

# Introduction

## *The Problem: Paths Out of the War*

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War does not end with the cessation of hostilities, especially not when the postwar order is threatened by fresh, potentially armed conflicts. While “organized death [has been] banned,” one reads in *Die Zeit* in November 1946, the “specter of war” still lurks. Peace is not the “effortless fruit of victory” the author concludes at an early stage, writing a year and a half after surrender, but rather “a new and difficult task.”<sup>1</sup> The conclusion could hardly have been more up to date. The transition from a wartime society shaped by its experience of the active and passive violence of military conflict to a new, postwar social order based in a different set of values is a complex process. It does not occur without engendering political, social, and cultural conflict and is not accomplished from one day to the next. The term postwar society may well confirm the war’s impact as a defining influence on that society; the conceptual distinction between war and postwar alone, however, posits divisions that rarely square with contemporary perceptions. The French designation of a *sortie de guerre* (exit from war) seems more appropriate here, as it avoids the dichotomy of war and postwar, emphasizing instead the transitory nature of the period and implying subsequent development without anticipating its result: a new social order.

There is no want of academic literature detailing Germany’s path to the Nazi dictatorship and the war. By contrast, the way Germans were subsequently able to make their way out of this period of extreme violence is rarely discussed.<sup>2</sup> How was a society able to emerge from beneath the shadows of war and genocide to build a peaceable and democratic order? The following is also concerned, although not primarily, with the *political* question of regime change as posed by the study of political culture, namely the extent

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to which the correlation between an “objective” system and “subjective” attitudes toward this system safeguarded the stability of the new political order against the recent backdrop of dictatorship.<sup>3</sup> Instead, continuities and discontinuities in attitudes toward “war” and “the military” will mainly serve to illustrate the fundamental challenge facing a society in its transition from war to peacetime: the potential discrepancy between postwar social, political, and military structures on the one hand, and the values of the individuals who must find their place in those structures on the other. This challenge applies particularly to transitions that are accompanied by a radical change in the political system, from dictatorship to democracy in the case of West Germany. The present study does not rely on an oversimplified dichotomy between “old” and “new” values; “new” values were often conceivable if only because they in some sense continued the “old” values of the German Empire or the interwar period. It is much more rewarding to identify these transitional forms as they appeared in contemporary interpretations of the war, as well as the political circumstances and purposes for which they were mobilized.

In keeping with recent research trends in political history, if one does not reduce the concept of democracy to the political system itself but instead takes a broader view of democratic culture that includes the communicative aspects of politics and the political function of semantics, symbols, and rituals,<sup>4</sup> then the question soon arises: Once the weapons fell silent, how did people speak about the war and the soldiers who fought it? Under such fundamentally different conditions, continuities and discontinuities in narratives of the war and the German military constituted one frame of reference that fundamentally shaped the political sphere. By one hypothesis, an answer thus would account for the new political culture (for which war and the military acquired fresh relevance with surprising speed), collective self-image (decisively shaped by the interpretation of the war and military past), and the way political and cultural conflicts were negotiated (which arose from these competing interpretations and were made recognizable on their account). The following study is based on the assumption that any account of a society’s transformation from a wartime dictatorship to a postwar democracy is incomplete without an understanding of the political interests at play in the meanings assigned to the past. However, my interest in the cultural history of the discursive and symbolic recourse to the past (as well as what preceded the immediate past) in the present is not limited to identifying key patterns of interpretation, such as the victim myth, be it in the interest of ideology critique or simply as *l’art pour l’art*. Rather, I look to detail the manifold and volatile discursive functions of a given society’s visions of history. What meanings did contemporary society assign to the past, and in the service of what contemporary interests?

In this context, the central focus lies on the war and the military forces that did, or could, wage war. In complement to a perspective on political history that views the transformation primarily in light of radical changes to the political system (as is currently argued for the post-dictatorial societies of Eastern Europe),<sup>5</sup> here the political problems of systemic change in (West) Germany are linked to a cultural, but no less political, line of inquiry into the visions and representations of a war that both belonged to the ideological essence of Nazism and provided the immediate context for the regime's collapse. The overarching question of how the West Germans dealt with the Nazi past may best be answered by focusing on a topic that only at first glance is not directly linked to National Socialism, as it is in studies of "denazification," "elite continuity," or the "politics of the past" (*Vergangenheitspolitik*). Examining notions of the war and the Wehrmacht from this angle may in turn point to discursive and social practices that are not explicitly connected with National Socialism. Of course, this does not change the fact, established at a separate level of inquiry, that war and the Wehrmacht were indissolubly linked with the Nazi regime.

A genuine emphasis on military history, moreover, permits a perspective that extends beyond the systemic change, revealing not only the obvious ruptures in collective self-image but also mental continuities whose origin may very well predate that change. An explicit focus on perceptions of the war and soldiers provides a foil against which the competing interpretations of distinct social groups, and thus a key aspect of the pluralistic new order, can be given serious and more complete consideration. Conflicting narratives of World War II and the German Wehrmacht, the current study assumes, constantly reflected a social and political process of negotiation that fueled the debate surrounding society's new self-image. In doing so, the study continually circles back to how discursive appeals to the past or social practices recalling the war also served to formulate and legitimate demands that were primarily political.

To avoid a sort of tunnel vision that obscures certain facts while making others appear larger than they initially seemed, the interest of my research and the central questions leading from it will be defined at first in a comparatively open way—more open, for example, than the questions on the origin of the "clean Wehrmacht" myth that caused such an uproar in the 1990s,<sup>6</sup> the normatively charged debate regarding the continuity of West German militarism or, conversely, the successful pacification effort under the Allies' policy of demilitarization and nuclear development.<sup>7</sup> This means the militarism rhetoric of the late 1940s and 1950s can itself be historicized, and explored in its turn as an interpretive strategy in the context of war and the military, as prompted by discussions of modern military history.<sup>8</sup> The present field of interest encompasses various social groups, areas of policy, political

parties, and the general literary market that shaped the West German “public” as one facet of the new media landscape after 1945. Moreover, throughout the 1950s, a “historical culture” emerged whose form and content was not intended for a professional readership, and which as a rule was not driven by academic specialists, the historians.<sup>9</sup>

Even a cursory glance at the newspapers, magazines, and memoirs of the day confirms this basic assumption: the war was at once past and present; the Wehrmacht was passé yet omnipresent. Despite great changes in politics, ideas, and the historical curriculum, from the 1920s into the late 1950s war, next to biography, proved the most popular reading subject. As in the period following 1918, interest in World War II and its consequences continued unabated after 1945. This is corroborated by novels’ advance publication in illustrated magazines and the high sales figures of printed editions. To give only one example: *As Far as My Feet Will Carry me* (*So weit die FüÙe tragen*), Joseph Martin Bauer’s novel detailing a German POW’s escape from a Soviet camp, reached a circulation of 780,000 copies.<sup>10</sup> Granted, the discursive and visual presence of war and the military in the fledgling West Germany alone says nothing about the meanings attributed to their presence and the role they played—or, more precisely, the role these attributions played—in the “nation building” that followed in the wake of political, social, economic, not to mention military collapse.

The first decade after the war is particularly appealing as a period of investigation in light of the comparatively high degree of contingency that marked its historical development, both for eyewitnesses and in retrospect. Looking to intellectual history, a survey of independent brochures and books published from 1945 to 1948 reveals a wide array of political proposals for the extremely uncertain socioeconomic and constitutional future of occupied Germany, including such “failed” grand designs as an autonomous “Swabian-Alemannic Democracy.”<sup>11</sup> Conversely, looking back, one can say no single “master narrative”<sup>12</sup> had yet to establish control over the public interpretation of the past. Instead of the cultural hegemony of such a narrative, one finds a great diversity of competing patterns of interpretation. The reader need think only of various plans proposed in the immediate aftermath of the war by Eugen Kogon, Karl Jaspers, or, from abroad, Hannah Arendt.<sup>13</sup> Such postwar references to the past have in time become a part of the historical writing themselves, forming a history of the “second degree” (Pierre Nora).

## The Postwar Period as an Object of Historical Research

To this day, a peculiar two-part division is observable in historical appraisals of the postwar period. On the one hand lies research into National Social-

ism, World War II, and the Holocaust—subjects marked by an increasing recognition of their interdependence, leading them to work out the interactions between war and National Socialism, the conduct of the war and mass murder. On the other hand is the story of the two German states, in which the years following the war are cast primarily as a prelude to the division of Germany. As a dynamic category of periodization, contemporary history now frequently takes the years 1945 to 1949 as its starting point. The structural changes marking the postwar period, studied increasingly in terms of regional historical examples, similarly direct attention “forward,” past the “new beginning” and into the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>14</sup> Such is the case in the flood of eyewitness accounts during the 1990s—reflected, for example, in Walter Kempowski’s collages of memory fragments, which gave literary expression to a public need for authentic impressions—that discuss either the war and its end or the period of occupation.<sup>15</sup> It is no surprise that popular historical accounts in print media and television reflect this dualistic vision as well. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, our historical consciousness conceives of the war as one thing, and the occupation and division of Germany as another. The resulting split in historical research tends to treat the period in question as an end point in the first case and, in the second case, as the beginning of the period that is the actual concern of a given specialized discipline.

On one side, one encounters research into the war whose subject matter naturally centers on the years leading up to surrender.<sup>16</sup> This applies particularly to studies that encompass both world wars and analyze the “Age of Wars.” Here the emphasis lies primarily—and correctly—on the first half of the twentieth century, and the continuities and ruptures in military history from 1914 to 1945. The more the years preceding and following this window were to be included in the field of study, the fuzzier the concept of a “second Thirty Years’ War” would become.<sup>17</sup> Whatever role it is assigned in the politics of recollection, 8 May 1945 usually represents a dividing line in historical research. The heightened but selective attention paid to 1945 as the end of the war in Germany dating back at least to its sixtieth anniversary does nothing to change this fact.<sup>18</sup> The recurring argument about 8 May as a day of defeat or liberation, last on display in 2005, issues from the tension between contemporary individual experience of the period and collective public memory, which in its retrospective function can only ever be normative. The same dynamic applies to East Germany, albeit significantly later. In principle, this is not altered by the contention that surrender was experienced in East Germany less as the defeat of the Nazi regime than the beginning of a new period of violence (expulsion, occupation, SED rule) and accordingly should be seen as a perpetuation of “crimes against humanity.”<sup>19</sup>

On the other side we have the history of the two German states, as it is argued, which has drawn increasing attention with the change in perspective

since the end of the German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik—GDR) under the subject headings of a “history of relations” and “entangled history.” Even the 1950s, long regarded as an uneventful period of stagnation preceding the turmoil of the late 1960s, have long since emerged from obscurity. Until recently, the 1950s were seen as a period of “repression” or a failed attempt at coming to terms with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*), a term now often set off in scare quotes,<sup>20</sup> in which the vast majority of West Germans supposedly shrouded the years of the Third Reich and World War II in silence. This history of forgetting itself forms a part of the postwar period and has numerous variations. By the late 1950s, there was already talk of Germans’ inability to successfully cope with their past. Theodor Adorno located the reason for this failure to “come to terms with the past” in the continuation of the objective conditions—those of the capitalist system—for Fascism.<sup>21</sup> Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich explored the “inability to mourn” from a psychological perspective: unable to admit their identification with Hitler and the *Volksgemeinschaft* (people’s community), Germans were incapable of acknowledging complicity in the crimes of a regime that most of the population had supported. Striking out into the future obstructed the population’s view of the past; only in the late 1960s did it first become possible for society to conduct a critical self-examination and meaningfully analyze past events.<sup>22</sup> A later argument contends the population’s silence was less the result of repression than of the need to distance itself from the painful experience of war and its National Socialist past by “keeping silent” (*beschweigen*); otherwise, it would have been impossible to construct a democratic Federal Republic.<sup>23</sup> Too much recollection, the theory continues, would have aggravated the mental instability of postwar society in West Germany during an already delicate process of democratic renewal.<sup>24</sup>

Simply put, the image of the 1950s was shaped by two opposing perspectives. On the one side, proponents of the “restoration theory” (*Restaurationsthese*) and the theory of repression argued that over the midterm—into the 1960s—West Germany remained an ineffectual creature. Proceeding from this basic premise, left-leaning historians and eyewitnesses could explain well into the 1970s how actual developments after the end of the war and the National Socialist dictatorship had lagged so far behind their expectations.<sup>25</sup> This retrospective judgment painted a fairly static portrait of the 1950s as a decade marked by a fear of change, largely characterized by the normalizing and restorative measures carried out in the course of reconstruction. “*No Experiments!*” To this day, the 1957 CDU campaign slogan articulates in a nutshell this fundamentally conservative position. According to the theory, three overlapping developments shaped the 1950s whose origin predated the Third Reich and in part went back to the Wilhelmine Period: following a

brief revision at the end of the war and in the immediate postwar period, gender roles reverted to patterns established during and before the war with development, as it were, set in reverse. The churches again became the custodians of morality. West Germany was rearmed and integrated into the West. From this perspective, then, West Germany experienced the normalization—understood in a conservative sense—of its social, cultural, political, and military relations.

In contrast, advocates of modernization theories have developed a dynamic image of West Germany's first decade. A greater emphasis on social and cultural history has revealed, for example, changes in consumption, household structure, production, and mobility.<sup>26</sup> This is borne out by the dramatic rise in the consumption of foodstuffs, home furnishings, and clothing, as well as the burgeoning automotive culture that marked the second half of the 1950s, epitomized by the tremendous success of Volkswagen. In another sign of this newfound mobility, by the end of the decade tourism was well on its way to becoming a mass phenomenon. Finally, the contemporary experience of rapid technological and industrial change embodies the profound changes that West German society underwent in the course of its "Americanization."<sup>27</sup> Nothing demonstrates this as clearly as the shock of prisoners of war returning in the mid-1950s, when they stepped into the new age as though out of a time machine (more on that later). Not a return to the familiar but a departure for a new world best describes the years following the "economic miracle" (*Wirtschaftswunder*) ushered in by currency reform and the Marshall Plan. Economic development provides a particularly clear picture of this forward momentum.

Since the 1990s, the gloomy vision of the 1950s has been called into question from yet another perspective. When critics speak of the "legend of a second guilt," they reject the charge that in repressing their memories of the war, West Germans shirked their responsibility, thereby implicating themselves in a second crime.<sup>28</sup> On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that recollecting certain aspects of the war, especially its end, was in fact characteristic of the 1950s. Far from remaining suppressed, these topics—in particular, the course and impact of World War II—were the subject of emotionally charged debates. Even if these debates were highly selective, there can be no talk of silence—whether it is keeping secrets or keeping silent.<sup>29</sup> The years directly after the genocidal war were much more important for its memory than previously assumed.<sup>30</sup>

If contemporary debate frequently cast bystanders and criminals from the Third Reich as victims of the Allies and a denazification policy that was based on the premise of collective guilt, then the 1950s were also witness to a somewhat different discourse. It depicted the few Germans who had opposed the Nazi regime in the first half of the 1940s as engaging in model

behavior. Unlike in the GDR, what took center stage here was not the Communist resistance but rather the assassination attempt of 20 July 1944 (as well as, secondarily, the White Rose student resistance movement and church opposition). The conspiracy against Hitler seemed to attest to the fact that even without the help of the Allies, the Germans themselves sought freedom and an end to the Nazi regime.<sup>31</sup> A further matter was the dispute over state assistance for the millions of Germans who had lost their entire worldly belongings during the air war, who had been “bombed out” and evacuated, and who now claimed the status of victimhood for themselves.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, historical research has explored the late 1940s and 1950s through the lens of modern military history supplemented by a social and cultural perspective. From early on, rearmament served as the logical end point of an account that began with demilitarization after 1945 and assigned a particularly important role to Allied policy.<sup>33</sup> Foreign, domestic, and security policy; the contemporary organizational and institutional conditions required for the establishment of new armed forces; social tensions; military reformers’ internal efforts to introduce a new philosophy of leadership; the thorny issue of establishing tradition: all are subjects that have attracted historians’ attention.<sup>34</sup> Many of the numerous studies published in 2005–2006 on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the West German army devoted themselves to the military’s developmental phase, taking the early 1950s as their starting point and, as a rule, tracing the development of the army, navy, and air force into the 1970s. Since the 1990s, moreover, former Wehrmacht soldiers’ relationship with society has met with increased academic interest. Topics include soldiers’ challenging but ultimately successful integration into the new democratic society; their formal organization into veteran associations and the development of a “veterans culture” (*Veteranenkultur*); their political activities—mostly in terms of their resistance to the Allies and Konrad Adenauer’s government—and the role played by individual members of the former Wehrmacht elite.<sup>35</sup>

For some time now, the thriving field of perpetrator research (*Täterforschung*) has focused on second- or third-tier decision-makers.<sup>36</sup> As is the case with research on elites who got their start in the Weimar Republic, made their careers in the Third Reich, and then continued them in West Germany,<sup>37</sup> the central concern of perpetrator research has been to detail the biographical aspects of their subjects as they pertain to National Socialism rather than their “military” involvement per se. Critical works on the founding generation of the German military are still in their initial phases.<sup>38</sup> In their discussions of demilitarization, these studies touch on larger societal questions that are of interest in this study and lay important groundwork—particularly regarding institutional history—albeit with a different focus on the social group of West German veterans. Research on “militarism,” on the



other hand, focused from the outset on the relationship between the military and civilian society. Early studies focused on the political, economic, sociological, and cultural aspects of this relationship, generally taking a critical view of the military.<sup>39</sup> Before and after 1945, the vaguely defined concept of militarism also provided one interpretative model for the Allies—and, after the war, for German historians<sup>40</sup>—when it came to explaining Germany's role in World War II and deriving appropriate political consequences. Traditionally, historiography looked to the “militaristic” character of National Socialism or the Wehrmacht before posing the crucial question of the connection between the Nazi regime, the Wehrmacht, and society. Recently, another term that was contemporary to the period, the concept of “demilitarization,” has been used to describe the shift in values that occurred during occupation as a result of the interaction between the (intended) occupational policy and the subsequent German reaction.<sup>41</sup> The motives and basic assumptions of US politicians conflicted and coincided with the shifting expectations of the occupied population in such a way that demilitarization is now understood as a joint venture—a conclusion that contests the notions of “Americanization” and “Westernization.”

By defining militarism as the permeation of state and society by military modes of thought and action, militarism research does touch on one aspect of the present study. However, instead of treating its subject exclusively in terms of the Wehrmacht and the relative degree of military influence on civil society, the study also takes a broader investigative tack to consider the important role played by collective, contemporary appeals to the past of World War II in the process of inner democratization. To do so, a more flexible heuristic instrument is used that does not bear the historical and ideological weight of the debate surrounding militarism. By avoiding the premature exclusion of aspects that do not appear “militaristic” at first glance, this method is better able to historicize the fuzzy militarism rhetoric of the postwar period<sup>42</sup> and subsequently to incorporate it into analysis. Wartime experiences as well as demilitarization policy, moreover, must also be considered in their formative capacity and as *topoi*; in what follows, attitudes toward war and the military will accordingly be interpreted as expressive of a change in values precipitated by the experience of the war and occupation.

Such, then, are the more recent interpretations of the 1950s (and 1960s) that have emerged. What was long considered a period of relative stagnation following the upheavals brought about by the war and occupation is now regarded as a period of transformation, whether as an opening toward the West or as an era of modernization in which the cornerstones of political culture were themselves altered by a process of liberalization, understood in its democratic and pluralistic aspects. In this volume, when democratization is spoken of within the context of political history, it is not primarily with

reference to institutional and organizational changes, that is, the establishment of new democratic institutions. This “top-down” process of democratization has been well researched. Rather, this study takes a reverse view of democratization “from below” to examine how democratic values took root in West Germany amid the conflict between traditions of German authoritarianism and Western concepts of democracy for the first decade after the war. As it was, the Western occupational powers had little reason at first to assume democratization would succeed in Germany; the gap separating most (adult) Germans from the Nazi regime seemed too narrow. American authorities’ doubt led them to pursue a variety of plans instead of adopting a homogeneous postwar strategy. In their eyes, democratization was a long-term project. In an effort that drew not so much on the Weimar Republic as on liberal traditions (Theodor Mommsen),<sup>43</sup> short and midrange goals included the elimination of National Socialism and the “militarism” and sort of authoritarian thinking that were seen as typically German. German emigrants and officers in the US Army initially took an active role in this effort, not least in the cultural arena (the media). While most returned to the United States in the 1940s, they remained active into the 1950s alongside other “transatlantic mediators” via networks, exchange programs, and lecture tours.<sup>44</sup>

As political history research has demonstrated, West Germany’s eventual democratization was ironically facilitated by the “halfway” authoritarian leadership style of the first federal chancellor, who bridged the gap between the 1950s and 1960s. The first decade after the war is thus characterized by the following paradox: a political elite with values that were more authoritarian than liberal was responsible for constructing West German democracy. A similar bridging phenomenon is frequently ascribed to anti-Communist views, a force that allowed (West) Germans uninterruptedly to take up anti-Bolshevist and anti-Slavic patterns of interpretation dating back to the 1930s and 1940s while simultaneously adopting a “Western” worldview. The astonishing eventual success of this “inner democratization”—an internalized faith in democracy as a system of governance and a social order characterized by participation and emancipation—was a multifaceted, interactive process, one that is too multifaceted to be explained by a one-sided model of implementation from outside. At the same time, the second half of the 1940s was marked by intensive interventions in West German postwar society that set the future course of the country’s close ties to the West, and, more specifically, the United States.<sup>45</sup> The concepts of “Americanization” and “Westernization” can scarcely do justice to the complexity of such influences or the irregular appropriation of individual elements of the American democratic model—or more precisely, the interpretation of those elements.<sup>46</sup> Such concepts are too sweeping and one-sided to capture the diverse political and cultural forces that ushered in democratic conceptions

of government and society. Moreover, there can be no discussion of the German military adopting an American model under occupation after 1945. After all, the US government's policy of demilitarization did not seek the transformation of the Wehrmacht; it sought its abolition. For this reason, but also because "demilitarization" can be conceived of only as an interactive process, terms such as Westernization or Americanization are inadequate.<sup>47</sup>

Prevailing ideas on war and the military; Adenauer's rearmament policy, which in its advertisements for a "new Wehrmacht" functioned as both media policy and public relations strategy; the "democratization" of the new (West) German armed forces, as accomplished under a new philosophy of leadership; the public expression of attitudes toward the Wehrmacht among the civilian population, especially former soldiers; their stance on the new (West) German armed forces vis-à-vis real and perceived military threats; the social practice of protest, including the conflict over former Wehrmacht soldiers convicted of war crimes: whether handled publicly or worked out in private, each of these points of contention were flashpoints that highlighted the tension between implementation from without and changing values within. Incorporating attitudes toward the war and military would answer the call for a more differentiated understanding of democracy, one that takes greater account of the concept's cultural dimension and yields the type of research on political culture that has attracted the interest of historians for some time now. The present hypothesis contends that disputing military values, be it "from above" or "from below," is a central aspect of the public discursive process that fundamentally legitimates a democratic order. Such a hypothesis does not exclude questions on continuity and discontinuity. To the contrary, this lens allows one to concentrate on the interplay between older and more recent political models of justification. To give just one example, long-standing nationalistic interpretations and arguments, as well as the conflation of war with nation, and national sovereignty with the military continued to wield their influence. Conversely, the present research interest can be defined by a negative formulation: the following inquiry is chiefly concerned not with war and the military themselves, but rather with their role in the inner democratization of West Germany.

It is this reflection that the study takes as its point of departure. Exploring the perception of changes in the way people talked about the war and its soldiers within the context of systemic change serves as an interpretative lens for the transformation itself. Such an emphasis makes all the more sense considering that rapid military developments—the collapse of the Wehrmacht, the Allied policy of demilitarization, and the rearmament of both German states—represent a key "real historical" aspect of change that applied to the self-image of the large group of former soldiers, as well as West Germany's first significant national debate and the country's international position. The

value of this approach has been confirmed by studies on the political function of “war stories,” as explored by Robert G. Moeller.<sup>48</sup> With reference to a central dimension of the reorganization of state and society, an analysis of the “collective representations” of war and the military offers deep insight into the interplay of continuity and change that characterized the transition from the militarized *Volksgemeinschaft* of the Nazi regime to the democratic society of West Germany. These representations allow one to gauge the extent to which the collapse and military defeat of 1945 represented a historical caesura at the time, as West Germans adapted to the fundamental structural changes that accompanied modernization’s advance between 1945 and 1955, not least in security policy. As such, exploring West German representations of war and the military contributes to an early history of West Germany. Analyzing a key contemporary realm of political tension between 1945 and 1955 should also clarify the course that West Germans and their politicians charted along the difficult path of democratization, as well as the importance of public processes of negotiation in that process. Assessing the military past and future was not a theoretical dispute but a fundamental social issue that affected the reintegration of millions of people into society, the symbolic re- and/or devaluation of the recent past, and the momentous task of charting a normative and organizational course for the future with the deployment of “new” armed forces.

Changes in domestic and foreign policy proceeded at a different tempo than the rather dogged process of mental change. Persisting patterns of interpretation and meaning, which in part dated back to the nineteenth century, are clearly visible both in the image of a soldier as rooted in an individual’s own (masculine) sense of self and the concept of military service, which derived its legitimacy from a specific definition of the relationship between state and society. These vital questions were not settled after 1945 but were merely articulated in a new way and led to conflict, even political crises. Beginning with the Nazi regime, continuing with the Allies, and lastly with the Adenauer government, Germans were repeatedly told from on high how they were supposed to view the military. The fact that large parts of the population did not simply follow these prescriptions, particularly after 1949, gave rise to disputes between different key social groups that may be described as political conflicts of interpretation. Accordingly, one task of this study will be to clarify the concrete historical conditions in which these conflicts arose, which issues were salient, and, when it did, how the focus of the conflict shifted, beginning with surrender in 1945 up to the establishment of the Bundeswehr in 1955–1956.

In retrospect, the line of development from the Wehrmacht to the reformed armed forces of West Germany may seem a relatively unproblematic and straightforward, even “normal,” process to many. This viewpoint, how-

ever, does not do justice to historical developments in the period directly after the war, which initially proceeded in the opposite direction and, it must be remembered, were marked more by their contingency than their inevitability. As it was, developments in thought and military policy were the result of an ongoing balancing act—between forces of inertia and starts at reform, as well as continuities in personnel and new beginnings—that was executed under the fickle star of domestic and foreign politics. The end of the war, foreign occupation, the Cold War, the partitioning of the country, and fresh military conflicts abroad: these elements set the scene for the new liberal state and social order. While West Germans possessed an ideal and personal point of reference in the brief democratic era of Weimar Germany, there was an even stronger tradition of a worldview whose key terms of nationalism, militarism, and authoritarian thinking lay directly opposed to the values of a liberal civil society that would accept conflict and guarantee individual freedom of action. It is correct to observe that a second democracy could not arise from nothing; it is equally important to remember that undemocratic, even antidemocratic, forces had long shaped the political culture and political elite of that democracy.

It would also be insufficient to treat the Wehrmacht's transformation as a purely internal military affair, one that affected only the leadership philosophy of the Bundeswehr, plans for military reform, and their relative efficacy, or the logistical and economic difficulties encountered en route to reestablishing the armed forces. More puzzling (and therefore in need of explanation) is how, within the relatively short period of ten years, the entire sequence of surrender, demilitarization, and rearmament under a new political system was possible in the first place. Answering how it came to rearmament addresses only one aspect of the matter; the deeper question is, why did "remilitarization" become possible as a part of democratization? Or better, conversely, how did the democratization of West Germany succeed despite (or because of?) its policy of rearmament? Why did such contradictory values not seriously jeopardize the fragile social consensus of the period or the fledgling democratic institutions? Did the debate surrounding military values contribute to the inner democratization of the Federal Republic? In any case, the chosen object of study is useful in gauging the extent to which different civil groups comprised of former soldiers either stuck to old values or adopted new ones. Could it be that it was not an either/or dichotomy of old/new but rather—and herein lies its particular appeal—a combination of the two? In this case, preexisting strategies of interpretation and meaning were adapted as required to suit the new historical situation; existing symbols were invested with new content, and lines of reasoning developed that connected the past to the future without thereby contesting the fundamental boundary—a boundary that legitimized West German democracy—separat-

ing the country from its National Socialist past. Only via this bridge could millions of people cross over into a new society. Given the numerous divisions characterizing this period of extraordinary upheaval, a focus on this mixture of new and old thus also addresses the question of social cohesion posed by social historians. Conversely, if changing values can be tied to conceptions of war and the military as per the hypothesis, then it remains to be seen to what extent these ideas in turn slowed or accelerated this process.

Generally speaking, it is necessary to move past the comparatively simplistic argument that during the immediate postwar period, West Germans simply maintained a “silence” toward the recent past that was broken only by the social movements of 1968. This study seeks to provide a more nuanced account of the first postwar decade and to discern in historical developments the beginnings of an effort to confront the past. Instead of treating the period as something that was overcome en bloc, I focus instead on the extent to which the proliferation of interpretations charted a course for future decades. In this respect, the present study contributes to a social history of West Germany that has been germinating for some years. In addition to evaluating a wide range of sources, it draws on recent specialized studies of single events and individual people, as well as several preliminary works of mine regarding the history of the war and postwar period.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, by organizing the empirical data according to a methodological approach of French origin, I seek to address the justified critique of prevailing theories of culture in Germany.

## Methodological Considerations

Outside academic debate on the subject, in recent years three frameworks for analyzing Germany’s collective past have emerged in opposition to the earlier slogan of “confronting the past” (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*). In a first step, these frameworks are discussed under the terms “politics of the past” (*Vergangenheitspolitik*), “memory” / “memory (cultures)” (*Gedächtnis / Erinnerung(skulturen)*) and “(generational) experience” (*(generationelle) Erfahrung*). While their respective lines of questioning, research topics, and methods may overlap in practice, valid distinctions can be drawn from their basic assumptions. In a second step, “collective representations”—the chief analytical concept proposed for most of this study—are explained, and in a third step, the concept’s comparative advantages over prevailing older categories are enumerated.

First, following liberation in 1945, the West German experience was determined primarily by those aspects of the transition from dictatorship to democracy that concerned either active members or victims of the Nazi

regime. Prosecution and political purges, questions of material care and provision, and compensation agreements as negotiated between parliamentary legislative efforts and Allied intervention were the order of the day. The issue of war criminals (*Kriegsverbrecherfrage*), denazification (*Entnazifizierung*), reparations (*Wiedergutmachung*), and the equalization of burdens (*Lastenausgleich*): such were a few of the keywords oscillating between amnesty, rehabilitation, and integration on one end of the scale, with the joint disavowal of National Socialism and anti-Semitism on the other. At the center stood the question of the inner stabilization of the early Federal Republic following regime change, as accomplished through *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Without implying a strategic master plan behind contemporary political decisions and individual legislation, these idioms and policies can be grouped retrospectively under the term of *Vergangenheitspolitik*. In this approach to the past, the subject appears as a matter for political history,<sup>50</sup> yet collective references to the past cannot be reduced to laws or political programs and are not exhausted by the intentions of individual actors.

Second, “memory” (*Erinnerung*) positions the complex set of interactions between individual and society governing the formation of collective identities at the center of common references to the past. Maurice Halbwachs, and Jan Assmann in succession, were the first to research this nexus. Halbwachs’s key concept of a collective memory, or *mémoire collective*, highlights the supra-individual, communal memories and categories present within individual memory.<sup>51</sup> Individual memories are socially configured; they presuppose interaction and communication with given social groups. To this end Halbwachs coined the image of *cadres sociaux* for social frameworks that appropriate and transform the past, and without which there would be no memory. Conversely, this model of social dynamics offers insight into the mutability and diversity of individual memory. The process of remembering alone is invariable. Assmann’s distinction between communicative and cultural memory, in turn, lends “memory” a chronological structure. Communicative memories concern the immediate past, experiences that individuals have themselves undergone and can narrate in everyday life. As such, they exist for three or four generations, until there are no longer any living “eyewitnesses.” “Cultural memory,” on the other hand, is “a matter of institutionalized mnemotechnics.”<sup>52</sup> Taking the shape of ceremonies, memorial days, or celebrations, it is highly formalized, imparted by expert representatives via objective expressions and symbolic coding. While communicative memory presupposes a “floating gap,” that is, a chronological horizon pegged to the present day, cultural memory usually looks to an earlier, “absolute” mythical (pre)historical moment. Further distinctions follow, in particular, an analytical division between private memories and “public” or “representative” memories. Memories are “public”

if they are presented in public spaces regardless of who the actors may be. When a representative of state or society functions as the medium of public memory, this implies a claim to a certain obligation based on a presumed social consensus. “Official” memory can be sensibly discussed only in reference to a dictatorship.

Since the mid-1990s—in part with the 1997 founding of the “Memory Culture(s)” Collaborative Research Center (CRC) at the University of Gießen—the content and forms of cultural memory have been researched under the term memory cultures (*Erinnerungskulturen*). The CRC has also disputed the tired phrase of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, focusing more on “cultural commemoration,” or the transformation of events into memory that underlies a collective need for meaning. More so than Assmann’s relatively static and theoretical model of culture, the idea of cultures of memory emphasizes the dynamic, processual, and especially pluralistic nature of cultural memory. In this context, it is no coincidence that memory in the sense of *Gedächtnis* recedes behind the concept of memory in the sense of *Erinnerung*. The plural in “cultures” refers to not only the diachronic variety of references to the past but also the synchronic multiplicity of “modes of constituting memory, which may include concepts that are complementary as well as competing, universal as well as particular, or may rely on immediate interaction as well as remote or storage media.”<sup>53</sup> In the course of its efforts to historicize the category of historical memory, the CRC has developed a descriptive model for cultural processes of memory that distinguishes three levels: the conditional framework of remembering (social structure, epistemic system, awareness of time, and “challenges”); the form that a given culture of remembrance takes (the influence, interests, techniques, and genres of memory); and finally, the concrete object of memory (memory/recollection, types of memory work, experienced/non-experienced past, the history of reception for the media of the cultural memory).<sup>54</sup> The CRC’s research on the cultural history of memory has focused on interdisciplinary investigations of the forms that specific memory cultures have taken in the past.

Studies of cultures of memory find common ground with *Vergangenheitspolitik* where the historical reference is first and foremost conceived of in a political context and is functionally defined. Historically, interpretations of the past have often been used to underpin and legitimize political action: enemy stereotypes, official memorial days, community and national heritage societies, or the creation of myths and national heroes, for example, in textbooks, are frequent subjects in studies of memory cultures.<sup>55</sup> The tactics of division and antagonism appear so often in these studies that history has been described as “a weapon.”<sup>56</sup> While Aleida and Jan Assmann’s theory of culture posits a similar connection between cultural memory and political legitimation, it lays particular emphasis on the former’s relationship to



collective identity. Halbwachs remained somewhat vague when it came to the mechanisms guiding the social grouping effects of common historical references. Jan Assmann, however, whose work had a decisive influence on Halbwachs's reception in Germany, placed collective memory at the heart of ethnogenesis as a force for constituting identity. Not only social groups but entire societies and cultures forge their self-image through a common reference to the past. For Aleida Assmann, too, cultural memory and collective identity are opposite sides of the same coin.<sup>57</sup> Memory, however, does not create identity *per se*. At some point, regular, ritualized commemoration threatens to miss the mark.

Third, "experience" has emerged as a leading category in cultural studies, a term that is so closely affiliated with the concepts of recollection and memory that the borders blur at times.<sup>58</sup> On the one hand, more recent studies of historical experience take their cue from Reinhart Koselleck's work on historical semantics. For Koselleck, the distinction between "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation" that prefigures it is just as important as the distinction between the "historical present and future" and the "present past and future."<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, in the course of their reflections on the sociology of knowledge, Peter L. Berger and Thomas L. Luckmann have coined a constructivist definition for "experience." They do not conceive of experience as it is commonly understood (i.e., actual, ostensibly authentic experiences). Rather, they examine the social and cultural interpretive frameworks that shape and are in turn shaped by experience, the temporal structure of these frameworks, the mediated transmission of others' experiences, and finally, the implications these interpretations hold for praxis. Memory in this case functions as a "kind of switchboard that organizes experience both prospectively and retrospectively"<sup>60</sup> by giving order to what is actually perceived and processed, and converting the simple fact of the experience into a meaningful life event by a narrative recounting of the past. Yet, the glittering ambiguity of the term experience is made no clearer by its frequent use. Critics are thus right to demand a theoretical clarification of the term's advantage over Koselleck's historical semantics.<sup>61</sup>

Finally, the link established between "experience" and "generation" has proved problematic. Prompted in large part by the new vision of the 1950s and the debate surrounding the "generation of '68," one's generation—and thus relative proximity to or distance from the Nazi regime and World War II—has entered discussion as a force with a bearing on action, and thus another organizing principle. First and foremost, a generation can be understood and traced empirically as a "self-descriptive formula."<sup>62</sup> Given similar conditions of socialization, people who are roughly the same age attribute their thinking and acting to their age, thereby making "their" generation a subject for discussion. Looking back on collective experience from this

perspective, then, would seem to foster group identity. On closer inspection, however, one finds the experiences of an age group are in no way so “collective” as to inevitably provide a unified generational context. As such, the incontestable bond between experience and generation on which the concept of a generational community of experience (*Erfahrungsgemeinschaft*) relies becomes a highly problematic lens through which to understand the past. In truth, the interpretation of the past according to generation is itself a consolidating social process. On the one hand, then, different types of experience (such as imprisonment during the war) would have to be identified instead of assuming uniform “cohorts of experience,” while on the other hand, the social actors and communicative mechanisms enabling this process of consolidation (soldiers returning from the war, for example) would have to be described instead of subjecting them to habitual, unverifiable phrases.

In a second step, I propose the concept of “collective representations” (Roger Chartier’s *représentations collectives*) for the specific research period of the first decade after the war. Coming from social and cultural studies, the term reflects basic assumptions of academic research on memory that link historical references on the one hand to poststructuralist insights into “the constitutive role played by processes of signification and media representation in shaping reality (and the past),”<sup>63</sup> and the narrative properties of historiography on the other. This study employs “collective representations” as a heuristic tool in order to trace the interpretations of the past outlined above while providing sufficient flexibility for both the form they take (media, sources) and their content. Primarily a lens of cultural analysis, “representations” (for stylistic purposes, this shortened form will hereafter appear without quotation marks) is applicable to not only French society in the Ancien Régime (Chartier’s area of research), where the term itself was in use, but also (West) German postwar society, where for obvious reasons it did not belong to the contemporary repertoire. “Representation” incorporates seemingly contradictory meanings, recalling both the distinction between depicter and depicted (the real or symbolic image that calls something to memory), as well as the exhibition of a present person or thing (public presentation). There is “no activity or structure . . . that is not generated by the contradictory and colliding representations [*représentations*] individuals and groups use to assign meaning to their world.” A cultural history that focuses on competing representations necessarily incorporates social aspects because, as Chartier writes, such a history “directs its attention to the symbolic strategies that determine positions and relationships and that construct for each class, group, and milieu a form of perceived existence that is constitutive of their identities.”<sup>64</sup> It is already apparent that, like Halbwachs, Chartier assumes references to the past are socially conditioned; his differen-

tiated understanding of collective social groups, however, avoids conflating memory and nation or national identity, as the case may be.

Briefly stated, four layers of meaning can be distinguished for the concept of “representation.” First, “representation” refers to the material, immediately perceptible transmission that mediates between the past and the observer, regardless of its type. Second, the term denotes the visual and/or linguistic structure of the transmission, the texture that presents patterns for creating meaning to the observer. Third, at the imaginary, or conceptual level, “representation” designates the idea arising from the interaction between the material transmission, its texture, and any parameters already in place for the perception or creation of meaning. Fourth, the concept includes the practice of representation itself, or the symbolic self-representation that marks social difference. Whereas *l’histoire des mentalités* described the basic attitudes and collective patterns of human thought and perception (representations) that for Émile Durkheim were characterized by their capacity for social integration, Chartier’s model instead emphasizes representations’ potential for conflict in social praxis, if not the outright fighting power of the actions with which they are associated.<sup>65</sup> In this case, representations are not so much the expression of unconscious mental attitudes (i.e., militarism) as they are interpretations carried out in response to concrete claims and situations (here, the military past) by certain segments of society, who use them to classify the social order with consciously selected strategies and to derive a (prominent) position for their own group. This befits the present study’s research interest in dispensing with what was already the contemporary question of German “militarism” or the militaristic national character, as it was then reflected in an Allied policy of demilitarization that sought to exorcise the Germans of that very attitude. Investigating collective representations of the war and the military thus seeks to set individuals’ cultural self-image into dialogue with those individuals’ social position.

The concept of representation recommends itself as a research topic over and against *mentalité* for another reason: it is well equipped to investigate changes in patterns of interpretation over relatively short periods of time, for example, the war and the war’s end, occupation, and the early Federal Republic. There is another advantage. By using the term in Chartier’s sense, I look to document a social history of usage and interpretations that are “related to their underlying determinants, and inscribed within the particular practices that engender them.”<sup>66</sup> As such, the conditions and activities that “bear the development in structures of meaning in a very concrete sense” stand at the center of attention. This in turn leads to an examination of which types of ideas were circulated publicly in which media at the time: in daily newspapers, coffee table books, or in the day-to-day activities of local

veteran associations. What opportunities and restrictions were present in the public sphere at the time? Which media were available, which were used? What role did Nazi propaganda play in the media landscape of the Third Reich, and what role did “public relations” then play in West Germany after 1945, especially at the former defense ministry? Yet, the social order does not merely provide a “frame” for representation; on the contrary, the very existence of that order is in no small part guaranteed by the assimilative power of collective representations themselves.<sup>67</sup>

In its attention to the cognitive and emotional levels of communication and its sensitivity to the potential for conflict implied by representations’ ceaseless competition, the model represents a superior approach to wandering the airy peaks of the history of ideas, the pious fixation on records and their “top down” approach, or telling a purely experiential history “from below.”<sup>68</sup> This leads to a final step. Compared to the basic theories of culture sketched above, the proposed concept possesses a recognizable advantage that is reflected theoretically: it not only takes up with the current state of theoretical discussions of memory and combines certain benefits within it but also counterbalances central shortcomings in the prevailing categories of memory. As such, it works toward a future point of reference specific to the war and postwar past that takes into account changes in the landscape of memory in West Germany at the beginning of the twenty-first century. There are seven aspects worth distinguishing in this connection. First, the conception of “collective representations” avoids an overly rigid coupling of memory and collective identity, particularly as it appears in Jan Assmann’s interpretation of Halbwachs, in which the concept of cultural identity is used to apprehend national society as a single entity regardless of any potential differences. Such a conceptualization raises national “identity” to a norm, sometimes postulating ethnic homogeneity as the foundation of the national collective—an exception in real life—and ultimately constitutive of a political community’s form of expression.

Incipient attempts at a comparative European or world history aside, studies of national “sites of memory” do not often look past the borders of national history.<sup>69</sup> The *lieux de mémoire* described by Pierre Nora in his monumental seven-volume work (1984–1992) are conceived of as mnemonic loci of the nation in a broad sense;<sup>70</sup> the description of geographical places was intended to help prompt French memory as much as that of monuments, historical figures, or symbolic acts. In contrast to Halbwachs, Nora assumed neither the presence of a collective memory (of the French nation in this case), as had presumably existed in the case in the Third Republic, nor that reflecting upon sites of memory would create one. Rather, the colorful variety of Nora’s sites permits the inclusion of different kinds of references to the past. While Nora draws a seemingly clear distinction between the mate-

rial, functional, and symbolic aspects of the cultural forms he discusses, the criteria for determining a “site of memory” in practice are blurred, leading critics to bemoan the opaque, even arbitrary nature of an historiographical approach based on the memory of the past.

In an era shaped by mass media and forms of identity that are as diverse as they are fleeting, it is obviously problematic to speak of a (national) collective identity. The same could be said for representations of the self in post-war Germany, however—a society that was no longer certain of its national identity, and could no longer easily discuss the notion anyhow, given its cooption by the racial ideology of the *Volkgemeinschaft*. It is therefore advisable *not* to assume a homogeneous collective that was at once constituted by and productive of collective memory, much less attribute intentional action to such a collective. This applies all the more for the post-sovereign nation-states of today’s “global society,” whose sovereignty has long since been undermined by international markets. However, this development is not a new phenomenon whose character is here simply projected into the past. Indeed, the origins of today’s “global society” are located precisely in the middle of the twentieth century, and thus the era on which this study focuses. The connection to the experience of World War II is obvious: renouncing sovereignty was supposed to limit military conflicts, if not make them impossible. The end of World War II also marked a turning point in the institutionalization of global society (although this occurred prior to that society’s account of itself).<sup>71</sup> Asking about “collective representations” permits one to research a process of identification rather than a statically conceived, unified identity; to determine empirically verifiable *alternatives* for identification at a given time; and to show how cultural knowledge was accordingly updated, assimilated, and adapted.

Instead of homogenizing group identity, then, its plurality must be emphasized. As with the basic patterns described above, the category of representation underscores the importance of the present day to the view of the past. For Halbwachs, the matter was clear: members of a social group actively construct their picture of the past; they do not reconstruct it. Following Jan Assmann, one could speak of the “reconstructivity” of representations. A second advantage of the pattern proposed for this study is that it more readily prompts one to identify the groups whose historical identities are under discussion. When “collective representations” are discussed, it is not the preservation of a people that is at stake as with Assmann but rather the relevant self-description of specific groups within a given society. References to the past occur in their public, nonauthoritarian capacity; they are not intended as shorthand for a top-down political history but retain the intentional, strategic aspect of memory: the instrumentalization of the past in group interest. Looking at different social groups comprised of individual actors makes

it impossible to privilege a particular group and is thus better equipped to handle the plurality of collective recollections and states of memory.

There is another level at which the term and concept of a collective identity as constituted by memory are problematic: neither individual nor social “identity” is fixed by the past.<sup>72</sup> In a third advantage, the category of “collective representations” avoids the misconception that history accounts for identity. The concept neither limits the function of history to establishing collective identity nor relies on a deterministic understanding of past and experience, as, for example, with the notion a generational community of experience. Here, too, the concept of collective representations serves as a more productive point of departure, not least in connection with media history and research on the public realm. Where an individual assigns themselves or another to a generation, the representation of the past takes part in a process of understanding that is defined by the relevant contemporary conditions of communication. Relieved of their substantialist premise, we come to see generations as constructed by specific references to the past in a range of public and semipublic spaces. Again, one advantage of the concept of representations is its capacity to capture not only the integrative power of these historical references but also their explosive force. Those who understand and conceive of themselves as belonging to a certain generation implicitly or explicitly separate themselves from others, whom they designate as belonging to another generation to which, in turn, different experiences may be attributed. Assigning communal memory an exclusively positive role based on its importance in forming collective identity—as grounds the basic premise of Assmann and Assmann’s theory—becomes especially problematic when the historical record in question generally prevents the sort of reductionist interpretations that produce heroic myths. The historical experience of violence under conditions of total war and the Nazi crimes with which this study deals cannot easily be interpreted as stabilizing elements in the creation of national identity—nor are they easily forgotten.<sup>73</sup> The open-ended nature of “representation” as a concept better suits this ambivalence.

This ambivalence in turn points to a fourth advantage. Remembering is the opposite of forgetting, or forgetting a complement to remembering, or so it would seem. In fact, remembering inevitably includes forgetting; each takes part in the same process, and even that which has been forgotten still forms a part of memory. What has been forgotten does not disappear entirely from the world, it is merely a part of the past that is absent at a given moment; it is still available and can later be recalled, or “re-presented.” The category of “representation” avoids the confusion that inheres in the basic structure of cultural-theoretical approaches to “remembering.” As a more neutral term, representation is all the more effective for not moralizing. The central fallacy of the concept of “remembering” contains a moral dimension:

one who remembers is on the right side of things morally, while one who forgets is on the wrong side—so one would like to think. “Representation” removes the footing for the dualism contained within our ordinary understanding of “remember.” While there is no immediate term against which to oppose it—who thinks of nonrepresentation on hearing the term representation?—the selective nature of any given representation of the past is plain to see. Speaking about one specific past means, at least in the moment, not speaking about another. For this reason, too, the concept holds an advantage over the prevailing cultural theories of memory.

Fifth, the proposed category is well matched to the selected period of study, as the absolute separation posited by Assmann and Assmann between the two temporally determined modes of (initial) communicated memory and (subsequent) cultural memory can easily lead one astray. In what follows, I focus on the lingering presence of a recent, immediate, and barely concluded past, as well as events that those affected—today, one would say “eyewitnesses”—spoke about themselves (or did not). Conceiving of such a complicated situation in terms of collective representations offers a more nuanced point of entry. The content and forms of expression that came “from below” proceed hand in hand with “top-down,” culturally determined patterns of and prescriptions for interpretation. The appeal of the chosen period of study lies precisely in the fact that while it contained the “short-term memory” of postwar society, it also laid the groundwork for a “long-term memory” that was determined culturally by the media and various institutions and would span multiple periods. Experiences, narratives, and memories are more tightly intertwined than a binary model would suggest. The changes that occurred between 1945 and 1955 are more easily interpreted and researched as a process of the cultural consolidation of recollection.

The model holds a sixth advantage by examining a troubled past with an “untroubled term.” Whereas most German studies of the politics of history and of cultural memoirs address the Nazi past and the crimes of the regime, viewing their own efforts as part of a critical reappraisal of the past, the French concept of “collective representations” neither arose in nor holds a close thematic relationship to this specific context. Positively formulated: even if the term is somewhat unwieldy in German, the concept is comparatively more open and versatile, especially when considering the war and the military aspects of the Nazi period and discussing victims of the regime as well as its supporters and active collaborators. This implies a final advantage that points toward the future. The combined advantages of the proposed heuristic tool can, seventh, open up a new perspective on the war and its treatment in the postwar period. As alluded to earlier, the moralizing nature of memory runs the risk of appropriating victimhood and enshrining an ossified culture of memory that, moreover, contains an exculpatory func-

tion in the “indignation” and ritualized anger it engenders: is it possible to be guilty if one remembers? The omnipresence of the victims in this view pushes perpetrators to the edge of collective representations of the war, thus distorting the image of the past.<sup>74</sup> Chartier’s model may help us reevaluate the charged field in which individual memory oscillates between subjective experience and cultural memory. By assigning a larger role to collaborators and followers of the Nazi regime as agents of collective representations and forces that kept the memory of the war alive, the model is well suited to a historical perspective that avoids conflating cultural theory with *Opferidentifikation* (victim identification) or restricting its perspective to identification with victims, thereby freeing itself from a restrictive interpretative strategy that has dominated West Germany for nearly forty years. In the end, the empirical test case will determine the success of this (hopefully) productive breach in the norms of memory politics.

Responding in 2010 to criticism that the concept of representation distracts from historical reality and reduces the awareness of the past to its myths, Chartier reemphasized its heuristic value.<sup>75</sup> He began by distinguishing between the term’s “transitive” and “reflexive” functions in historical discourse, recalling the contradictory meanings referred to above: on the one hand, *représentation* designates the image or presentation of a thing that replaces the thing represented, which is itself absent. On the other hand, the concept denotes the exhibition of the thing itself, that is, the process that makes its presence conspicuous. In this latter case, *représentation* conveys the linguistic and visual presence of that which is represented, or the thing itself. Compared to the older term *mentalité*, he argued anew, “representation” more effectively accesses social relationships and their conflicts, which may themselves be understood as expressing a competition between representations. Especially in democratic societies that have not been exhaustively “codified,” Chartier maintained with reference to Pierre Bourdieu, social groups are constructed by representations. On the one hand, these representations draw on the available resources; on the other, they define and perpetuate those same structural conditions. As such, representations are just as real as objects themselves. In this way, Chartier concluded, the concept was well suited to explaining how social reality is constructed.

Hartmut Kaelble recently made an interim assessment of the term’s use in German historiography. While the concept has found only recent inclusion in the German tradition and is not used as frequently as in France, it has enjoyed an increasingly positive reception, particularly in histories of the Middle Ages and the early modern period, less so in contemporary history. Kaelble identifies numerous factors that have complicated the concept’s reception in German-speaking lands. First, the term runs up against semantic barriers. When translated into German, it finds itself in competition with



either the common term for political representation or outdated meanings, as in the term for entertaining expenses, *Repräsentationskosten*. Second, the term is unwieldy because it allows for any number of partially contradictory translations into German—one need think only of position (*Einstellung*), idea (*Vorstellung*), depiction (*Darstellung*), establishment (*Aufstellung*), or exhibition (*Ausstellung*). Third the concept relies on a technical term whose use interferes with historians' aspiration to general comprehensibility. Kaelble nevertheless finds good reason for expanding the concept's use in German historiography. He views a "history of representations" as more attractive than *Ideengeschichte* (conceptual history) for example, as the former incorporates a wider range of areas in its analysis, such as social conflict, political consequences, and the role of the media and public sphere. The concept's international and interdisciplinary nature makes it compatible with several fields outside the purview of historiography; both literary studies and art history use the term, for example.<sup>76</sup> For Kaelble, particularly promising fields of research for the concept include a history of encounters with the (non-European, "barbaric") "Other" (e.g., in global history), the history of social and political structures and identities, and especially the interpretation of epochal crises. As Kaelble rightly observes, using *repräsentation* as a heuristic tool provides an avenue for exploring the consequences of these crises, which may be construed as an argument about the various meanings attached to historical breaks and new beginnings, that is, as a confrontation between different representations. Whether a society simply endures a period of disorientation, reverts to previous conceptions of order, or must instead adopt new, externally imposed attitude toward a crisis, severe crises intensify and often change individuals' perception of themselves and others to an extent that overshadows the political critique of crisis (Koselleck).

The epochal disruption that followed 1945, then, is well suited to investigation in terms of changes in representations, especially given the crucial role that competing interpretations of the immediate past, World War II, and the Wehrmacht played in defining West Germans political and cultural realignment. This approach takes on even greater appeal when it is recalled that shortly after the historical break of 1945 in the 1950s, Germans' interpretations were confronted with externally imposed interpretations from the Allies. Thus, the initial phase of competing historical interpretations under occupation itself figured into the representation and conceptualization of formative attitudes toward the pre-1945 past. Herein lies the double historicity of the concept: two periods of time—the past, of which one spoke, and the present, in which one spoke—both become objects of historical analysis. Discussing the subject in terms of a history of representations sheds equal light on the original conditions of the crisis (the Nazi war of 1939–1945 and the unconditional surrender) as it does on the period of occupation

(1945–1949), in which a new system of representation was prescribed not only by control of the geographical space but also by categories of interpretation and argumentation that proposed meaning and rationales (especially those in the interest of demilitarization). My focus is not on the crisis *per se*, however, but rather on the return to stability after the crisis. In other words, the concept of representation sets the emphasis of the research not on the war period but rather on the postwar period. The concept is helpful in arranging the research period systematically, moreover, as the fields of social conflict it defines are generated by competing representations, which in turn provide the basis for the structural composition of this study. The structural conditions for representations thus provide a central through line for the present study. Chartier’s findings for the French transition from the monarchy of the Ancien Régime to the Republic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the emergence of a “space for free critique” and the “progressive politicization of cultural practices” that had previously been either dominated by the state or developed in the private sphere<sup>77</sup>—are equally applicable to the transition from the National Socialist dictatorship to West German democracy. Changes in the way power was exercised in turn altered the rules governing those practices. This represents another advantage of the chosen approach: reestablishing cultural practices’ connection to the exercise of power.

During the war, the public sphere was dominated by censorship and propaganda, even if vivid field correspondence and rumors spread by soldiers on vacation or hospital stays did succeed, more effectively as time went on, in creating a public sphere apart from the state, even under the conditions of dictatorship. By contrast, the post-1945 democratization of West Germany led to a new type of public sphere, a plurality of opinions, and, as Chartier has observed for the eighteenth century, “the emergence of an independent literary sphere and the development of a market of symbolic goods and intellectual and aesthetic judgments.” This sphere developed initially under conditions of occupation such as the licensed press (*Lizenzpresse*), as well as the limitations imposed by the policy of demilitarization, in particular on the sensitive topics of war and the Wehrmacht. Many of these restrictions were dropped with the establishment of West Germany, after which former soldiers could now also organize themselves formally so that, beginning in the early 1950s a public “veterans culture” emerged. The Nuremberg trials of the 1940s, the arrest of so-called “so-called war criminals,” and the rearmament of the two German states ushered in new conditions for representations of war and the military. Meanwhile, the publicity work carried out by the “Blank Office” (the forerunner to the Federal Ministry of Defense), which in its advertisements for a “new Wehrmacht” sought “new soldiers” who would be “citizens in uniform,” charted new paths of communication.

Chartier's concept, then, also serves the present goal of grounding a cultural history of the media and communications in the notion that "the dense network of perceptions, orientations, sense-making, symbols, and patterns of action that constitute a culture arises, preserves itself, and develops via communication and, where it is the case, also via the media."<sup>78</sup> It is not the technical preconditions for the media that are meant here, as a positivist account of their development would have it, but rather media itself as a precondition, as "spheres and forms for exchange and fostering meaning and action," a force that defines the political space. It follows from this that the development of the communicative and medial strategies that gave rise to representations of the war and military must be examined in concrete terms. This will in turn contribute to an understanding of media and cultural practices as such, as well as the particular interplay of effect and meaning between media and culture on display in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The new public forum set the stage on which these conflicts played out. Among the changes to underlying conditions was a structural transformation of the public sphere.<sup>79</sup> The postwar years were especially characterized on the one hand by a progressive relaxation in control over public communication, which if never complete was nonetheless far reaching, and on the other by the elevation of pressing social, economic, and political problems and decisions to central themes in programs and discussions in the mass media. The following discussion of representations of war and the military, then, not only engages in the debate surrounding West German democratization but also contributes to a history of political communication since 1945.

At least since the 1990s, this topic has come under increasing scrutiny because of the growing importance of the media in the public eye.<sup>80</sup> What is the public, however, and what is public opinion? Given their prominent position in democracy, there is no lack of definitions for these terms; there also appears to be no limit to their lack of definition. It is clear that, as a rule, public opinion and published opinion are not one and the same thing.<sup>81</sup> For the purposes of this study, the "public sphere" defines the space in which society communicates about itself, selects topics for discussion, and engages in debate. According to such a pragmatic definition, one may conceptualize the public sphere as a "medium of self-reference for a given society . . . an arena in which collective patterns of interpretation are generated, values are negotiated, and conflicts of interest are resolved."<sup>82</sup> In the present case, war and the military provided the focal point for collective patterns of interpretation around which new values were determined that affected areas far beyond the military, defined in any narrow sense. War and its effects also triggered the first large conflict of interest in the young Federal Republic. In contrast to Habermas's idealized vision of *one* public sphere, I look to distinguish various types of public spheres and set them in relation to each other.

Research into political communication has never been more popular, and media history continues to strike a significant chord.<sup>83</sup> Yet, studies of the communicative, medial aspect of the political process often remain general, as though they were applicable worldwide, regardless of context. The field of military history, too, increasingly examines the military's representation in the media, the role of journalists and war correspondents, and public images of war. Especially in democracies, public representations are powerful means for legitimizing or delegitimizing the presence of armed forces or the conduct of war, as the case may be. This applies in particular to the "media democracies" of the late twentieth century, but it also applied at the beginnings of West Germany, to the preliminary forms of the public media whose actors—how could it be otherwise?—did not begin at "zero" but in part took up where the war and the prewar era had left off.<sup>84</sup> To this extent, the chosen period of research lies at the beginning of a history of the media that starts with the diffusion of television in the 1960s, continues with the new radio programs and stations of the 1970s, and ends with the ascendancy of private radio and television channels in the 1980s—overlooking for a moment the rise of "new media" since the 2000s—which is accompanied by an evolution in journalistic convention toward scandal and entertainment. None of this had occurred, however, in the immediate postwar period and the 1950s. If one compares the public sphere of the first two decades after the war with the rapid growth of public media since the 1970s, the former appears relatively homogeneous, especially because of the stipulations imposed on media by the Allied reeducation program of the immediate postwar era. It is ultimately in this context that it becomes meaningful to include "public opinion" as a variable in an examination of shifting military values.

One pragmatic, if positivist, approach holds public opinion to be whatever representative public opinion polls reveal about their participant's attitudes. In this case, the results of public opinion surveys are consulted to quantitatively substantiate the qualitative analysis of individual voices. Since the end of the war, the high priests of public opinion have defined the relationship between publicity and politics. Opinion research, its defenders argue, prepares the way for political decisions by informing decision-makers "about the lifestyle, mind-set, and latent political will of the people,"<sup>85</sup> and raising the level of interaction between politicians and citizens (responsiveness) in an egalitarian, truly democratic manner. Critics, meanwhile, contend that opinion researchers all too easily turn into opinion makers. In the present case, the importance that politics attached to public opinion research from early on is reflected in the lengths to which Adenauer's government went to obtain as clear a picture as possible of West German public opinion, in order to either incorporate it into subsequent decisions or channel it in specific directions via deliberate public relations strategies. Opinion research

established an early foothold in West Germany. The most important opinion research institutes in Germany today began their work directly after the war's end: in 1945, Karl-Georg von Stackelberg founded Bielefeld's *Erforschung der öffentlichen Meinung, Marktforschung, Nachrichten, Information, Dienstleistungen* (Research on Opinion, Market Research, News, Information, and Services—EMNID) in Eastern Westphalia; Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann founded the *Institut für Demoskopie in Allensbach* (Allensbach Institute—IfD Allensbach) at Lake Constance in 1947. Their annual reports deliver valuable quantitative information about the collective ideas of West Germans, and the evolution of those ideas over time.

Change does not occur in a vacuum. It is bound to concrete actors, to individual people and social organizations. While this study does not seek to highlight individual groups of actors and institutions as a generational or institutional history might, it should nevertheless become clear that collective representations do not originate in abstract structures but are actively shaped by individuals and institutions that must be identified and examined based on their experiences and interests. The circle of actors the present study encompasses is not limited to the (former) political, intellectual, and military elite. Aside from government officials, party politicians, and high-ranking ministry officials, for example—aside from officers, authors, lawyers, and journalists, I also consider common (former) soldiers. Beneath the level of parliamentary action, I look to parties' internal committees. The "general" public—as reflected in a letter to the editor, a protest sign, or an opinion survey—will similarly be considered. The public further appears indirectly, between the lines so to speak, when a newspaper article, magazine series, or an association brochure paints a portrait of its intended recipient. One developmental factor is generational. The impact of wartime experience is conditioned by its reception in a politically and socially effective "generational context." However, this context is defined by not mere age range or a single defining experience of the war but rather its predominant, if not to say hegemonic, interpretation within the social group. The (political) action of group members in turn depends on the patterns of interpretation on which a "common" past is constructed. In this sense, generations are collective actors constituted by similar experiences and their interpretation, and make themselves recognizable, regardless of the variation in individual cases, as a historically influential force.

To return to the present object of investigation, the different possible interpretations of "the" experience of war point speak to competing interpretations that may prompt different, even contradictory, forms of action, leading one to speak—in the language of generational research—of different "generational units" (Karl Mannheim).<sup>86</sup> Individuals who belong roughly to the same age group and share a comparable biography during the politically

formative period of their lives will more or less reliably belong to the same generation. This connection is not inevitable however, in the same way, conversely, that a (only vaguely fathomable) generational context alone does not define action. In what follows, “generation” will not serve as the central heuristic category for the relatively brief window under investigation. At the same time, generational hallmarks will be discussed, as will individuals belonging to a specific generation. I attend to individuals’ self-assignment to a generation, especially in cases where a generational interpretation of experiences of war and war captivity holds implications for action or socialization, as in the case of *Heimkehrer* (homecomers) and the political élite.

What emerges, then, is a cultural history of politics with a discrete focus on the military dimensions of that history,<sup>87</sup> to the extent that representations of war and the military count among the cultural parameters that constituted political action during the transitional period—as with demobilization and rearmament, for example—and among the cultural forces that shaped institutions associated with defense policy. This representational approach to history indissolubly links the analysis of discursive strategies and practices to research on concrete actors or groups of actors, not least that of (former) soldiers. This approach also answers a call for research into the political past to take greater account of the central role of violence and the state monopoly on force, not least in the area of security; referencing historical patterns of interpretation, for example, when analyzing official recruitment during rearmament.<sup>88</sup> In other words, when applied to issues in military history as they relate to politics and society, this cultural approach described avoids both the “disappearance of the social in societal discourse”<sup>89</sup> and glossing over political problems. The “institutionality” of the new social order is also considered, allowing leading concepts of the eventual Federal Ministry of Defense—to stay with the current example—to be explored in terms of their bearing on cultural conceptions of meaning and value.<sup>90</sup>

## Period of Investigation, Sources, and Structure

Against the backdrop of these preliminary methodological considerations, a clear picture of the period of investigation finally emerges. Tracing changes in collective representations of war and the military requires one to look behind the political and military caesura of 8 May 1945 to the final years of the war, if only for a moment. Using 1945 as a turning point presents a problem typical to historical periodization. While the war’s end marks a caesura with respect to certain types of (in this case, political and military) development, with 8 May standing in as shorthand, if one adopts a different perspective and emphasis, then a “break” that many contemporaries did not notice anyway

quickly becomes relative. In principle, one can assume new macrostructural developments did not affect the people living within those structures equally, as their individual capacity for experience, explanation, and action were determined at a biographical level by inherited cultural traditions. As such, the transition from war to postwar was marked by different rates in institutional and individual change. This provides another motivation for investigating changes in shared patterns of interpretation within the context of the political, social, and attendant military reorganization of society. The image of the war and its soldiers plays a central role in this transformation, a fact that is borne out theoretically as well as empirically.

The period of investigation also looks past the other end point of many works that deal with the end of the war, which consistently limit themselves to the immediate postwar period of 1945–1948, focusing on the occupation and crisis of the postwar years leading up to currency reform. The field of interest outlined above, however, calls for a broader definition of the transitional period itself. Looking further ahead, research on contemporary history has gradually dismantled an older, politically oriented master narrative of West Germany, with 1968 representing the decisive break. The end of the 1960s, it was argued, fundamentally altered a society still permeated by the authoritarian traditions of the Nazi dictatorship. Under the motto “Mehr Demokratie wagen” (Dare more democracy), Willy Brandt’s 1969 government made pretensions to a second founding for West Germany, one with a greater orientation toward democracy and spurred on by the “68ers.” More recent works now see “1968” as one moment in an era of change that began in 1958–1959 and ended by 1973–1974. Military history follows a similar trajectory, albeit with 1955–1956 as the crucial years. Like no other event, the founding of the Bundeswehr stands in for the shift from demilitarization to rearmament. In the same period, the final homecomers arrived from the Soviet Union, and most soldiers, among them prominent Wehrmacht generals, were released from Allied prisons in the West. From this moment on, debates surrounding war and the military would occur under new structural conditions, and within a different landscape for domestic politics. The final phase of the war in 1944–1945 and the mid-1950s thus respectively constitute the beginning and end points of the central period of investigation. By comparison, a much more ample periodization that discerns in the end of the Cold War the swan song of a “long postwar” is unhelpful in this context for the methodological uncertainty that it brings.<sup>91</sup>

This study privileges conflicts in interpretation for the period after 1945 in West Germany, without thereby losing sight of potential “entanglements.” In East Germany as in West Germany, the end of the war was incorporated into myths that were intended to legitimize postwar society and to integrate former followers of National Socialism. “Anti-Fascism,” however, shortly

came to define the official ideological field of vision in the Sowjetische Besatzungszone (Soviet Occupation Zone—SBZ) and the GDR. In an oversimplified comparison, the Federal Republic became a den of former Nazis, while in the GDR, the “victims of Fascism”—those who had opposed the Nazi regime and the war from the start—had at last found a homeland. This prescribed line of interpretation necessarily led to another public interpretation of the war, which took as its starting point the suffering that Communists experienced at the hands of the Nazis and celebrated the war in the East as one of liberation in which the Red Army ultimately destroyed German Fascism. A similar line of interpretation was never prescribed in the pluralistic society of West Germany.<sup>92</sup> This pluralism, as well as the methodological decision to test the concept of representation, admits—even demands—the use of a wide range of contemporary source materials. Basing one’s methodology on the mediated nature of historical praxis, that is, on the form-bound communication of historical experience, necessarily leads to the fundamental assumption that it is media transmissions themselves that first provide access to past events, whether via text, image, or object. According to the premise of this theory of media, the form of communication influences the content of what is communicated, turning it into an object of analysis.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the impetus to investigate the reciprocal influence that different realms of human experience exert on one another in terms of cultural history makes useful any number of sources attesting to the human creation of meaning.

The systematic construction of the study sets focal points in the selection of sources chapter by chapter. Depending on the question at hand, then, different kinds of sources are employed successively. Part I, concerning the war, focuses in particular on eyewitness reports, as well as wartime correspondence and personal diaries. The following investigation of the media’s representation of postwar trials, the predicament of prisoners of war, and more trivial accounts of the war, draws primarily from published sources with a high circulation: daily papers such as Berlin’s *Tagesspiegel*, weekly newspapers like the *Frankfurter Hefte*, and popular illustrated magazine such as *Quick* and *Stern*. Turning to veteran culture in Parts III and IV, source material includes veteran association publications such as *Der Heimkehrer* and *Der Notweg*, as well as historiographical works, chronicles, and biographies; autobiographies, literary works, and films are also analyzed. Statements regarding perceptions and interpretations of the war can also be found in “top-down” reports on public sentiment and opinion polls. Whether it is the assessment of a field post inspection office during the war, a popular sentiment report conducted in the early postwar period for the French High Commissioner, or the analysis of a social research institute from the 1950s, the combination of quantitative assessments with qualitative examples present in such sources



means they must be evaluated with caution. Finally, Part V largely focuses on the “publicity work” of the government and political parties, making particular use of minutes from internal meetings, memorandums, and “gray propaganda.”

There is a further criterion for source selection that cuts across the aforementioned material. Beyond the written body of work, each chapter includes documents that combine text and image such as posters, illustrated pamphlets, monuments, photographs, and exhibition catalogs. Images, too, can effectively capture the mental disposition of actors, whether they are material artifacts, metaphors (a linguistic image), or ideal concepts (one’s mental image). Finally, performative practices such as (military) ceremonies and rituals like commemorating the deceased on the People’s Day of Mourning (Volkstrauertag) are also examined. Images’ ambiguity has long hindered their consideration by historians, who in the name of rationalism have primarily, if not exclusively, relied on written sources to document their interest in continuity and change, causality and contingency.<sup>94</sup> By contrast, the multiple analytic layers contained within the concept of representation encourage the consideration of visual sources in addition to textual analysis, without thereby limiting oneself to “looking at images” in the narrow sense of the term. Such a “visual turn” rests on a broader conception of images that includes their material and linguistic forms.<sup>95</sup> In the language of historical image research: content-bound images will be considered in addition to meaning-bound images (visions, dreams) and context-bound images (linguistic, narrative images).<sup>96</sup>

Compared to studies whose sources are more or less fixed by their choice of topic—studies on generals’ memoirs, for example, on issues of *Der Landser* magazine, or on a particular newspaper—the current approach is less comfortable. The aim, however, is not to document exhaustively a particular type of source as it appeared during the period of investigation. I instead focus broadly, as through a wide-angle lens, on a range of forms and content in the media and the concomitant patterns and conventions of interpretation, though not necessarily on every variation within a particular (e.g., literary) genre. Nor am I primarily concerned with gaining a purportedly authoritative, official perspective from administrative records (the “Akten”), as one misleading understanding of basic research might suggest. Texts written by experts for a professional audience, therefore, play a peripheral role. In this case, the interest lies not so much with the war’s place in military history as in everyday culture. “Everyday culture” should be understood in the sense of “popular culture,” although without the pejorative undertone that “popular” often retains. Considering popular forms of cultural expression in turn helps appraise, even in trivial form, the impact of a war that was allegedly forgotten or repressed. The borders are anyway often fluid. On the one

hand, academically trained authors helped craft popular war stories and tales of soldiers; on the other, these accounts were primarily intended for an educated middle class, if not an academic audience. (Conversely, the borderline between academic and nonacademic cannot always be clearly established.)

Public memory is not coterminous with the numerous private, individual memories of the war that several historians have traced since the 1970s and 1980s under the methodology of “oral history,” including the memories of soldiers as well as the civilian population.<sup>97</sup> The most recent wave of “eyewitness” reports was triggered by a resurgent interest in German suffering under the bombing campaigns and the end of the war. There is no attempt in what follows, however, to gain more direct access to the history of the war than is already possible with the forms of memory transmitted by media. “Eyewitness” memories are not authentic in the sense of providing a genuine account of the war and postwar period. In the postwar period, the forms and content of public memory functioned both as filters for the personal memories of the war generation—not least regarding the founding myths of the young Federal Republic—and as a force with lasting influence. Anyone who in recent decades has asked an interviewee about their suffering during the war or how the loss of relatives affected them is familiar with how suffering and grief have been expressed in the meantime. Recording and evaluating “private” war stories presumes an awareness of “official” war stories.<sup>98</sup> By contrast, in the study of the 1950s that follows, interviews originating in the postwar period, such as those conducted by Frankfurt’s Institut für Sozialforschung (Institute for Social Research—IfS) in 1956–1957, are interesting for what they reveal about the political consciousness of former prisoners of war.

The study also draws on unpublished sources, documents, and publications of “gray literature” from numerous archives in Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The subjective account of the defeat and the war’s end that emerges through military historical collections, estates, and documents from field inspection offices, and which provides the central focus for the first part of this study, was researched primarily at the department of military archives at the federal archive in Freiburg im Breisgau. The subsequent analysis of the judicial context derives in large part from research at the Archiv der Zentralen Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen (Archive of the Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes) in Ludwigsburg. Part V’s look to local and state level discussions of the war and soldiers within the political and pre-political space of the postwar period are based on documents from the Federal Archives (Bundesarchiv, Koblenz/Berlin); the Archive of Liberalism (Archiv des Liberalismus, Gummersbach); the Archive for Christian Democratic

Policy (Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, Bonn/Sankt Augustin); the Archive of Social Democracy (Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn); and the archive at the Institute of Contemporary History (Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich). The collection of confidential demographic commissions at the Allensbach Institute archives, such as those prepared for the Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government—BPA), provided an understanding of West German citizens' opinions—as they circled back time and again to the country's military past and future—beyond that afforded by the published yearbooks. Research at the relevant archives of the Western occupational forces provided an account not only of occupational policy measures adopted in the course of demilitarization but also of the view “from outside” throughout the period of investigation. These archives include the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC and College Park, Maryland; The National Archives in Kew, London (until 2003, the Public Record Office); and the Archives of the French Occupation in Germany and Austria (Bureau des Archives de l'Occupation française en Allemagne et en Autriche) in Colmar, located since 2010 in the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in La Courneuve, Paris. Finally, the specialized library at the Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr (Center for Military History and Social Sciences of the Bundeswehr—formerly the MGFA)—in Potsdam has preserved what is most likely a unique collection of “found items” of gray literature and press clippings from the former Militärgeschichtliches Institut (Military History Institute) of the GDR, which are drawn on primarily in Part V.

Amid structural changes in the exercise of political power and the public sphere, certain fields of conflict can be identified that, to return to Chartier, generated the discrepancies and rivalries between the collective representations with which individual actors and social groups made sense of the post-war order. The study is built around three such areas of conflict, which at moments during the period of investigation were linked directly to changes in various “power relations,” and at other times simply reflected a change in a given topic's social significance: the war's evaluation in a judicial context; the evolving image of soldiers, especially at veterans' instigation; and (pre-) political references to the past made in the context of rearmament and reconstruction. The book is thus primarily arranged in systematic fashion; its focus on three areas of conflict yields a tripartite division that open various perspectives on the subject of concern over multiple chapters. The chapters themselves revolve around the conflicts' respective focal points, in each case study adopting both systematic and chronological criteria if discrepancies between their historical genesis and their development over time become apparent.

Part II begins with an overview of the event structures that shaped the contemporary experience of German “wartime society.” This section presents, in ideal form, the collective forms of consciousness and “prospects for experience” prompted by the most recent military conflict in an age of world wars. Particular attention is paid here to the war’s end in 1944–1945, on the one hand as an interface between war and postwar, and on the other as an important reference point for subsequent collective representations of war and the military. These patterns inhabited a field of tension defined by official motivational slogans and attitudes denounced by the regime as defeatist. Representations of and ideas concerning war are then examined in light of political purges. The judicial evaluation of World War II and the Wehrmacht—conducted against the backdrop of the recent political, military, and social turmoil, occupational policy, and newly formed public spheres—cast war and the military, as well as the cultural politics of “demilitarization,” in a new light. Beneath the surface of the debate about this evaluation and the campaign against the “war criminals,” the altered self-conception of the post-dictatorial society was openly debated—that is to say, via the media—not least with regard to the criminal nature of the war and the responsibility of those involved.

Parts III and IV shift focus to the war’s impact over the midrange, in particular to its social consequences. The increasingly contentious issues of German soldiers’ continued imprisonment in Soviet war camps and their “homecoming” (*Heimkehr*) were surfaces on which the early Federal Republic projected its self-image to great social effect. Groups of former Wehrmacht soldiers who had at first been limited to informal networks by Allied restrictions imposed in the immediate postwar era began organizing themselves into veteran associations in the 1950s, a process that over time resulted in a pronounced “veterans’ culture.” Arguments surrounding wartime imprisonment, homecoming, and “war criminals” surfaced in public debate via association newspapers and publications, as well as the national press. War and the Wehrmacht were also made the subject of accounts that former soldiers provided themselves, in collective representations that primarily addressed the authoritarian past and the interaction with that past in the democratic present. The ambivalence of the meaning ascribed to the wartime past and war internment, which when juxtaposed to consumer society were not exclusively conceived of and represented as a period of suffering, becomes clear in such cases.

Veterans not only organized themselves as a community of shared experience in a constructive manner, that is, through an interpretation of the past that gave them meaning and identity; they also actively and passively separated themselves from the “others.” Internally, they distinguished

themselves from men of the military resistance who, still seen as traitors, were suddenly presented as models fit to uphold the traditions of the young democracy and its new armed forces. Similarly excluded were the “black sheep” of the Wehrmacht—those who were “ineligible for military service,” deserters, and defectors—but also, and finally, the former soldiers’ own *Führer*. Externally, one’s previous wartime enemies, the Western powers and the Soviet Union, provided the targets. Depictions of the war in mainstream sources that followed media logic—in which outlandish and solitary individuals played leading roles in suspenseful, entertaining episodes—were hard-pressed to match an average soldier’s reports on the monotony of life in the camps.

Part V presents a further perspective with a greater orientation toward the future of the past. The interplay between traditional and modern elements in collective representations of war and the military is discussed in terms of its military significance, yielding lines of inquiry that point into both the past and the future. Furthermore, the leading question focuses in particular on a development that took root at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s: the establishment of new German armed forces on (West) German soil. In contrast to traditional histories of the Bundeswehr, this study is not concerned with the institutional or foundational roots of the new armed forces, the difficulty of implementing military reforms in the troops, the technical aspects of armament, or how German rearmament impacted foreign affairs: enough has been written on these subjects. Instead, sources are read “against the grain” and—to the extent that they set World War II and the Wehrmacht in dialogue with the “new Wehrmacht” and its image of soldiers—examined for their underlying values and historical interpretations. What historical interpretations of the recent past were contained within the military reformer’s vision of the future? How did traditional images of war and soldiers combine with new traits to form the normative core of “modern” military leadership philosophy? How did representatives of the (future) Ministry of Defense use the public media to campaign for rearmament? What was the contrasting image of war and soldiers developed by critics from the ranks of the *Ohne mich* (Count me out) movement? This area of conflict, so central to the story of the early Federal Republic, will be read as another projective surface within the process of inner democratization. To set the selected period of investigation itself into historical perspective—to the extent that the scope of the argument can be expanded to include the history of the future—the study subsequently offers a perspective on relevant debates from the late 1950s to the present. In a final analysis, the most important events are then evaluated according to the hypothesis, and set within current discussions in their respective fields of research.

## Notes

1. Lovis H. Lorenz, "Das Kriegsgespenst," *Die Zeit*, 14 November 1946.
2. See Berghahn, "Recasting Bourgeois Germany," 340; Naumann, *Nachkrieg in Deutschland*; Echternkamp, *Nach dem Krieg*; Echternkamp, "Im Schlagschatten in Deutschland"; Echternkamp, "Fin de la guerre"; on the private dimension, see Fulda, *Demokratie im Schatten der Gewalt*.
3. See Schwelling, *Wege in die Demokratie*; Danyel, "Die geteilte Vergangenheit"; Bergmann et al., *Schwieriges Erbe*.
4. On the debate since the 1970s, see Conze, "Moderne Politikgeschichte"; Mergel, "Überlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte"; Frevert and Haupt, *Neue Politikgeschichte*; Echternkamp, "Krieg."
5. See Fritz et al., *Nationen und ihre Selbstbilder*.
6. Historiographical research had already debunked this myth by the 1970s and 1980s. Messerschmidt, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*; Streit, *Keine Kameraden*; Krausnick and Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges*. The topic first gained wider public appreciation, however, with the debate that flared up around it—primarily addressing the crimes committed in the East and the Balkans—between 1995 and 1999, during the (first) tour of the exhibition "Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941–1944" by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research (Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung). See Prantl, *Wehrmachtverbrechen*.
7. Kühne, *Von der Kriegskultur zur Friedenskultur?* See also Heuser, *The Bomb*.
8. Kühne and Ziemann, "Militärgeschichte"; see Wettig, *Entmilitarisierung und Wiederbewaffnung*.
9. See Hardtwig, "Geschichtskultur."
10. Bauer, *As Far as My Feet Will Carry Me*; see Hardtwig, "Geschichte für Leser," 25.
11. Olick, *In the House of the Hangman*; see also authors such as Alexander Abusch, Walther Dirks, Otto Feger, Karl Jaspers, Eugen Kogon, Ernst Niekisch, Wilhelm Röpke, Paul Sering (aka Richard Löwenthal), or Helmut Schelsky in Greven, *Politisches Denken in Deutschland*.
12. Jarausch and Sabrow, *Die historische Meistererzählung*.
13. There were one hundred thousand copies of Kogon, *The SS-State in 1947* (Moeller, *War Stories*, 202n9). Kogon, "Gericht und Gewissen," *Frankfurter Hefte*, no. 1 (1946): 29–31; Kogon, "Über die Situation," *Frankfurter Hefte*, no. 1 (1947): 29, 34; see Prümm, "Entwürfe einer zweiten Republik"; Jaspers, *Question of German Guilt*; see also Abusch, *Der Irrweg einer Nation*; Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*; Olick, *In the House of the Hangman*; Arendt, "Aftermath of Nazi Rule."
14. See Schlemmer, *Umbruch in der Provinz*; cf. already in 1988 Broszat et al., *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform*.
15. See Kempowski, *Das Echolot*; cf. F. Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler*.
16. This trend is reflected in the MGFA series *Germany and the Second World War*, concluded in 2010. The final volume, however, ventures a brief overview of the economic, political, and cultural history of the immediate postwar period. See MGFA, *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, vol. 10, bk. 2.
17. See Echternkamp, "1914–1945: Ein zweiter Dreißigjähriger Krieg?"
18. See, e.g., Casdorff, *Weihnachten 1945*; Asmuss et al., *Der Krieg und seine Folgen, 1945*; Hillman and Zimmermann, *Kriegsende 1945 in Deutschland*.
19. See Knabe, *Tag der Befreiung?* See, among other reviews, Echternkamp, "Hubertus Knabe."
20. The fact that the term has is now the subject of terminological dictionaries can surely be taken as a sign that its honeymoon has passed and that it remains current only in terms of its relationship to historical memory and material collection. See T. Fischer and Lorenz, *Lexikon der "Vergangenheitsbewältigung"*; and, with less context, Eitz and Stötzel, *Wörterbuch der "Vergan-*

genheitsbewältigung”; see also Hettling, “Die Historisierung der Erinnerung”; Echternkamp, *Die Bundesrepublik 1945/49–1969*; cf. König, *Die Zukunft der Vergangenheit*.

21. Adorno, “Meaning of Working through the Past.”

22. See, e.g., Wolfgang Benz, “Postwar Society,” 2.

23. Lübbe, “Der Nationalsozialismus”; see also the reprint of the polemical treatise Lübbe, *Vom Parteigenossen zum Bundesbürger*.

24. In Herf, *Divided Memory*, 225. Axer, *Die Aufarbeitung*; Berghoff, “Zwischen Verdrängung und Aufarbeitung.”

25. See Schildt and Sywottek, “‘Reconstruction’ and ‘Modernization’”; Sywottek and Schildt, *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau*.

26. Hilger, “Die mobilisierte Gesellschaft”; Jarausch and Geyer, *Shattered Past*.

27. See Schildt and Sywottek, “‘Reconstruction’ and ‘Modernization’”; for the cultural history with an emphasis on US influence, see Maase, *Bravo Amerika*; Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels*.

28. Steinbach, “Zur Auseinandersetzung”; Graml, “Die verdrängte Auseinandersetzung”; Kittel, *Die Legende von der “Zweiten Schuld”*; Wengst, “Geschichtswissenschaft und ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’”; C. Hoffmann, *Stunden Null?*

29. For what follows, see Moeller, *War Stories*. For research-oriented overviews, see Geppert, *Die Ära Adenauer*; Stöver, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*; further, see Kleßmann, *Die doppelte Staatsgründung*.

30. “The years after the war, which are so often uncomplicatedly labeled as years of denial and repression, may be much more important than previously thought for molding the memory of war and genocide . . . Before and after 1945, the noises of the past reverberated loudly in German society and culture. We may not like the articulation of some of these pasts, but ‘silence’ is not the right term to describe the presence of the past in modern German history.” Confino and Fritzsche, “Introduction,” 14.

31. For the history of the reception of the resistance, see Ueberschär, *Der 20. Juli 1944*; Ueberschär, *Stauffenberg*; Frei, “Erinnerungskampf.”

32. Krause, *Flucht vor dem Bombenkrieg*; Moeller, “Remembering the War.”

33. See Wettig, *Entmilitarisierung und Wiederbewaffnung*; generally, see A. Fischer, *Entmilitarisierung und Aufrüstung*.

34. See MGFA, *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik, Bd. 1*; for the question of tradition, see the pioneering Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross*.

35. G. Meyer, “Soldaten ohne Armee”; G. Meyer, “Zur Situation der deutschen militärischen Führungsschicht”; Wette, “Die deutsche militärische Führungsschicht”; Diehl, *Thanks of the Fatherland*; Large, *Germans to the Front*; Wulfhorst, “Der ‘Dank des Vaterlandes’”; Lockenour, *Soldiers as Citizens*; Searle, *Wehrmacht Generals*; Manig, *Die Politik der Ehre*; Lingen, “Soldiers into Citizens.”

36. For more recent perpetrator research, see Mallmann, *Karrieren der Gewalt*.

37. Frei and Freimüller, *Karrieren im Zwielficht*; Loth and Rusinek, *Verwandlungspolitik*; Wildt, *An Uncompromising Generation*; for research, see Herbert, “Rückkehr in die Bürgerlichkeit?”; Lommatzsch, *Hans Globke*; Conze, *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit*; Baumann et al., *Schatten der Vergangenheit*.

38. Largely uncritical: G. Meyer, *Adolf Heusinger*; Scholten, “Offiziere.” For more recent biographies of leading military figures who did not survive the Third Reich, see, e.g., Kroener, *Der starke Mann im Heimatkriegsgebiet*; Müller, *Generaloberst Ludwig Beck*; see also Hammerich and Schläffer, *Militärische Aufbaugenerationen*; for an East German career, see Diedrich, *Paulus*.

39. For this history, see Berghahn, *Militarism*; for Germany since the German Empire, see Wette, *Militarismus in Deutschland 1871 bis 1945*; Wette, *Militarismus in Deutschland: Geschichte*; for war discourse in France during the 1789 Revolution, see Kruse, *Die Erfindung des modernen Militarismus*; see also Berghahn, *Europe in the Era of Two World Wars*.

40. Ritter, *Sword and the Scepter*; Sauer, “Die politische Geschichte.”

41. Nawyn, "Striking at the Roots," 15, talks about an "interactive enterprise."
42. This historicization defines Nawyn's research interest and partially phenomenological approach in her regional case study "Striking at the Roots," esp. 28.
43. See Rupieper, *Die Wurzeln der westdeutschen Nachkriegsdemokratie*; Rupieper, "Die amerikanische Demokratisierung"; on France, see Vaillant, "Frankreichs Beitrag zur Demokratisierung"; Bauerkämper et al., *Demokratievunder*.
44. Krauss, *Heimkehr in ein fremdes Land*.
45. See Rupieper, *Die Wurzeln der westdeutschen Nachkriegsdemokratie*. On "cultural" re-education, see Monod, *Settling Scores*; Pape, *Kultureller Neubeginn*; Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible*; Füssl, *Die Umerziehung der Deutschen*; see also Tent, *Mission on the Rhine*. For other aspects of cultural policy under occupation, see Bausch, *Die Kulturpolitik der US-Amerikanischen Information Control Division*; Hartenian, *Controlling Information*; W. Lange, *Theater in Deutschland*; B. Hahn, *Umerziehung durch Dokumentarfilm?*
46. For conceptualization, see "American Impact on Western Europe."
47. As rightly emphasized in Nawyn, "Striking at the Roots," 15–16.
48. Moeller, "War Stories"; Moeller, *War Stories*.
49. See esp. Echternkamp, "Wut auf die Wehrmacht?"; Echternkamp, "Mit dem Krieg seinen Frieden schließen"; Echternkamp, "Kameradenpost bricht auch nie ab . . ."; Echternkamp, *Kriegsschauplatz Deutschland 1945*.
50. See Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past*, xii. "Rather, a 'policy for the past' signifies a political dynamic that extended over half a decade and was characterized by a high degree of societal acceptance—indeed of collective *expectation*." Frei reads the matter of fact nature of amnesty and reintegration as a means of using historical policy to legitimize the young democracy.
51. Halbwachs, *Das kollektive Gedächtnis*, 14–15. For the following, see also Jureit and Schneider, *Gefühlte Opfer*, 54–73; Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, 14–15; Halbwachs, *Das Gedächtnis und seine sozialen Bedingungen*.
52. J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 37.
53. On CRC 434 at Giessen (1997–2008) and its interdisciplinary investigation of cultural memory processes from antiquity to the twenty-first century, see as a summary Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, 34, Marcus Sandl quote. See also the forty-volume Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht series *Formen der Erinnerung*; Cornelißen, "Was heißt Erinnerungskultur?" On military self-representation, see Epkenhans et al., *Militärische Erinnerungskultur*; Carl and Planert, *Militärische Erinnerungskulturen*.
54. According to Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, 34–35.
55. Reichel, *Politik mit der Erinnerung*; Wolfrum, *Geschichtspolitik*; Margalit and Smith, *Amnestie oder die Politik der Erinnerung*; A. Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma*; Jarausch and Sabrow, *Verletztes Gedächtnis*.
56. Wolfrum, *Geschichte als Waffe*.
57. See A. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization*; cf. critique in Jureit and Schneider, *Gefühlte Opfer*, 70–71; Stephan, *Erinnerungen*.
58. Buschmann and Carl, "Vorwort"; Buschmann and Carl, "Zugänge zur Erfahrungsgeschichte."
59. See Koselleck, "'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectation.'"
60. Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, 110. CRC 437 at the University of Tübingen "Kriegserfahrungen: Krieg und Gesellschaft in der Neuzeit" (1999–2008) made an approach based in historical experience particularly effective for a modern military history by focusing on the interpretive appropriation of the war's reality, as well as the development of war experience and its effects on the postwar period. Korff, "Kriegserfahrungen."
61. Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, 110.
62. Jureit and Schneider, *Gefühlte Opfer*, 78. For more detail, see Jureit, *Generationsforschung*, 40–52, 78–85.



63. Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis*, 4. As Erll rightly stresses, this is surely a basic explanation for the memory boom since the 1990s. See also Erll et al., *Cultural Memory Studies*.

64. Chartier, "Die Welt als Repräsentation," 326, 337.

65. See Chartier, "Kulturgeschichte zwischen Repräsentationen und Praktiken."

66. Chartier, "Die Welt als Repräsentation," 331.

67. This notion underpins the interdisciplinary CRC 640 "Repräsentationsformen des Anderen: Migranten in Westeuropa und den USA im 20. Jahrhundert" at the Humboldt University of Berlin (HU Berlin), which takes aim at a comparative study of European and non-European cultures and their ties. At the CRC, representations are "understood as publicly negotiated or enforced, socially consensual or controversial ideas and images that claim to represent past, present, or future social realities and are contained within the one as in the other. From this perspective, representations are not mere reflections of social orders, but are also models for reality; the effect of representations on social orders are of particular interest." Metzler et al., "Repräsentationsformen des Anderen." The original project website from which the quote is taken is no longer active. See Baberowski et al., *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder*; Baberowski, "Was sind Repräsentationen sozialer Ordnungen?"

68. There is also the issue that the term is used in political and historical studies, as well as in epistemological discussions and philosophies of culture—hence its multilayered character. Taken from the French (Chartier, Ricœur), the term, when understood from a historiographical point of view, holds the appeal of an ambiguity that connects the past to the present via the aspect of transmission. The French *représentation* can be translated as "making present," but also as "representation," and as such is connected to *représentance* (political representation, or representative). In German, the French term is usually not translated for a variety of usages because of its multiple connotations but rather reproduced with *Repräsentation*. See, e.g., Ricœur, *Geschichtsschreibung und Repräsentation*.

69. For Germany, see François and Schulze, *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*. A first exception is the large-scale Polish-German project of the Centre for Historical Research in Berlin of the Polish Academy of Science "German-Polish Places of Remembrance." The project applies a transnational approach to the concept of *lieux de mémoire*, among other things, by presenting different interpretive contexts for the same place of remembrance, or two functionally equivalent places of remembrance. See H. Hahn and Traba, *Deutsch-polnische Erinnerungsorte*; H. Hahn and Traba, *20 Deutsch-polnische Erinnerungsorte*; Cornelißen et al., *Erinnerungskulturen*; François and Puschner, *Erinnerungstage*.

70. See Nora, *Realms of Memory*; Nora, "Das Abenteuer der Lieux de mémoire"; Erll et al., *Memory in Culture*, 22–27.

71. In "Nation und Weltgesellschaft," Ulrich Bielefeld recalls the subprocesses: legally, the formation of the transnational and international legal system (the founding of the United Nations 1945–1948, international law); financially, the restructuring of the international monetary system at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, with the US dollar as the chief currency; economically, the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951; in security policy, with the conclusion of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1948–1949, and plans for the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1952.

72. Cf. esp. Niethammer, *Kollektive Identität*, 314–66; Niethammer, "Gedächtnis und Geschichte." Straub also warns against prematurely applying a concept of personal identity to a collective. Straub, "Personale und kollektive Identität."

73. For the following, see the critique in Jureit and Schneider, *Gefühlte Opfer*, 74–76.

74. Jureit was responsible for redesigning the "Wehrmacht Exhibition."

75. A panel discussion at the German Historical Institute Paris (GHIP) on 7 May 2010 provided an illuminating view on the current state of the debate and the concept's reception in Germany. As a part of the event series "Les mots de l'Histoire. Historiens allemands et français à leur concepts et à leurs outils" organized by the GHIP and the Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur l'Allemagne at EHESS, Roger Chartier (Collège de France) and Hartmut Kaelble

(HU Berlin) presented on the topic “Vorstellung / Représentations.” Commentator: Pierre Monnet (EHESS). I am grateful to Stefan Martens (GHIP) for the referral and the invitation.

76. See the journal *Representations*, published by the University of California Press.

77. Chartier, “Die Welt als Repräsentation,” 344.

78. Tschopp and Weber, *Grundfragen der Kulturgeschichte*, 14.

79. Jürgen Habermas’s eponymous 1962 study, which presents an idealized form of the public sphere in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, would be interesting more as a part of debate at the time than as a model. Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

80. Western democracies find themselves on the path toward an informational society in which politics and politicians (must) also renegotiate their relationship to the media. In this context, the medialization of politics (e.g., the “Americanization” of elections) means symbolic politics has taken an increasingly, critics would argue, overly important position. In a media democracy, intermediary authorities such as political parties and parliaments recede into the background, leading to the current debate about the causes and possible effects of a renewed structural transformation of the public sphere, especially within political scientists’ theoretical reflections on democracy. Politics requires legitimation through communication. Without publicly effective representation, politics is not possible in democracy. See Beierwaltes, *Demokratie und Medien*.

81. For the history of the term, see Gallus and Lütke, *Öffentliche Meinung und Demoskopie*, 10–49; Gallus, “Medien, öffentliche Meinung und Demoskopie”; Kleinstauber, “Öffentliche Meinung.”

82. See Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise*, 17, also for more literature references.

83. See the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation) interdisciplinary project “MilMed,” based in Braunschweig, Freiburg, and Ilmenau: Daniel, “Kooperation, Kritik und Konkurrenz” (2009–2012); see also Daniel, *Augenzeugen*.

84. See Köhler, *Wir Schreibmaschinentäter*.

85. Schmidtchen and Noelle-Neumann, “Die Bedeutung repräsentativer Bevölkerungsumfragen,” 171.

86. For a systematic overview and references to the differentiated literature that has emerged since Mannheim’s groundbreaking study, see Jureit, *Generationsforschung*. The importance of successive generations for the West German public sphere is emphasized in Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise*.

87. Frevert, “Neue Politikgeschichte”; Frevert and Haupt, *Neue Politikgeschichte*; Landwehr, “Diskurs—Macht—Wissen”; C. Lipp, “Politische Kulture”; Mergel, “Überlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte,” 574–606; Mergel, “Kulturwissenschaft der Politik”; Stolberg-Rilinger, *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?* Cf. Nicklas, “Macht—Politik—Diskurs.”

88. See Haupt, “Historische Politikforschung”; and the critique in Metzler, review of Frevert and Haupt, *Neue Politikgeschichte*. For the research concept for CRC 584 at Bielefeld University from 2001, see Haupt, “Das Politische als Kommunikationsraum.”

89. For a critique of “culturalism” see Kaschuba, “Kulturalismus,” 80–95; Maurer, “Alte Kulturgeschichte—Neue Kulturgeschichte?”; see also Echternkamp, “Militärgeschichte”; Echternkamp, “Wandel durch Annäherung.”

90. I.e., it is not about the history of the institution, e.g., as an “organization”; for the research program for CRC 537 at the Technical University of Dresden, see Melville, “Institutionalität und Historizität.”

91. See “Gender and the Long Postwar.”

92. For a German–German comparison see Frei, “NS-Vergangenheit unter Ulbricht und Adenauer”; Danyel, “Die beiden deutschen Staaten”; see also Herf, *Divided Memory*; Biess, *Homecomings*.

93. See Crivellari et al., “Die Medialität der Geschichte,” 19. For the construction of media reality and constructivism in communications research, see also Bentele, *Theorien öffentlicher Kommunikation*.

94. This primacy of language reflects an effort to resolve ambivalence in rational narratives, and applies in particular to histories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the other hand, visual documentation plays a greater role in histories of the Middle Ages and the early modern period given the available sources. The fundamental politicization that occurred in the nineteenth century, the mass dissemination of images allowed by their technical reproduction, and finally, the connection between politics and the mass media in the twentieth century have all led to images' primarily being viewed as a source for political messaging. Wartime propaganda from 1914 to 1918 and, to a greater extent, from 1939 to 1945 led to an inflation of the image that no longer had anything to do with the singularity of an artistic work per se. Images' increasing relevance did not at first lead at the same time to a consideration of their value as historical sources, neither in the French *Annales* school nor in the German historical social sciences. Whatever role the rationalist postulate of academic inquiry may have played, the historical importance of the visual element, the influence of the imaginary on social praxis, and the mass media's fundamental importance to modern society cannot be grasped with an "iconophobic" attitude. The linguistic turn has only strengthened the hegemony of the verbal, even if a sense of the persistence of the metaphorical element in (rational) historical research of the nineteenth century provided a crucial point of departure for Hayden White. The linguistic turn centered on the insight that the past is always (linguistically) communicated and thus cannot be directly made into a subject or structured as such. What is past is not reflected in sources: the sources construct what is past. The practical consequence for research was an analysis of the rhetorical means by which this occurs, and a more intensive look at narrative structures, key terms, and metaphors.

95. See Roeck, "Visual turn?"

96. See Mitchell, "What Is an Image?"

97. See Niethammer's groundbreaking work, esp. Niethammer, "Heimat und Front"; see also Schröder, "Die Vergegenwärtigung des Zweiten Weltkrieges"; Schröder, *Die gestohlenen Jahre*; Rosenthal, "Vom Krieg erzählen"; Rosenthal, "Als der Krieg kam, hatte ich mit Hitler nichts mehr zu tun"; Lehmann, *Im Fremden ungewollt zuhause*; Lehmann, *Gefangenschaft und Heimkehr*.

98. See Moeller, *War Stories*, 174; Domansky, "A Lost War"; Geyer, "Place of the Second World War."