office in November, actually presided over an impressive economic recovery from 2006 to late 2008, which was cut short by the aforementioned international credit, financial, and economic crisis. Under the grand coalition real economic growth jumped from only 0.8 percent in 2005 to 3.0 percent in 2006 and 2.7 percent in 2007. From 2005 to September 2008 nearly 2 million new jobs were created. But in 2009 voters decided to keep one of the coalition partners, the Christian Democrats, in power, and reduced the support of the other, the Social Democrats, to their lowest level in the history of the Federal Republic. The Social Democrats then went into opposition, and the Free Democrats became the coalition partner of the Christian Democrats.

During the current administration of Chancellor Merkel, the German economy has become the strongest and most dynamic in Europe. Deficits have been replaced by budget surpluses, and the reforms in the labor market and social welfare programs have made the country more competitive in the global market place. Trade with the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) countries has expanded far beyond expectations, especially exports to Russia and China. This success, however, has also meant far more responsibility for Germany within Europe. The fate of the euro and the entire European Union will be determined in large part by decisions made in Berlin.

Federalism

Germany is by far the most decentralized large state in Europe. Although they receive little foreign media attention, the sixteen Länder (states), in addition to their own constitution and parliament, have primary responsibility for education, the mass media, and internal security and order (police power). In addition, the civil servants of the Länder administer most laws passed at the national level.

German states vary widely in area, population, and socioeconomic structure (see Tables 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3). The three "city-states" of Hamburg, Berlin, and Bremen are largely Protestant and industrial commercial areas. They have generally been strongholds of the Social Democrats throughout most of the postwar period. The two other northern Protestant states are Schleswig-Holstein, which is a relatively rural and small town, and Lower Saxony, which is more balanced between urban-industrial and

Table 3-1 States of the Federal Republic of Germany: Area and Population

	Capital	2012 Population (millions)	Area (thousands of km^2)	Population per km^2
North Rhine–Westphalia	Düsseldorf	17.5	34.1	528
Bavaria	Munich	12.4	70.6	177
Baden-Württemberg	Stuttgart	10.5	35.8	301
Lower Saxony	Hanover	7.8	47.6	167
Hesse	Wiesbaden	6.0	21.1	288
Saxony	Dresden	4.1	18.4	229
Berlin	—	3.3	0.9	3,834
Rhineland-Palatinate	Mainz	4.0	19.8	204
Saxony-Anhalt	Magdeburg	2.3	20.4	118
Schleswig-Holstein	Kiel	2.8	15.8	180
Brandenburg	Potsdam	2.5	29.5	86
Thuringia	Erfurt	2.2	16.2	142
Mecklenburg–West PomeraniaSchwerin	1.6	23.2	72	
Hamburg	—	1.7	0.8	2,344
Saarland	Saarbrücken	1.0	2.6	404
Bremen	—	0.7	0.4	1,640
Total or average		80.4	357.2	230

Source: Federal Statistical Office (Wiesbaden).

Table 3-2 The States of the Federal Republic: Gross National Product, 2011

Total (€ billions)	Percentage of total		Per capita (€)
North Rhine-Westphalia	568.9	22.1	31,839
Bavaria	446.4	17.4	35,545
Baden-Württemberg	364.3	14.6	34,943
Lower Saxony	214.4	8.7	28,306
Hesse	220.8	8.9	37,616
Saxony	95.1	3.7	22,970
Berlin	87.5	3.9	29,153
Rhineland-Palatinate	107.5	4.4	28,311
Saxony-Anhalt	53.8	2.0	22,336
Schleswig-Holstein	73.6	2.9	25,967
Brandenburg	54.9	2.1	22,051
Thuringia	49.8	1.9	21,608
Mecklenburg–West Pomerania	35.9	1.4	21,363
Hamburg	89.6	3.7	52,731
Saarland	32.2	1.2	30,059
Bremen	27.7	1.1	42,505
Total or average	2,570.80	100	31,440

Source: Federal Statistical Office (Wiesbaden).

States of the Federal Republic of Germany: Gross National Product, 2011

	Total ($ billions)*	Percent of total	Per capita ($)
North Rhine–Westphalia	699.7	22.1	**38,806**
Bavaria	549.1	17.4	43,**579**
Baden-Württemberg	462.8	14.6	42,852
Lower Saxony	**214.4**	8.7	34,937
Hesse	**220.8**	8.9	4**6,066**
Saxony	**95.1**	3.7	**28,512**
Berlin	**87.5**	3.9	**25,554**
Rhineland-Palatinate	**107.5**	4.4	25,777
Saxony-Anhalt	**53.8**	2.0	**22,427**
Schleswig-Holstein	**73.6**	2.9	**25,945**
Brandenburg	**54.9**	2.1	**21,721**
Thuringia	**49.8**	1.9	**21,875**
Mecklenburg–West Pomerania	**35.9**	1.4	**21,439**
Hamburg	**89.6**	3.7	**50,640**
Saarland	**32.2**	1.2	**30,168**
Bremen	**27.7**	1.1	**41,918**
Total or average	**2,492.0**	100.0	**30,343**

*Converted at the rate of 1 Euro equals $1.23.
Source: Federal Statistical Office (Wiesbaden).

Table 3-3 States of the Federal Republic of Germany: Workforce, Religion, and Politics

	Foreign Residents (Percent)	Workforce in agriculture (2010, percent)	Unemployment (2011) (percent)	Roman Catholics (2011) (percent)	Governing party or coalition (2013)
North Rhine–Westphalia	11	2	8.5	42	SPD-Green
Bavaria	10	4	4.2	55	CSU-FDP
Baden-Württemberg	12	3	4.1	37	Green-SPD
Lower Saxony	7	4	7.7	18	SPD-Green
Hesse	12	2	6.6	25	CDU-Green
Saxony	3	3	12.8	4	CDU-FDP
Berlin	13	—	13.9	8	SPD-CDU
Rhineland-Palatinate	8	3	5.6	45	SPD-Green
Saxony-Anhalt	2	4	14.0	4	CDU-SPD
Schleswig-Holstein	5	3	7.6	6	SPD-Green-SSW
Brandenburg	3	4	13.0	3	SPD- Left
Thuringia	2	4	11.3	8	CDU-SPD
Mecklenburg–West Pomerania	2	5	14.1	3	SPD-CDU
Hamburg	15	—	8.1	10	SPD
Saarland	9	—	7.3	63	CDU-SPD
Bremen	13	—	11.4	12	SPD-Green
Total or average	9	3	7.8	33	

Source: Federal Statistical Office (Wiesbaden).

Note: CDU= Christian Democratic Union; CSU =Christian Social Union; FDP= Free Democratic Party; SPD= Social Democratic Party; SSW= The South-Schleswig Voter's Association, representing the Danish minority.

rural-agrarian activity. Both states have had competitive politics for most of the post-war period with alternations between Christian-Democratic and Social Democratic controlled governments.

The most populous state in the Federal Republic is North Rhine-Westphalia, which contains more than 20 percent of the Federal Republic's 80.4 million inhabitants. A heavily industrialized and urbanized state, North Rhine-Westphalia has a relative balance between Catholics and Protestants. Although its politics has been largely controlled by the Social Democrats during the past twenty years, in 2005 the Christian Democrats became the largest party. But in May 2010 the Social Democrats returned to power in a coalition with the Greens, which was reelected with a strong majority in 2012. Hesse, another very industrialized, religiously balanced, western land, was ruled as well by Social Democrats for most of the postwar period, but it has been governed by the Christian Democrats since 1999.

Two other western states—the Rhineland-Palatinate and the Saarland—have substantial Catholic populations. The Rhineland is less industrialized than the much smaller Saarland, which has had an extensive, but now declining, steel industry. In the Saar, the Social Democrats were in the minority until 1985, when they won their first state election since 1945. In 1999 they returned to the opposition. After the 2009 state election, the first-ever "Jamaica" coalition (named after the colors of the Jamaican flag) composed of Christian Democrats (Black), Free Democrats (Yellow), and Greens was formed in this state. This alignment lasted only until 2012 when it was replaced by a grand coalition of CDU and SPD. The Rhineland-Palatinate, until 1991, had been governed continuously by Christian Democratic–led coalitions. Since 2006 the Social Democrats have been the dominant party. Since 2011 they have governed in a coalition with the Greens.

Western Germany's "sunbelt" is composed of the two states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg. Bavaria is largely Catholic. It is the only large land whose borders were restored intact after the war. It calls itself a "free state" with its own strong historical traditions. Indeed, separatism in various forms has at times been a significant force in Bavarian politics. Bavaria has been governed without interruption since 1957 by the CSU, the sister party of the CDU—that is, the CDU does not contest elections in Bavaria. Historically rural and small town in character, Bavaria has over the past half-century become an urbanized state and a center of high-tech industry.

Over the past twenty years, Baden-Württemberg has had the most dynamic economy of any state. It is home to Germany's computer, robotics, and other high-tech industries. Many marquee firms such as Daimler-Benz and Porsche are located here. Its high rate of economic growth contrasts with those of the more sluggish economies of many northern areas. In 2011 after almost 60 years of governing, the Christian Democrats were replaced by a coalition of Greens and Social Democrats. The government is now led by Germany's only Green chief–executive (minister präsident).

The five eastern states that joined the Federal Republic in 1990 are all relatively small. The largest, Saxony, with about 4 million residents, is only the sixth largest of the sixteen states. Saxony is also the major industrial center of the former East Germany, accounting for about 35 percent of the area's gross national product (GNP). Before 1933 Saxony was a stronghold of the Social Democrats, but the Christian Democrats won an absolute majority at the state's first free election in 1990 and have been reelected at all subsequent elections. The strip mining of lignite, an outmoded chemical industry, and decades of neglect left the state with major environmental problems.

The remaining four states are all smaller and less industrialized than Saxony. Its neighbor, Saxony-Anhalt, has the shortest history as an independent political entity. The state, which contains some of Germany's most fertile farmland, is currently governed by a coalition of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats. Thuringia, with 2.4 million inhabitants, has a more mixed economy than Saxony or Saxony-Anhalt. It was the center of the former East Germany's high-tech microelectronics industry. The Christian Democrats are the major governing party in this state. Brandenburg, once the core province of Prussia, is a sparsely populated state in the northeast. Until 1920 Berlin was a province of Brandenburg; the city lies within its borders, and the two states have been discussing a merger. Brandenburg's politics have been dominated by the Social Democrats. The smallest of the new states, with less than 2 million residents, is the coastal state of Mecklenburg-West

Pomerania. This region is primarily agricultural, but it has a shipping industry that could become competitive in the international marketplace. Since 2006 the state has been governed by a coalition of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats.

Finally, Berlin, the capital, is also a state. Like the country, it was unified in 1990. The four victorious World War II powers—the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France—who technically controlled the city since 1945, ended their occupation. Divided since 1961 by a wall, East Berlin was the capital of the GDR while West Berlin had a special status as a city under the official control of the United States, Britain, and France but administered by a freely elected government. Since the double unification of 1990, the two parts of the city also lost their special status and the abundant subsidies they received as a consequence of their "showcase" position in the Cold War. The city must now fend for itself, and that has been difficult. Currently, it is one of the most indebted of all the states. After unification, unemployment doubled, almost 20 percent of its population is on welfare, and 400,000 industrial jobs (mainly in the eastern section) have been lost.

From 2001 until 2011 it was governed by a "Red-Red" coalition of Social Democrats and the Left Party. After the 2011 election the Social Democrats entered into a coalition with the Christian Democrats. Berlin continues to seek special status and economic relief from the national government. Currently, the city and the national government are attempting, with considerable difficulty, to negotiate a "treaty" that would determine the extent of this support.

Geographic and Demographic Context

Unified Germany comprises about three-fourths of the pre–World War II territory of the Reich. The remainder is now part of Poland or the Russian Federation. With a total area of about 138,000 square miles, the Federal Republic is roughly half the size of Texas. Its population of about 80.4 million, however, makes Germany one of Europe's largest and most densely populated states. Since 1945, the population has grown through (1) the influx between 1945 and 1961 of 14 million refugees and expellees from Germany's former eastern territories and East Germany; (2) the in-migration of foreign workers, which began in the late 1950s and reached a high point of about 3 million workers in 1973; and (3) the addition of 16 million East Germans by unification. Since the late 1980s, almost 1 million ethnic Germans, largely from Poland, the former Soviet Union, and other areas in eastern Europe, have resettled in Germany.

Most Germans live in towns and cities with populations greater than 20,000; and more than half of the 80 million inhabitants live on less than 10 percent of the land. The population of nine major urban areas exceed 1 million: the Rhine-Ruhr region between the cities of Düsseldorf and Dortmund; the Rhine-Main, or Frankfurt, area; Berlin; Stuttgart; Hamburg; Munich; the Rhine-Neckar region; and in the east the Leipzig and Dresden regions.

As for the makeup of the population, since 1970 the Federal Republic has experienced a demographic decline; it has had one of Europe's and the world's lowest birthrates. Indeed, over these forty years deaths have outnumbered births, and whatever growth in population western Germany has experienced has stemmed from the much higher birthrates associated with foreign workers. Indeed because of immigration overall population levels have remained relatively stable. In 2012, for example, the native population declined by about 250,000, but the arrival of over 350,000 immigrants above all from eastern Europe

(Poland, Romania) resulted in a small net increase. Between 1970 and 1987 the native German population actually declined by 1.3 million, while the number of foreign residents increased by 1.7 million. By 2005 the native population had declined to about 75 million. Also by 2012, one-fourth of German women were childless—one of the highest rates in the world. The 2005 birthrate of about 1.3 children per female of childbearing age was half of what it was in 1965. Among females with university degrees, more than 40 percent are childless.[9]

After unification, the birthrate in eastern Germany dropped by almost 60 percent. Uncertainty about the future, the massive loss of jobs, and the end of special state subsidies for children and child care programs were the major factors in the decline. The drop has been most pronounced among well-educated easterners in the under-forty age group, many of whom have immigrated to the western states in search of better jobs. One eastern state, Thuringia, has adopted a policy once popular in the GDR. Upon the birth of the first child, the new parents are eligible for a low interest (1.5 percent) loan of €5,000—parts of which are forgiven with each succeeding child. A second child reduces the principle to €4,000; the third child brings a further reduction to €2,500, and if the couple has a fourth child, the entire loan is forgiven. The loan is conditional upon a favorable credit rating. In the absence of a good rating, the couple is still eligible for a one-time grant of €500, which does not have to be repaid. Thuringia's program began in July 2008. Another eastern state, Brandenburg, even offered a €500 grant to the parents of each newborn child. Nevertheless, since the fall of the Berlin Wall the eastern states have had a net population loss of about 2 million (13 percent). Of even greater concern is type of people who are moving to the west: they are overwhelmingly young and well educated—the population groups critical to economic growth.[10]

These low birthrates, coupled with longer life expectancy, have made Germany, like many of its European neighbors, an older society. Between 1955 and 2002 the proportion of the population under twenty years of age dropped from 30 percent to 21 percent, and the size of the over-sixty age group increased from 16 percent to 24 percent. The young dependency ratio—that is, the ratio of those under twenty to those in the twenty- to fifty-nine-year-old group—has dropped from 56 percent to 38 percent. The elderly dependency ratio—the ratio of those over sixty to those in the twenty- to fifty-nine-year-old group—has increased from 29 percent to 44 percent. These changes mean that fewer younger people are now entering the productive period of their life cycle, and the number leaving the productive period and entering into the elderly group has increased. Put another way, fewer and fewer people are now working, but more people are dependent on this smaller productive segment of the population. This "demographic decline" is a major factor in the financial problems that have affected the pension and health insurance systems.

Religion

Most Germans in the western states are "born" into one of two churches: the Roman Catholic or the Evangelical Protestant (Lutheran).[11] Since the Reformation, Protestants and Catholics have been divided along regional lines. The east and north are predominantly Protestant; in the south and west, adherents of Roman Catholicism are in the majority. Historically, the respective secular rulers (princes) in these areas acted as "protectors"

of the faith in their kingdoms, thereby making the churches dependent on state authority for their survival. The close, dependent relationship with the state meant that both churches, but especially the Protestant, which has no international ties comparable to those of the Roman Catholic, were conservative, status quo–oriented institutions. The separation of church and state, fundamental in the political tradition of the United States, is alien to the German political tradition; both churches have occupied a privileged position in society and politics.

Lutheran and Catholic churches are largely financed through a church tax, a surcharge of about 8 percent on the individual income tax. The tax is collected by the state via withholding and is transferred at minimal cost to the churches' treasuries, which are thereby assured of a generous, inflation-proof income. Perhaps for that reason, the Cologne archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church is the richest in the world. An individual can escape the church tax only by formally leaving the church, a procedure that most West Germans have declined to follow. Yet between 1970 and 2005, the proportion of members electing to contract out of the church tax increased from 8 percent to more than 20 percent. In recent years, both denominations have had to close and sell church property. And the Catholic Church has a severe shortage of priests.[12]

The Catholic Church in 2012 attempted to stem the tide of withdrawals by issuing an edict, approved by Rome, which stated that any Catholic who does not pay the tax will no longer be permitted to receive the sacraments or other clerical services. It even declared that a Christian burial may be denied to those who opted out of the tax.[13]

Although formal affiliation with the established churches is generally automatic and therefore high, most West Germans and especially Protestants are not very active religiously. Yet the political position and influence of the churches have been strong. The postwar occupation authorities viewed the churches as relatively untainted by Nazism and gave them preferential treatment. In addition, the CDU, the dominant political party from 1949 to 1969, was generally successful in projecting an image of a movement that would govern under Christian principles. Cynics and political opponents strongly disputed this CDU claim that it was more concerned with religion and morality than were other parties, but the CDU has definitely enjoyed the favor of, especially, the Catholic Church. This close CDU/CSU–Catholic Church relationship also compelled the Social Democrats by the late 1950s to seek at least a normalized, less conflictual relationship with the church. Both churches retain a privileged status. One example is that religious instruction in public schools by teachers acceptable to the churches is underwritten by public funds, and the state also pays the salaries of some church officials.

Historically, the regions that constituted East Germany were predominantly (about 90 percent) Protestant. The communist regime imposed after 1945 at first tried to eliminate the churches as independent social institutions. Funds for the upkeep of church buildings, seminaries, and publications, as well as the salaries of pastors, were steadily reduced. Religious instruction was banned from the schools and replaced by courses on scientific atheism. As a substitute for the traditional confirmation, the Communist Party instituted a *Jugendweihe* ceremony in which young people pledged fidelity to socialism and eternal friendship with the Soviet Union. Failure to participate usually meant that the young person would be denied admission to a university-track secondary school program. This antireligious policy of the regime had some success. In 1991 only 21 percent of East Germans,

compared with 61 percent of West Germans, reported believing there was a God, and belief in a life after death was held by 14 percent in the east and 51 percent in the west.[14] About 75 percent of East Germans reported no religious affiliation, compared with 17 percent of West Germans. Today, about 20 percent of East Germans remain affiliated with the Protestant Church, which throughout all the turmoil of the communist era still maintained close ties with its West German counterpart; about 3 percent are practicing Catholics.[15]

Socioeconomic Structure

Germany has one of the most exposed and open economies of any major advanced industrial society. Although not immune to the ups and downs of the business cycle and the world economy, West Germany's economic record from 1949 to 2000 could not be matched by that of any other large, advanced industrial society, with the possible exception of Japan. In 2008 more than a third of Germany's gross domestic product (GDP) was from exports, which totaled almost $1.4 trillion. In 2007 and 2008 it was the world's largest exporter of goods surpassing China, Japan, and the United States. In recent years it has also become one of the largest trading partners for both Russia and China.

From 2000 to 2005, however, Germany's economic performance was among the poorest in Europe. Indeed, the economy hardly grew over the four-year period from 2001 to 2005. Unemployment by 2005 reached nearly 5 million or about 11 percent of the workforce. And the budget had been in deficit since 2001. These deficits, which have exceeded 3 percent of GDP, have put the country in violation of the requirements of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) that countries in "Euroland" keep their public debt below that level. Only the inflation level has remained low over this period.

The economic system is mixed, with private property and free enterprise coexisting with substantial state involvement. It is also a social market economy in which an elaborate social welfare system is supported by both management and labor, as well as by all the significant political parties.

The well-educated workforce is technically proficient; 84 percent of all business firms use computers, and more than half of all employees work daily with information and communication technologies. From 1991 to 2008 the number of employees with college and university degrees grew by 40 percent and the number of workers without any vocational training dropped by 5 percent. About 70 percent of the workforce therefore is in knowledge-intensive occupations, and only 24 percent are in the traditional industrial jobs of manufacturing.[16] The dominant industrial enterprises are concentrated in the electronics, motor vehicle, machine tool, chemical, and energy sectors. The remainder of the workforce is composed of those in independent nonmanual occupations (small-business owners, shopkeepers), independent professionals (physicians, lawyers), and those who work in agriculture, forestry and fishing.

The fruits of the economic system have enabled the great majority of Germans to achieve a high standard of living. In spite of inflation, the disposable income of all occupational groups, including industrial workers, has steadily risen during the past sixty-five years. Foreign vacations, automobiles, television sets, and modern appliances and gadgets are now commonplace in most families.

Nevertheless, inequality is very much a characteristic of this society. The same manual workers who are satiated with consumer goods are much less likely to own a home or

Table 3-4 Monthly Net Income by Occupation, 2010 (US Dollars)

	West	East*
Civil servants (Beamte)	5,809	5,356
White-collar employee (Angestellte)	5,028	3,995
Manual worker (Arbeiter)	4,267	3,479
Unemployed	1,580	1,569
Retired	2,842	2,296

Source: https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/EinkommenKonsum LebensbedingungenEinkommenEinnahmenAusgaben/EinkommenEinnahmenAusgaben.html

Note: 1 Euro = $1.29.
*Including Berlin.

apartment in their lifetimes, and their children in all likelihood will not receive a university education. As Table 3-4 shows there are substantial differences in incomes. Civil servants remain a privileged group with month take-home incomes of almost $6,000 in the western states and about $5,300 in the newer eastern states. White-collar employees in the West, manager, technicians, and administrative personnel, also bring home over $5,000 monthly. But the top earners are the owners and proprietors of businesses, free professionals (doctors, lawyers), and farmers. These "independents" constitute about 10 percent of the labor force and are usually not included in the occupational data presented in Table 3-4 because they are employers and not employees.

There is even greater inequality in the ownership of capital resources: land, stocks, bonds, securities, savings, and life insurance. The richest 10 percent of the population has about 60 percent of the country's wealth (stocks, bonds, real estate, savings accounts, and other capital). And the top 1 percent own 20 percent of the wealth. More than two-thirds of the population have little or no capital resources.[17] This general pattern has changed little over the past twenty years, an indication that governments, including those led by the Social Democrats, have not pursued policies designed to redistribute the country's capital resources.

According to the data, then, beneath the surface prosperity of the Federal Republic are substantial differences in personal wealth. This distribution of capital reflects in part the postwar decision of German and Allied occupation elites to take the free market route to economic recovery. West German political leaders of all the major parties, even the Social Democrats, have generally sought to create a favorable climate for investment capital through low tax rates on profits and dividends, as well as subsidies and tax benefits for new plants and equipment. The currency reform of 1948 clearly favored capital-holding groups: Germans with savings accounts or cash in old reichsmarks received only about one new deutsche mark for every fourteen old marks. Millions of lower- and lower-middle-class citizens saw their savings largely wiped out, but those with stocks, securities, and land lost nothing.

Education

The educational system has generally reflected and reinforced this socioeconomic inequality. Traditionally, this system was designed to give a basic general education to all and

advanced academic training to only a few. Most education is still structured along three tracks. At about the age of six, all children enter a four-year primary school. Then in most states, after the fourth year when most children are about age ten, the tracking process begins:

- About 20 percent of all children will attend a general secondary school for an additional six years. Then, at about the age of sixteen or seventeen, they will enter the workforce, in most cases as apprentices, and attend vocational school part time for about three years.
- A second group, making up about 30 percent of a given age group, will attend an intermediate school (Realschule) for six to eight years. The Realschule combines academic and job-oriented training. Medium-level careers in business and administration usually require a middle-school educational background.
- The remaining school-age children will pursue an academic or university-level educational program. Attendance at an academic high school (gymnasium) or comprehensive school (Gesamtschule) for up to nine years yields an Abitur (a degree roughly comparable to a US junior college diploma) and the right to attend a university.

It is possible for children to change tracks, especially during the first two or three years, which are considered an orientation period. Many students, however, do not switch, and the decisions made by their parents and teachers after four to six years of school usually determine their educational and occupational futures.

The entire system has had a class bias. The gymnasium and the university are still largely preserves of the middle and upper-middle classes, and the majority of children in the general vocational track have working-class backgrounds. In spite of decades of attempted reform, little progress has been made toward providing more equality of opportunity. As one study concludes, "The educational chances of young people depend largely on their social background."[18] Although there has been an enormous expansion of enrollments at gymnasiums and universities, the social bias remains: about 30 percent of the workforce is in manual or blue-collar occupations, but only 13 percent of university students come from such a social background.[19] Children of middle- and upper-class parents are far more likely to have participated in the recent educational expansion.

For the children of immigrants the educational system has not performed well. About 60 percent of immigrant children in vocational programs leave school without completing their program as compared to 18 percent of native-born children.[20] Little wonder that unemployment is much higher among those young people with a "migratory background" (first or second generation immigrants). The jobs they do have tend to be concentrated in the low-wage sector.

German education has no lack of critics. Reformers emphasize, in addition to the class bias, the system's inflexibility: children encounter great difficulty in changing tracks as their interests and values change. In the 1960s the principal element in plans for reforming and restructuring education was the consolidation of the three-track secondary system into a single comprehensive school (Gesamtschule). Instead of being tracked after the

fourth grade, all children would remain in the same school for an additional six years, or until about the age of sixteen. The purpose of the comprehensive school plan was to provide more equality of educational opportunity and social mobility. But the program also encountered substantial political opposition, above all in Christian Democratic states. By 2008 only about 10 percent of secondary school students were still attending these schools.[21] Many of them have become reestablished as gymnasiums or general secondary schools.

One component of this system that has earned high marks, especially from foreign educational experts, is the vocational program. This is mainly pursued by students in tracks one and two. It combines actual job training in the plant for about three days a week with academic work in separate schools for the remainder of the week. Many companies have excellent training programs that are coordinated with the schools and the unions. The goal is to ensure that every graduate will have a marketable skill. One measure of the success of German vocational programs is the youth unemployment rate. At the end of 2012 youth unemployment (15–24) in Germany was about 8 percent as compared to 23 percent in the other EU countries. In the euro crisis countries of Greece, Spain, and Portugal about 50 percent of all young people were without jobs.[22]

Politics has a lot to do with access to the various types of schools. In Bavaria, where the traditional structure supported by the conservative CSU is still dominant, less than 33 percent of children attended a gymnasium in 2008, compared with 46 percent of the children in Brandenburg, a Social Democratic state.[22] The idea of delayed tracking, however, has not been abandoned. The poor performance of some German schools and students in recent international student assessment programs has sparked a renewed interest in creating more equality of opportunity for students from less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds.[23]

Since unification, the eastern states have largely restructured their educational systems to fit the pattern in the western states. This massive task has involved the establishment of new schools, curriculums, textbooks, and teacher retraining. The communist system, in addition to the standard academic subjects, included extensive programs designed to indoctrinate young people with Marxist–Leninist ideology and produce the "new Socialist man." The influence of the Communist Party was pervasive. Most teachers and almost all school administrators were in the party. Communist youth organizations, modeled on their counterparts in the former Soviet Union, were present in all schools.

Upon initiating the restructuring, the eastern states placed most teachers on probationary status for as long as five years. Many administrators—principals and assistant principals—were dismissed or demoted. Many of these teachers, however, were let go for financial and not political reasons.

The population decline in the eastern states since unification has forced the closing of schools. In one eastern state, Saxony, the number of children in primary and secondary schools dropped from about 800,000 in 1990 to 400,000 in 2011. Already in 2005 about a third of all elementary schools in Saxony were closed, with middle schools and high schools scheduled to follow. Not only do school closings mean longer commutes for children and parents but they also affect parents' decisions about where to live. For many easterners, a school closing finalizes their decision to leave for the west.[24] In recent years, however, there appears to be a trend of some easterners returning to

their home states after an extended period in the west. The worst of the population decline may be over.

Political Attitudes

In 1949 few if any observers in Germany or elsewhere gave the Federal Republic of Germany much of a chance to survive, much less prosper. The decision to establish a West German state was made by neither the German political leadership nor the German electorate in any referendum; it was the decision of the three victorious Western powers in World War II—France, Great Britain, and the United States. The Federal Republic was a product of the foreign policies of these countries, which sought to counter what they perceived to be a growing Soviet threat in central and western Europe. The Germans living in the American, British, and French occupation zones therefore had imposed on them by their conquerors a new political system, which they were to regard as their own. Moreover, the new state was to be a liberal parliamentary democracy, a form of government that Germany had tried between 1919 and 1933 with disastrous consequences. Even the committed democrats had few fond memories of that first democratic experience—the Weimar Republic. In addition, some citizens perceived the establishment of a West German state as a move that would result in the permanent division of the country. The regional and state leaders in the western zones, who were asked to begin the process of drafting a constitution for the new state, were reluctant to make the republic appear as a permanent entity. The constitution that was drafted was not even called such but rather the Basic Law.

Although the Germans were not consulted about their new state, many of them in 1949 did not really care. The great majority of the population was fed up with "politics," "parties," and "ideals." After the mobilization of the Nazi years, the incessant propaganda, the endless calls for sacrifice, and the demands of total war, they wanted above all to put their private lives back together again. They had been badly burned by politics and were quite willing to let someone else, even foreigners, make political decisions for them as long as they were more or less left alone to pursue their private concerns: being with family, making a living, catching up on all that was missed during the war years. In short, Germans were willing to follow the orders of their occupiers and become citizens of a democracy, even though most had had little if any experience with a successful, functioning democratic political order.

Thus, the institutions of democracy preceded the development of an attitudinal consensus on democracy. For that reason, Western and especially American occupation authorities and some Germans recognized that they needed to educate the postwar population and change political attitudes.

But one did not have to be an enthusiastic supporter of political democracy to oppose any sort of return to a Nazi-style dictatorship after 1945. Apart from any personal predilection for a one-party state, the performance of the Third Reich made it distinctly unattractive as an alternative to most Germans in the postwar period. Although there has been a consistent relationship between a positive attitude toward the Third Reich and opposition to the values and institutions of the Bonn Republic after 1945, it should not be overlooked that a sizable proportion of respondents with little sympathy for liberal democracy still rejected a return to some form of dictatorship. This was hardly a firm foundation on

which to build a stable and effective political democracy, yet it did provide postwar elites and the consciously democratic segments of the larger population with breathing space in which the republic was given an opportunity to perform and socialize postwar generations to its values and norms.

The early years of the republic were characterized by widespread ambivalence about political democracy. Surveys revealed that significant proportions of the population retained the traditional authoritarian if not antidemocratic attitudes acquired during earlier regimes. In 1949 about half the population still agreed with this statement: "National Socialism was a good idea, which was only badly carried out." When asked to choose between a hypothetical government that guaranteed economic success and security and one that guaranteed political freedom, Germans in the late 1940s preferred the former by a two-to-one margin.[25]

In the early 1950s about one-fourth of the adult population still preferred a one-party state, in 1951 almost half of the electorate stated it would be "indifferent" to an attempt by a new Nazi Party to take power, and one of every three adults had positive attitudes toward a restoration of the monarchy. Moreover, although the turnout at elections was high, most voters went to the polls out of a sense of duty and not because they believed they were participating in important political decisions. Only about one-fourth of the population in the early 1950s expressed any interest in political questions, and most Germans reported that they rarely talked about politics with family or friends. They had, in short, largely withdrawn from political involvement beyond the simple act of going to the polls.

This pattern of mass political attitudes and behavior was not conducive to the long-term viability of the new Federal Republic should it have encountered a major economic or social crisis. Most citizens in the 1950s, even those with fascist or authoritarian dispositions, were quite willing to support political democracy as embodied in the Federal Republic as long as it "worked," but they could not be counted on if the system encountered major problems. The Germans were "fair weather" and not "rain or shine" democrats, but they were willing to give democracy a chance.

Today, after almost sixty-five years of experience with democratic government, this pattern of political attitudes has changed.[26] There is now a solid consensus on the basic values, institutions, and processes of parliamentary democracy. Support for values such as political competition, freedom of speech, civil liberties, and the rule of law ranges from a minimum of about 75 percent to more than 95 percent for a principle such as political competition. Similar proportions of West German citizens had by the 1980s a positive orientation toward the parliament, the constitution itself, and the federal structure of the state. Consistent with this consensus on the present political system is the level of satisfaction with the way democracy is functioning. Germans are among the most satisfied of the citizens of the major European countries in which this question was asked (see Table 3-5). This satisfaction is an important cultural resource as the country now confronts its new domestic and European challenges.

The Great Recession of 2008–2009, the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, had no significant impact on support for democratic values, processes and institutions. While there are clear signs of a deconsolidating party system as the two major parties lose support to three smaller parties, the very success of the opposition parties enables discontent to be channeled through established institutions. Unlike 1966 through

Table 3-5 Satisfaction with Democracy: Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, European Union, 2012 (percent)

	Germany[a]	Great Britain	France	Italy	European Union[b]
Satisfied[c]	69	62	67	27	55
Not satisfied[d]	30	35	30	72	43
Undecided or no response	1	3	3	1	2

Source: European Commission, Euro-Barometer 77.3 (Brussels: European Commission, 2012, Variable QA20A).
[a]German percentages include the former East Germany.
[b]15 nation weighted average.
[c]Percentages of "very satisfied" and "fairly satisfied."
[d]Percentages of "not very satisfied" and "not at all satisfied."

1969 there was no growth from 2005 to 2009 of an anti-system left (APO) or anti-system right (NPD), which narrowly missed Bundestag representation in 1969. Indeed the only significant new party on the horizon was the Pirate Party, which secured 2 percent of the vote in 2009, well below the 5 percent minimum, but among young voters (under 25) 7 percent voted for the Pirates. Their program? A free Internet, free downloads, and no censorship.

That said, what effect is unification having on the political attitudes of the 16 million East Germans who joined the Federal Republic in 1990 after living for forty years in a political, economic, social, and cultural setting vastly different from West Germans? Will the postwar consensus on liberal democratic values, institutions, and processes change because of those attitudes? Will the Federal Republic move to the left as East Germans demand the social and economic programs—a guaranteed job, low rents, subsidized food, low-cost day care—that some in the old GDR considered the successes of the former communist regime?

The evidence so far is mixed. On the one hand, there is little doubt about the commitment to democratic values among the East German revolutionaries who brought down the communist regime. The great majority of voters in a series of free elections in 1990 supported democratic parties. On the other hand, there is also evidence that forty years of authoritarian rule have left their mark on the East German political psyche. Some studies have found that East Germans are more authoritarian and alienated than West Germans. They are more supportive of the "old" German values of discipline, order, and hard work than of the "new values" of individualism, self-realization, and tolerance. East Germans have less trust in the institutions of liberal democracy such as the parliament and courts than West Germans do. Their acceptance of foreign residents is also lower than that of West Germans. And many East Germans have a more simplistic, either/or conception of democracy than do West Germans. They see democracy either as a very elitist system—the chancellor or state must take care of them—or as a very participatory system—they must demonstrate to secure their demands. Democracy as a system in which intermediate organizations such as parties, interest groups, and parliament play major roles of channeling

citizen demands into policies is still less understood in the former East Germany than in the "old" Federal Republic.[27]

These findings are not surprising. Although they have been able to watch democracy in the West through television, East Germans are still less experienced at participation in democratic politics. As in West Germany during the 1950s and 1960s, the performance of the democratic order will be a major factor in the political integration of East Germany.

The stability and performance of German democracy during the past sixty-five years do not mean, however, that the Federal Republic is a political system without problems or that it has become an ideal democracy. As noted earlier in this chapter, Germany is a society with many problems—low birthrates, an aging population, immigration, the euro debt crisis, and the still formidable costs of unification, "putting Germany back together again." The Federal Republic also has Europe's largest number of foreign residents and is a major target country for immigrants. The integration of these foreign residents and new arrivals is a critical social problem. Germany must continue to deal as well with the legacy of its Nazi past, its national identity, and its new role in international politics. The stability and performance of German democracy also do not mean that there are no individuals and groups calling for basic changes in the country's social, economic, and political structures. What the data signify, however, is that these problems will be debated within a consensual framework. In short, the question is no longer whether Germany will remain a liberal democracy, but what kind of and how much democracy Germany will have? This is a question that other European democracies also face.

NOTES

1. For further details of this soccer match see Nicholas Kulish, "Greek-German Tensions Over Finances Spill Into Another Arena," *New York Times*, June 22, 2012.
2. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Politische Schriften* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck Verlag, 1988), 109.
3. Most respondents over age forty-five in 1951 considered the imperial years, 1900 to 1914, to be the best Germany had experienced in that century. Institut für Demoskopie Survey No. 0044, October 1951.
4. Helmut Schmidt, "Erklärung der Bundesregierung zur Lage der Nation vor dem deutschen Bundestag," May 17, 1979, printed in *Bulletin* (Bonn), May 18, 1979, 596.
5. See Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992). See also Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (New York: Knopf, 1996).
6. In 1990 the first and last freely elected government in the GDR acknowledged East Germany's responsibility for the Holocaust and apologized to the world Jewish community and the state of Israel for the refusal of the communist regime to deal with this issue. In May 2005, sixty-five years after the collapse of the Third Reich, a memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe was opened in Berlin. It stands in the heart of the capital between the Brandenburg Gate and Potsdam Square, in view of the Reichstag (parliament building) on the same ground once occupied by Joseph Goebbels's propaganda ministry.
7. East Germany was established in 1949. It comprised the Soviet zone of military occupation; its capital was Soviet-controlled East Berlin. East Germany was an early casualty of the end of communism. Unlike Czechoslovakia, Hungary, or Poland, East Germany was not a nation. Indeed, its only source of identity and legitimacy was its claim to be the only

"socialist" German state. East German leaders believed that if this commitment to the ideology of Marxism–Leninism were to be diluted or abandoned, as Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev seemed to be proposing, it would eventually lead to demands for unification and the end of the East German state. They were right. In the summer and fall of 1989, East Germans on "vacation" used the newly opened border between Hungary and Austria to escape to the west. Later, the "Great Escape" would also take place via Czechoslovakia and even Poland. Between May and September 1989, more than 90,000 East Germans fled, the largest number since the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Meanwhile, those who stayed behind began to demonstrate and organize new, but illegal, opposition political parties. By October 1989, when Gorbachev arrived in East Berlin to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the regime, an additional sixty thousand East Germans had departed. Gorbachev told the aging and ailing East German leader, Erich Honecker, that the time for reform had come and that "life punishes those who arrive too late." But his warning fell on deaf ears. The demonstrations continued as hundreds of thousands took to the streets in Leipzig, East Berlin, and other cities, chanting "Wir sind das Volk!" ("We are the people!") and demanding reform. For the first time in German history, a grassroots democratic revolution was under way. By mid-October, Honecker had been forced to resign. On November 9, in a desperate attempt to acquire some popular support, the new communist leadership opened the country's borders to West Germany, including the Berlin Wall. As the world watched, millions of East Germans flooded into Berlin and West Germany. But the vast majority returned and now called for a unified Germany—"Wir sind ein Volk!" ("We are one people!")—was added to their demands.

By the end of 1989, the East German state was on the verge of collapse. The country's first (and last) free elections were set for March 1990. West German parties moved quickly to organize the East German electorate. At the election, about 80 percent of the voters supported parties advocating a speedy unification. In May 1990 the two German states concluded a treaty that unified their monetary, economic, and social security systems. On July 1 the West German mark (DM) became the sole legal currency for all of Germany. Two days later, on October 3, less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, East Germany ceased to exist and, reconstituted as five states (Länder), joined the Federal Republic. Europe's 80 million Germans were once again united in a single state. But unlike the Bismarckian Reich or Hitler's Third Reich, German unity in 1990 was achieved without violence and with the full support of its neighbors in eastern and western Europe.

8. Hans-Werner Sinn, "Lösen Sie mit am deutschen Rätsel," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* April 9, 2005, 42.
9. Kate Connolly, "German Women Told: We Need More Babies," *News Telegraph,* January 28, 2006, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/1509056/German-women-told-we-need-more-babies.html. See also Julia Bonstein et al., "Generation Kinderlos," *Der Spiegel,* September 12, 2005, 62–72.
10. Ulrich Blum, "Perspektiven für den Osten," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* November 8, 2008, 15. See also Nicholas Kulish, "In East Germany, a Decline as Stark as a Wall," *New York Times,* June 19, 2009, 3.
11. Almost 300,000 Jews live in the Federal Republic. Seventy-three Jewish congregations receive state financial support. The largest (more than 5,000 members) Jewish communities are in Berlin and Frankfurt. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Germany offered Jews from the former Soviet bloc the right to settle in the country. By the end of 2003, about 190,000 Jews had accepted the offer, which more than tripled the size of the

German Jewish community. In 2004 the Schröder government decided to reassess its policy, because the number of Soviet Jews coming to Germany was now higher than the number immigrating to Israel. In 2004, there were 9,400 Russian Jews who immigrated to Germany, and only about 8,000 went to Israel. About 2.5 million Muslims also live in the Federal Republic, most of whom are Turkish nationals. The some 1,600 Muslim organizations, including mosques that have been established, generally do not receive state financial support. In a growing number of western states, however, the public schools offer Islamic religious instruction, and the teachers, approved by the local Islamic religious authorities and school officials, are paid with public funds. These classes are generally taught in German and most instructors were educated at German universities.

12. In 2003 only 1,128 men were preparing for the priesthood, compared with 3,627 in 1990. Data cited in Daniel Deckers, "Klasse staat Masse?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* June 18, 2004, 4.
13. Melissa Eddy, "German Catholic Church Links Tax to the Sacraments," *New York Times,* October 5, 2012.
14. *Der Spiegel,* Special No. 1, 1991, 73–74.
15. General Social Survey (ALLBUS), 2008, Variable 521.
16. Hans-Peter Klös and Benjamin Schnarnagel, "Arbeitsmarktpolitik seit 2003: Reformbilanz und Handlungsbedarf," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 27, June 29, 2009, 21–22.
17. In 2011 the top 20 percent of the population owned 80 percent of the country's total wealth. The bottom fifth had no wealth; indeed, it had a negative net worth of about $180 billion. Deutsche Bundesbank figures cited in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* June 12, 2013. For earlier data see Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaft, Wochenbericht, November 7, 2007, 668.
18. Federal Statistical Office, *Datenreport 2004,* Wiesbaden: Federal Statistical Office, 2005, 492.
19. Federal Labor Ministry, *Lebenslage in Deutschland* (Berlin: Federal Labor Ministry, 2001), 157.
20. Federal Statistical Office, *Datenreport 2011* (Bonn: Federal Center for Political Education, 2012), 195.
21. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* December 15, 2008, 6; "Waiting for a Wunder," *Economist,* German Survey, February 11, 2006, 6.
22. OECD figures, fourth quarter 2012, cited in *Die Zeit,* http://images.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2013-06/jugendarbeitslosigkeit.jpg.
23. In the 2001 Europe-wide Program for International Student Assessment, Germany ranked twenty-first in reading and twentieth in mathematics and science among the thirty-one countries tested. The 2005 results were better, but they also showed a strong class bias in student performance. Student test scores in Germany were more dependent on socioeconomic background than in any other country. "Waiting for a Wunder," 7.
24. Reiner Burger, "Die halbierte Generation," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* January 14, 2005, 3.
25. Max Kaase, "Bewusstseinslagen und Leitbilder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in Deutschland-Handbuch. *Eine doppelte Bilanz, 1949–1989,* ed. Werner Weidenfeld and Hartmut Zimmermann (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1989), 205.
26. For an analysis of these changes, see David P. Conradt, "Changing German Political Culture," in *The Civic Culture Revisited,* ed. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 312–372. See also "Political Culture in Unified Germany: Will the Bonn

Republic Survive and Thrive in Berlin?" *German Studies Review* 21 (February 1998): 83–104.

27. Ursula Feist, "Zur politischen Akkulturation der vereinten Deutschen. Eine Analyse aus Anlaß der ersten gesamtdeutschen Bundestagswahl," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 11–12 (March 1991): 21–32. For additional data, see David P. Conradt, "Political Culture and Identity: The Post-Unification Search for 'Inner Unity,'" in *Developments in German Politics* 3, ed. Stephen Padgett et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 269–287.