

Germanness

Editors' Introduction

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Avoiding essentialist definitions, this module presents "Germanness" as complex, contingent, and constantly changing. It features more than 200 sources that draw attention to the various considerations—textual, visual, material, spatial, aesthetic, physical—at play in negotiating Germanness and in establishing, granting, or denying this "status." How and when are subjects, spaces, objects, norms, seen as "German"—by whom, or for whom? By presenting Germanness as a space of negotiation, we hope to offer teachers, students, and scholars an interesting way to engage with certain historical outcomes in need of further reflection.

Explanation of Terms and Guiding Concerns

This module was originally called "German identity," but our working group was dissatisfied with both the slipperiness of "identity" and the essentialism it connotes when used in combination with "German." We renamed it "Germanness" [*Deutschsein*], which did not necessarily make our task itself any easier but does point to our basic orientation. We conceive of Germanness as something that is neither fixed nor essential, nor as something that can be clearly explained historically. On the contrary, our chosen terminology should suggest that Germanness has always been subject to controversial negotiations. From the sixteenth century to the present day, people have sought time and again to determine what was meant by Germanness or identity and who had the right to decide. But what can be said of that time period as a whole, and of each of its constituent chapters, is borne out by historiographical reflection as well: the concept of Germanness in no way reflects any sort of consensus or established agreement; rather, it leads directly into the center of contentious, ongoing debates or opens up new ones.^[1] Unconcerned with the telos of nationhood and the nation-state, our module leaves open the possibility that there are many kinds of Germanness that can exist independently of a collective national consciousness—indeed practicing Germanness often means finding differences and divisions among "Germans."

This bilingual module roughly covers the era called *Neuzeit* (German) or Modern Europe (English): the period from the Renaissance and the Reformation up to the present day. The German and English-language historiographies differ somewhat with respect to terminology and chronological divisions. We have chosen the terms Early Modern and Late Modern for the English version of the website and *Frühe Neuzeit* und *Moderne* for the German. Whereas the Age of Revolutions usually serves as a dividing line between the two periods in English-language literature, the term *Sattelzeit* (Reinhart Koselleck), meaning the transitional period "saddling" the 1760s to the 1830s, is frequently employed in German-language studies. It was not our intention, however, to reify any single approach to periodization or to introduce time periods as static and fixed.^[2] In purely practical terms, our goal was to select approximately the same number of primary sources from the Early and Late Modern periods, and then to organize those sources according to theme or topic.

The very concept of Germanness already differed significantly in the Early Modern and Late Modern periods, not least because it did not exist in a proper sense in the Early Modern period—and certainly not in the form in which it crystallized during the eighteenth century or the *Sattelzeit*. This is already evident in the fact that the basic frameworks that people used to situate or locate themselves and others in the Early Modern period—whether it was the Holy Roman Empire [*Reich*], region, city, or family—differed from those in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and later. Of overarching importance in the Early Modern period were the estates system and the

spectrum of interpretations of the Christian faith, the latter of which became fragmented and competitive, also internally, in the wake of the confessionalization process that started in the sixteenth century. Foremost among those factors that shaped perceptions of oneself and others were the estate one was born into, one's dynastic position or proximity to rulers, confession, occupation, and sometimes even place or city of residence, to name just a few examples.^[3]

Yet Germanness, according to our argument, also remained fractured and contested in modern society from the late eighteenth century onwards. Starting with the late Enlightenment, we see, on the one hand, the emergence of certain discursive and conceptual continuities regarding Germanness. We view these continuities neither deterministically nor one-dimensionally, but they are important nonetheless. Around 1800, for example, Germanness started being defined according to cultural patterns. German modernity, as is well known, was not ushered in by a revolution; nor did any sort of national framework or unified political structure exist in the German lands around 1800. When the new, bourgeois-aristocratic and educated elite of the late eighteenth century thought about Germanness, as an imagined order in a "(cultural) nation without a nation," they focused on criteria such as language, education, or religion (in the sense of Christian tradition), as well as on categories such as gender, ethnicity/"race" or "whiteness," the last of which was assumed and thus often went unspoken. This bourgeois German culture presented itself as universal while drawing boundaries, both internally and externally, at the same time. The construction of gender and "race," for example, relied on an essentialized or "essentializable" conception of the body and no longer on social status.

These and other dimensions of identity served to enshrine difference in a theoretically open, modern society, to lend credence to boundaries and hierarchies, and to normalize different forms of participation or non-participation. The German lands were not the only place where this happened. One could point out, however, that in Germany the cultural determination of Germanness outlasted the various political and geographical manifestations of Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In fact, the idea that Germanness can be culturally fixed or defined in opposition to entities that are religiously and culturally different is still active today, in latent or manifest form, and has even been reactivated.^[4] How potent this idea was, how it was deployed in various times and places, and to what effect, has to be considered in each individual case.

Seemingly identical patterns of interpretation (i.e. apparent continuities) could, on the other hand, have very different effects in different situations or could be interpreted, appropriated, and deployed differently at particular moments in history or over time. The aforementioned definition of Germanness was effective despite its particular origin (elitist, bourgeois, often Prussian, mostly Protestant), but it did not necessarily determine how people understood themselves and others. Rather than being the most salient form of identification, Germanness was often only one of many competing categories and factors in the way people experienced and made sense of the world. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the feeling of being German could also express belonging to a local community, a region, or a nation, and was similarly compatible with having divergent political views or regional-social origins.^[5] Various categories such as economic capital, professional expertise, or local networks played a role in negotiating new allegiances forged in the context of migration within the German lands, to border regions, or beyond German national or linguistic borders.^[6] Similarly, the founding of Germany as a unified nation in 1871 did not necessarily cause other forms of belonging or social capital to lose significance. Even well into the 1900s, "national identity" was not the predominant lens through which many people saw the world.^[7] At the same time, however, we see that the idea of a culturally determined Germanness remained intact, even in cases of political upheaval, such as those surrounding the founding of Germany or the establishment of the Weimar Republic; gender or "race" helped uphold or even draw new boundaries on the inside and outside.

Altogether, the concept of Germanness has shifted fundamentally from the sixteenth century to today. At the same time, it also has a “twisted history” in the modern period, during which time it was “invented.” Many different historical actors have tried to steer and determine what Germanness means, and yet many divergent interpretations have still managed to coexist. For each time period, we aim to emphasize tensions and contradictions between opposing impulses and actions (inclusion and exclusion, or drawing and crossing boundaries), noting that shifts could occur depending on the context and who was involved. The sources featured in this module draw attention to the various considerations—textual, visual, material, spatial, aesthetic, physical, etc.—at play in negotiating Germanness and in establishing, granting, or denying this “status.” The whole collection should thus demonstrate that our approach is neither deterministic nor linear. At the same time, the collection should also make clear that certain patterns of interpretation, at least in the Late Modern period, were long-lived, or in fact never disappeared; and this meant that they could always be reappropriated, altered, and not only expanded but also narrowed. Ultimately, the question of whether or how to integrate which historical sources into a narrative—and what that narrative could be—has to be decided in each case on the basis of one’s chosen argument and approach to research.

Approach / Snapshot Structure

In terms of approach, we chose not to present the individual sources in a list; rather, we opted for so-called snapshots. Our module is divided into 49 snapshots, each of which addresses one topic and consists of 3-6 sources that reflect different perspectives or aim to achieve some sort of synthesis. Several snapshots examine important historical episodes and, in the process, highlight attendant conflicts and contradictions. Others cover longer historical processes and are more explorative in nature. Each individual snapshot includes a brief introduction. These introductory texts gave us an opportunity to explore how certain historical actors might have considered or deployed Germanness in the face of certain interests, or how the concept of Germanness could grow and be combined with other markers of identity. How and when are subjects, spaces, objects, norms, etc., seen as “German”—by whom, or for whom? The individual sources are also accompanied by short introductions; this ensures that each source is comprehensible on its own, even when it is accessed through the search function, a process that removes the sources from their “home” snapshot and recombines them with other sources in a list of search results. All of the snapshots include recommendations for further reading.

The entire Germanness module includes more than 200 sources (approximately 100 images, approximately 100 texts, and select audiovisual sources). While we sought to achieve an equal distribution of sources (and types of sources) across six centuries, we grappled with obvious limitations regarding the availability of photographic and audiovisual sources for the pre-twentieth century periods. As a result, some snapshots focus on texts, while others include a mix of materials. The snapshot approach necessarily limited the number of topics that we were able to cover, but the layout of the website helped compensate by allowing us to link snapshots or individual sources together, thereby creating new connections and entry-points. To create these networks, we developed keywords for the whole module, which we then applied to the snapshots and the individual sources as well. These keywords will also make it possible to connect all three *Intersections* modules with each other and ultimately with *German History in Documents and Images*. The three themes addressed in *Intersections*—Germanness, migration, and knowledge and education—are so closely connected in so many ways that some important topics have not been fully developed in our module because they are discussed in the other two. In general, we envision the *Intersections* project as a springboard for discussion, as an interactive endeavor that lends itself to ongoing development and further evolution.

Finally, it is important to note that our approach was shaped by the research interests and strengths of the

individual members of our four-person working group. Hence, readers will inevitably discover certain thematic gaps in our coverage. We hope, however, that such gaps will be compensated for by the extended consideration that we give to certain themes over multiple snapshots and even centuries (see next section). Areas of focus include: Germanness in the lands that became Germany, in Polish and border regions, in overseas colonies and diasporas, and in the Habsburg lands. The last example includes, for example, sources on the Los von Rom movement, the reaction of the Austrian press to the deportations of Poles from Germany in 1885-86, and the impact of the British introduction of the “Made in Germany” label. Whereas the module includes sources on well-known events (the issuance of the Golden Bull in 1356) and famous personalities (Otto von Bismarck and Angela Merkel), it also features lesser-known episodes and voices. Certain types of sources are not (yet) represented in this module, including comics^[8] and, somewhat ironically, websites. Nonetheless, we hope that the sources presented in this module will find broad application not only within history and German studies, but also across disciplines and fields of inquiry that are not specifically addressed here, including memory studies. Several snapshots, for example, problematize the instrumentalization of historical persons and events—whether the Nazis’ portrayal of Albrecht Dürer as the quintessential German artist or the competing versions of *Heimat* (and, by extension, Germanness) put forth by refugees and others in the postwar period.

Themes

Making Difference. Rather than viewing Germanness as static or essentializing, we understand Germanness as a continual process of difference-making. Germanness, in our conception, is not just about seeing oneself as German and others as not German; rather it also encompasses processes whereby people in German-speaking lands made—and make—differences amongst themselves without necessarily excluding those “others” from the community. Thus, the Augsburg Dress Code [*Kleiderordnung*] from 1530 detailed not only how men of various occupations were supposed to dress but also provided sartorial recommendations for their wives. Importantly, it also specified how Jews were to be distinguished, thus—perhaps—as non-Christian others.

Viewing Germanness not only in an ethnonational sense but also as a performance of difference allows us to see more areas as “German,” even when the subjects themselves did not think of either themselves or their actions as German. While mining has always been practiced around the world, the widespread dissemination of German-language specialist literature on mining in the Early Modern period made it seem particularly “German.” Whereas this association was positive, insofar as it was linked to technical expertise, others were negative. Martin Luther’s declaration of war on drinking alcohol, which he viewed as an especially pernicious habit in Germany, led to Germanness being associated with excess. A century later, during the Thirty Years’ War, tobacco consumption was added to the list of negative habits associated with German manhood.

Different wars in different centuries yielded new norms and practices that shed light on Germanness and the role of difference-making. During the Second World War, hundreds of thousands of Poles were put on the pathway to German citizenship, while Jews were slated for separation and eventual extermination. One source included in the snapshot “Constructing Germans in Total War” describes encounters between Polish Jews and a so-called *Volksdeutscher* (ethnic German) during the war; among other things, the source suggests that many Polish citizens willingly changed their loyalties during the German occupation and attempted to present themselves as “German.” Though their grasp of the German language and culture was weak, they nonetheless proved their Germanness by participating in National Socialism—and in the persecution of Jews.^[9]

Over the last five centuries, the process of difference-making was constantly contested, and Germanness was thus constantly in flux. In Imperial Germany, this emphasis on difference cut across political and class affiliations to reveal competing forms of Germanness, as with social democracy’s parallel workers’ world; at other times, the

competing forms of Germanness consolidated to reinforce religious, political, or commercial interests and create a hegemonic version of “being German,” as with Lutheranism during the Reformation or the “Made in Germany” rhetoric of the twentieth century. Viewing Germanness as a negotiation of difference thus gives more agency to historical actors, and a fluid understanding allows us to see how Germanness has changed over time.

Situation and Salience. Although the snapshots focus on revealing Germanness in difference-making, it does not necessarily follow that Germanness was the only, or even the foremost way in which the various actors defined themselves. To be sure, Germanness was significant in many instances, especially when it came to faith, marriage, profession, or politics, but it wasn’t “on” all or even most of the time. Our focus is not on those people who generally considered themselves “most German;” rather, we are more interested in examining the salient *moments* or *situations* in which people were forced to think of themselves as German, or at least as another kind of German. Such instances are documented in the sources on refugees—including ethnic Germans—who arrived in Germany after the Second World War. In many cases, the demonization of these migrant newcomers by the “natives” reached the point of racialization, a process that would repeat itself after the reunification of Germany in 1990.

Such salient moments were common when it came to Germany’s (sometimes) eastern neighbor, Poland, which features in several snapshots. In Imperial Germany, the perceived threat of a flood of Polish newcomers led to the mass deportation of Polish migrant laborers in the 1880s. The Reichstag’s censure of Bismarck’s policy toward the Poles and the related political posturing over who could best protect Germany’s national interest was watched around the world. During the interwar period, Germany’s various ideas for old/new eastern borders threatened the fledgling Polish state. Fast-forward to the 2000s and we see Germany evoked as a *Feindbild* (i.e. bogeyman) in Polish domestic politics.

At times, voices from outside the German-speaking lands can provide important insights into “being German.” W. E. B. Du Bois, the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University, spent two years in Berlin (1892-1894) during his doctoral studies. There, in the seat of the German monarchy, Du Bois experienced a sense of freedom that he did not feel in the American republic. Yet such exceptional cases do not necessarily prove which country was more democratic or less racist—as an American graduate student, Du Bois possessed a certain social and economic status that set him apart from many Germans—and many Africans under German colonial rule. Still, the extraordinary and situation-specific circumstances of Du Bois provide an excellent case study for the limits and possibilities of “being German” and “being in Germany” at the turn of the twentieth century.^[10]

Drawing, Crossing, Shifting Boundaries. Although transnationalism as a concept has become increasingly prevalent in recent research on modernity, we chose a different conceptual framework for our module: drawing and crossing boundaries. The choice made sense, because it allowed us to consider processes that played out in both the Early and Late Modern periods. Creating Germanness and negotiating difference often meant drawing, crossing, shifting, or even eliminating boundaries. That some borders were viewed as changeable or transgressable, whereas others were “hard” or non-negotiable, is evident throughout the whole period under consideration. Some of these boundaries were spatial. Early Modern maps or representations of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation point to the changing meanings of spatial concepts of order, as do portrayals of forests as “German” spaces. Travelogues brought boundary crossings and demarcated spaces into sharp focus, either uniting or dividing; this held true whether the encounters occurred outside of Europe in the Early Modern period or in German-French, German-Polish, or German-colonial (or non-European) “contact zones” in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus, “far” did not automatically mean “foreign” when European elites met their social counterparts in Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Early modern travelers tended not to see themselves primarily as German. That was because authors of German-language travelogues about other civilizations generally travelled as

missionaries, explorers, mercenaries, or diplomats under foreign patronage, since the states of the Holy Roman Empire did not participate in pan-European colonial policy or power diplomacy.^[11] For the Late Modern period, too, it is instructive to consider the ways in which the conception of a given boundary could change; the Rhine, for instance, was understood as part of a common border region well into the nineteenth century. It only gradually became a symbol of division between Germany and France.^[12]

Here again, religious or linguistic boundaries were profoundly important in how people saw and understood themselves. First-person accounts from the Thirty Years' War, such as the report by soldier Peter Hagendorf, showed how experiential spaces shaped by confessional conflicts and violence, as well as the experience of traveling and crossing spatial and linguistic boundaries, became integral aspects of forging a sense of self. Linguistic borders played an important role, too, mostly starting in the late eighteenth century, when the new educated elites defined Germanness, among other things, through language and sought to distinguish themselves from the Frenchified German nobility by elevating *Hochdeutsch*, as a shared language, over the various regional dialects, and by "purifying" it from "foreign," especially French, terminology. But the bond of language, however powerful, did not prevent those Germans who went abroad during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from adamantly disagreeing among themselves when it came to politics or religion. Furthermore, defining themselves as German in terms of language and culture did not prevent them from integrating into their new homelands.^[13]

Boundaries of an ethnicizing or racializing nature (racializing) have yet a different character. They also pose special challenges, not least because the relevant terminology differs across time and language. For example, the term *Rasse* as it was used in the interwar period in Germany after 1918 does not align with the way that "race" is used in English-language scholarship today.^[14] That applies even more so for earlier periods. Accordingly, the snapshot "Races' and Civilizations in the Eighteenth Century" focuses less on "race" than on various categories used to signify difference. Still, a racializing of difference occurred when individuals combined aesthetic, ethical, emotional, and cognitive traits with corporeal markers to establish a hierarchy of peoples and civilizations, or when gender and ethnic stereotypes were marshalled to naturalize and essentialize difference.

The unique character of ethnicizing or racializing boundaries means that colonial fantasies, from the late eighteenth century onward, had far-reaching consequences that are not always easy to grasp, because they often remained unspoken. Contemporaries defined Germanness as white long before the formal beginning of German colonialism in the 1880s, so that a racialized demarcation was already inscribed into Germans' self-image from the very start of the colonial project.^[15] When individual markers of identity are combined, the effect is not merely additive; rather, they build on each other or cause shifts.^[16] In modern gender thinking, femininity was subordinated to the construct of masculinity. In colonial power relations, however, belonging to the "white" colonial nation meant that German women were potentially superior to all the native-born residents of the colonized countries. In German culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Germanness was denied to Jewish Germans, although—or perhaps precisely because—they had contributed so much to German cultural life. In doing so, Jewish Germans had shined a light on a religious/cultural boundary that had been crossed, as opposed to a religious boundary that had been drawn. To be sure, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed an apparent increase in legal, political, and social equality between Germans of Jewish and Christian origin, at least in the upper classes. But if some perceptible differences between Jewish Germans and Christian Germans began disappearing, then Christian Germans compensated, in equal measure, by asserting an alleged essential difference that no conversion could remedy.^[17] One snapshot on National Socialism shows that convinced National Socialists performatively established their self-image as German, in the sense of being non-Jewish, by playing "Jews" in carnival parades, among other things, in order to be able to mark them as different. Tragically, the framework of Germanness and Jewishness as incompatible was also present among eastern European Jews,

and during the Holocaust the long-standing divide between German Jews and Eastern Jews [*Ostjuden*] could determine one's chances for survival. Beginning in the fall of 1941, tens of thousands of German Jews were deported from Germany to the East because they were, for the Nazi regime, alien to the German people. Yet the twenty-thousand western European Jews who arrived in occupied Poland soon discovered that their "Germanness" (even if they were not actually from Germany) led to their ostracization from the Polish Jews.^[18] The hard border between Germanness and Jewishness remained: One could be seen as not German enough and too German at the same time, or seen the other way around, as at once too Jewish and not Jewish enough.

Inventing Traditions. Historical memory plays an important role in Germanness, albeit primarily in the Late Modern period. Here again, religion offers an excellent case study. In the Early Modern period, religion provided the basic perceptual framework for structuring a worldview and situating or locating oneself and others in it; this became even more pronounced in the wake of confessionalization. During the nationalizing wave that swept through Imperial Germany after 1870-71, Germany's culture of remembrance liked to suggest that the only genuine German history was a Protestant one.^[19] The practice of inventing traditions and constructing historical memory encompassed not only religion but also the arts, underscoring the crucial role played by aesthetics and individual art forms, such as music or painting, in the projection and negotiation of Germanness. In the sixteenth century, the painter and master printmaker Albrecht Dürer enjoyed such renown that he was able to recast Nuremberg, his city of residence, as the seat of all art north of the Alps; and in doing so, he also influenced the whole perception of Nuremberg as an imperial city. His influence, moreover, extended far beyond his lifetime, not least because of his role in shaping historical and cultural memory from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. Above all, it was ardent National Socialists who appropriated Dürer's work to consecrate or lend historical credence to their interpretation of Germanness and to insert Hitler into a long line of "great Germans" stretching back over centuries. The modern "invention of traditions" (Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger) thus also included projecting Germanness back into time periods when it did not exist in the modern sense. In the nineteenth century, history painting was one of the artistic arenas in which contemporary artists transformed military and political leaders of the past into "great men" and "German heroes" who "created" the nation through war. A painting of Napoleon III on the battlefield at Sedan, the site of his 1870 defeat and capture, thus served as a counterpoint, as it were, and an opportunity to present Bismarck and the elder Helmuth von Moltke as the founding fathers of the German Empire, thus promoting war-oriented politics above the traditional democratic line in Germany. Finally, West German *Heimat*-films of the 1950s experimented, on an aesthetic level, with nature and music to generate associative patterns that evoked a "German homeland" unblemished by National Socialism.

Heimat. The construction of *Heimat* (a kind of mythical homeland), is among those key aspects of the invention of tradition that have exercised a particularly lasting influence in the Late Modern period. While locality has always played an important role throughout history, it was used by nationalists in the nineteenth century to introduce the nation as an extension of the town.^[20] In the lands that became modern Germany, the idea of a transcendental *Heimat* was particularly useful in overcoming centuries of *Kleinstaaterei* (particularism or small-state mentality) that had been nurtured within the Holy Roman Empire. During the March Revolution of 1848, Hoffmann von Fallersleben's "Lied der Deutschen" ["Song of the Germans"] aimed to elevate the image of one Germany above regional particularisms, as is examined in the snapshot "Nationalizing Anthems." After all, cute village houses with white window frames and tidy flower beds in the front yard were not necessarily unique to Germany and could just as easily be found in Brazil, Namibia, or the Ukraine. German immigrants to the United States recreated their own sense of Germanness (especially modesty) in relation to what they perceived as American values. Germans abroad, whether they had migrated for economic or political reasons, (re)created Germanness and *Heimat* anywhere and everywhere they found themselves.^[21]

Yet the nationalized *Heimat* could quickly become small again. The violence and turbulence of the Late Modern period meant genocide for Germany's victims but also displacement for millions of Germans. The suspicion of those without roots, previously cast upon Jews, now befell (albeit in less extreme form) the German-speaking expellees who arrived in established communities in eastern and western Germany. Those expulsions had a long legacy, and the resulting marginalization lasted for generations, as can be heard in the nostalgia of Alexandra's music or the hurt in Heinz Rudolf Kunze's songs. *Heimat* and its loss eventually became a topic for some seventeen million East Germans in the former GDR who lost their country overnight. These stationary migrants may not have mourned the demise of the GDR at first. But subsequent disappointments resulting from economic disparities and cultural-social disparagement turned into wistful reimaginations of the past in which East Germans inhabited a viable *Heimat*. This was shown by the immense popular success of the movie *Goodbye Lenin*, one very influential manifestation of *Ostalgie* (literally nostalgia for the East). After all, what is a German without a *Heimat*?

Such questions about *Heimat* are not just polemical; rather, they are also about power and can be easily instrumentalized politically. After all, who gives whom permission to be German? The essentialization of *Heimat*, for example, is regularly used in debates about German *Leitkultur* (the notion of a leading or dominant culture). The many migrants currently living in Germany tend to concentrate in neighborhoods that do not qualify as *Heimat*, nor do these spaces offer a ticket to Germanness—in contrast to German overseas communities, which somehow still remain “German” after several generations of assimilation. Indeed, Germany's immigrant neighborhoods often feel like occupation zones with constant police surveillance and increased brutality, as rap music by Fler and Bushido suggests. Other musical groups, such as MIA, yearn for a new, more positive relationship to Germany. For writer Henryk M. Broder, who has Polish roots, *Heimat* is too restrictive: his Jewish background has made him feel unwelcome at times in both countries.

Normalizing Patriotism(s). Germanness is deeply tied to debates about the individual's relationship to the state, a relationship that took many forms both diachronically and synchronically. Given Germany's late development as a European power, national proponents felt that Germany deserved to be treated like any other “normal” country, making it acceptable for Germans to have a respectable dose of patriotism. In Imperial Germany, Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow advocated for Germany's “place in the sun,” arguing that a country of Germany's economic stature was entitled to commensurate military force and the possession of an overseas colonial empire. In the 1920s, Adolf Hitler instrumentalized Germans' sense of collective denigration in the wake of the wartime defeat in 1918 and the Versailles Treaty and promised to restore German dignity. German patriotisms remained pertinent during the Cold War, although these were also embedded in discourses of achieving normality—which was of considerable significance for a society that had lost two world wars and was divided in two (having already lost significant territory further east). In the postwar period, both East and West Germany were dependent on their respective benefactor-states; in terms of foreign policy, both were embedded in multilateral coalitions. Domestically, both states tried to deliver a high level of social services. Convergence of the two systems, not divergence, seems to be the trend in hindsight.^[22] Although West German leaders were proud of their social market economy, they mostly remained a quiet partner in NATO and the European Economic Community. East German officials tried to instill loyalty to the state through various practices, be it the *Jugendweihe* (a kind of secular confirmation or coming-of-age ceremony) or the glorification of sports heroes. Yet debates about which Germany was more normal, less warmongering, and “better” (i.e., which one had more successfully dealt with the Nazi past) could not have been more heated.

After reunification in 1989/90, Germany seemed “normal” once again. At the time, Germans were mostly preoccupied with domestic issues or with the European Union's plans for monetary unification and eastward

expansion. In the 1990s, political sensitivities vis-à-vis neighboring countries and xenophobic violence at home made it difficult for many Germans to feel attached to the state, although many took a deep pride in purportedly German values intertwined with the social market system. But the wars in the former Yugoslavia and the terrorist attacks of 9/11 brought changes to the international order that disrupted traditional military alliances, causing confusion about appropriate levels of military intervention—a particularly fraught issue given the country's past. At the same time, the curtailing of certain social welfare benefits began to strain Germans' attachment to the state, since pride in supporting a generous welfare system is a major component of Germans' collective self-awareness. Finally, the growing multiethnic makeup of German society has challenged hegemonic discourse about German values, as the snapshots on contemplating war, on *Leitkultur*, and defining patriotism make clear.

Conclusion

Treating Germanness as a space of negotiation offers one way of addressing certain historical outcomes in need of further consideration. How Germanness is defined and ascribed has changed over time, sometimes being open and contingent, at other times closed and “sticky.” As stated previously, our intention was not to create particular narratives within this module. Instead, we have assembled various sources that invite juxtaposition in the hopes of promoting open discussion as opposed to closed arguments. Readers should be able to access these sources in various configurations within this module, within the *German History Intersections* project as a whole, and eventually in conjunction with *German History in Documents and Images*. The featured sources represent a starting point and should be used together with other online sources, print editions, and of course original archival materials. We hope that scholars and teachers alike will find in this module the tools and the *Anregung* (impetus) to understand how Germanness was perceived—and contested—at different points in history, in different situations, and by different Germans.

NOTES

[1] Neil Gregor gestured toward this basic conclusion in his review of Sabine Mecking and Yvonne Wasserloos, eds., *Inklusion & Exklusion: “Deutsche” Musik in Europa und Nordamerika 1848–1945* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2016), in *German History* 35, no. 3 (2017), pp. 455–56. Referencing one of the book's chapters, he noted that certain ascriptions of “Germanness” were “always at the centre of a field of open debate” and not “a point of settled consensus.”

[2] We are also aware that the chosen terminology of periods and periodization might reflect a Eurocentrism that is often inherent in historiographic concepts themselves. Likewise, it is worth emphasizing that sources produced from Eurocentric perspectives can in turn reproduce those same perspectives. Unfortunately, this is something that we were unable to avoid.

[3] For a general introduction to the Early Modern period, see Paul Münch, *Lebensformen in der frühen Neuzeit. 1500 bis 1800* (Berlin: Ullstein Buchverlage, 1998); Münch, *Das Jahrhundert des Zwiespalts. Deutschland 1600–1700* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1999); and Euan Cameron, ed., *Early Modern Europe: An Oxford History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). The question of how early a national consciousness is detectable remains controversial. On the German nation and German identity in the Early Modern period, see Georg Schmidt, ed. *Die deutsche Nation im frühneuzeitlichen Europa. Politische Ordnung und kulturelle Identität?* (Munich: Historisches Kolleg, 2010); Caspar Hirschi, *Wettkampf der Nationen. Konstruktionen einer deutschen Ehrgemeinschaft an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005).

[4] On the nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Helmut Walser Smith, *The Continuities of German History. Nation, Religion, and Race across the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For the postwar period, see Rita Chin, Heide Fehrenbach, Geoff Eley, and Atina

Grossman, eds., *After the Nazi Racial State. Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009).

[5] On regions, see James Retallack, ed., *Saxony in German History. Culture, Society, and Politics, 1830–1933* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

[6] Levke Harders, "Migration und Biographie. Mobile Leben beschreiben," in *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 29, no. 3 (2018), pp. 17–36, also on the theoretical approach of intersectionality in English- and German-speaking research.

[7] On national indifference, see Tara Zahra, "Imagined Non-Communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69 (Spring 2010), pp. 93–119.

[8] One example would be: Birgit Weyhe, *Madgermanes* (Berlin: Avant-Verlag, 2016). She describes the experiences and recollections of former contract workers from Mozambique in the German Democratic Republic.

[9] Doris L. Bergen, "The Nazi Concept of 'Volksdeutsche' and the Exacerbation of Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, 1939–45," *Journal of Contemporary History* 29, no. 4 (1994), pp. 569–82.

[10] Kenneth Barkin, "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Kaiserreich," *Central European History* 31, no. 3 (September 1998), pp. 155–70.

[11] Jürgen Osterhammel, "Reisen an die Grenzen der Alten Welt. Asien im Reisebericht des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Der Reisebericht. Die Entwicklung einer Gattung in der deutschen Literatur*, edited by Peter J. Brenner (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), pp. 224–60, here p. 229. See also Antje Flüchter, "Transethnic Unions in Early Modern Travel Literature," in *Mixed Matches. Transgressive Unions in Germany from the Reformation to the Enlightenment*, edited by David M. Luedtke and Mary Lindemann (New York: Berghahn, 2014), pp. 150–65.

[12] Bernhard Struck, *Nicht West-nicht Ost. Frankreich und Polen in der Wahrnehmung deutscher Reisender zwischen 1750 und 1850* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006). Germany's eastern borders after 1918 were supposed to be impassable for immigrants from Eastern Europe, whereas Germans were allowed to cross them eastward. For more on this, see Annemarie Sammartino, *The Impossible Border. Germany and the East, 1914–1922* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 2010.

[13] H. Glenn Penny and Stefan Rinke, "Germans Abroad: Respatializing Historical Narrative," in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 41 (2015), pp. 173–96; Franka Bindernagel, *Deutschsprachige Migranten in Buenos Aires. Geteilte Erinnerungen und umkämpfte Geschichtsbilder 1919–1932* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2018); and Stefan Manz, *Constructing a German Diaspora. The "Greater German Empire," 1871–1914* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

[14] Mark Roseman, "Racial Discourse, Nazi Violence, and the Limits of the Racial State Model," in *Beyond the Racial State: Rethinking Nazi Germany*, edited by Devin O. Pendas, Mark Roseman, and Richard F. Wetzell (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 33–34.

[15] Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies. Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

[16] Patricia Hill Collins, Valerie Chepp, "Intersectionality," in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 58–87.

[17] Uffa Jensen, *Gebildete Doppelgänger. Bürgerliche Juden und Protestanten im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

[18] Avraham Barkai, "Between East and West: Jews from Germany in the Lodz Ghetto," *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984), pp. 271–332.

[19] On Catholics' distant stance toward Sedan Day (and toward the border issue more generally), see David Blackbourn and James Retallack, "Introduction," in *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place. German-speaking Central Europe, 1860–1930*, edited by David Blackbourn and James Retallack (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

[20] Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials. The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

[21] Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin, eds., *The Heimat Abroad. The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), p. 1.

[22] The convergence of policies in the American-dominated "First World" and the Soviet-led "Second World" with respect to science, migrant workers, and the environment has been explored in work on the so-called "atomic cities" where plutonium was manufactured. See Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

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