

prime minister Appointed by the French president and approved by the majority of the lower house of the legislature to select a cabinet and preside over the day-to-day affairs of government.

Rally for the French Republic (RPR) Formed by Jacques Chirac as the more nationalist, socially conservative, EU-skeptic force of the French right.

regime Norms and rules that govern politics.

Reign of Terror Seizure of power and class war launched by radical Jacobins in revolutionary France (1793–1794).

Sarkozy, Nicolas President of France since 2007.

semi-presidential A legislative-executive system that shares political power among the legislature, a directly elected president, and a prime minister responsible to both the president and the legislature.

Sénat France's 321-member upper house of legislature.

Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) A single cohesive party of the center-right formed in 2002 with Chirac's encouragement.

Union for French Democracy (UDF) An alliance of five center-right parties founded in 1978 by Chirac's rival and former president Giscard d'Estaing as a more neo-liberal force of the French right.

WEB LINKS

Assemblée nationale www.assemblee-nat.fr

Constitutional Council www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr

Information on national, regional, and local governments

www.politicalresources.net/france3.htm

Ministry of Foreign Affairs www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en

Le Monde diplomatique mondediplo.com

President www.elysee.fr/elysee

Prime Minister premier-ministre.gouv.fr/en

5 GERMANY

Head of state: President Horst Koehler
(since July 1, 2004)

Head of government:
Chancellor Angela Merkel
(since November 22, 2005)

Capital: Berlin

Total land size: 357,021 sq km

Population: 82 million

GDP at PPP: \$2.81 trillion US\$

GDP per capita at PPP: \$34,200

Human development index rankings: 22



GERMANY

INTRODUCTION

Why Study This Case?

Germany commands a prominent position in the world and a pivotal position in Europe. It is the world's largest exporting nation, Europe's biggest economy, the European Union's most populous country, and an integral member of Europe's economic, political, and security organizations. Situated in the heart of the Continent, Germany today in many ways typifies the political, social, and cultural values and institutions of Europe and offers a useful window into understanding the political institutions and public policies shared broadly by many of its European neighbors. By and large, Germans embrace social democratic political and economic values, champion postmaterialist concerns for the environment and the pursuit of leisure, and vigorously promote European integration even as they seek to enhance the competitiveness of Germany's capitalist economy and to strengthen its national security. But in other fundamental ways, Germany sits apart from its European neighbors and poses interesting puzzles for the comparative political scientist.

Unlike many of its western and northern European counterparts, the German state is federal; sovereignty and nationhood came very late to Germany. The modern institution of the nation-state finds its origin in Europe, in no small part with the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which affirmed the principle of national sovereignty at the end of Europe's bloody Thirty Years' War. But even though this treaty was inked on German soil, it would take another 220 years before a German nation-state was established. Once forged in the nineteenth century, German nationalism took on powerful and ultimately virulent and destructive force in the twentieth century at the hands of Nazi fascists. The disastrous consequences of this hypernationalism led the allies who defeated Germany to divide the nation in 1945, a division perpetuated for over three decades by the cold war. Despite reunification of East and West Germany in 1990, many Germans today remain hesitant to promote nationalism and are among Europe's strongest advocates of greater European integration and the European Union. Although it can claim a thoroughly Western and European heritage, German modernization in many ways better resembles the experience of Japan than that of Britain, France, or the United States. Germany is a latecomer to both modern capitalism and democracy, with both imposed externally.

The very successes of German industrialization, democratization after World War II, and peaceful reunification have left the country uncertain about

its own future. Globalization poses new challenges to Germany's vaunted welfare state. Immigration has raised old questions about race and national identity; the end of the cold war changed Germany's role as a linchpin of East-West relations; the expansion of the European Union eastward has weakened the central role that the country historically played in the organization. Germany remains a major power, but its role in the post-cold war international system seems muted, a reflection of a country still troubled by its past and uncertain what responsibilities it must shoulder in the future.

Major Geographic and Demographic Features

With an area slightly smaller than Montana or Japan, even reunified Germany cannot be considered large on a global scale. But its substantial population (over 80 million), economic vitality, and location in the heart of Europe have placed it at the center of European affairs for many centuries. German topography has enhanced this centrality. Situated on the plains of Northern Europe, it shares contiguous borders with nine European countries. With the exception of the Alps to the south and the Baltic and North Seas to the north, Germany possesses no natural boundaries. Unlike England, Japan, or even France, which relied upon natural barriers to offer protection from foreign predators and to create a strong sense of national identity, Germany found itself externally vulnerable and internally divided. This central location, accessibility, and internal incoherence meant that many of Europe's conflicts over the centuries were carried out on German soil and that Germans, unlike the British or Americans, did not have the luxury to remain aloof from the military and political affairs that surrounded and too often engulfed them. This predation by foreign armies only perpetuated Germany's continued political disunity, its sense of vulnerability, and its propensity for military preparedness.

Often the victim of foreign affairs, the German state, once it finally achieved political unity and military capacity in the nineteenth century, took its defense into its own hands and at times engaged in aggressive expansion. A lack of natural resources—with much of Germany's coal, iron, and some of its most productive farmland located in disputed border regions—also inspired German imperialism and military aggression as a means of obtaining resources. The German empire's late nineteenth century "scramble for Africa" and Nazi Germany's call for *lebensraum* (living space) were justified in these terms. This same sense of vulnerability and the bitter lessons learned from nearly a century of aggression have also propelled postwar German overtures for European integration. Just as Germans in the nineteenth century recognized that German safety and interests were well served by unification, Germans in the postwar era have concluded that German and European security and prosperity are well served by the peaceful integration of Europe.

The absence of geographical barriers also encouraged the migration of Germans and the diffusion of German culture into surrounding regions over time. These German migrants spread the German language and culture well beyond the boundaries of what now constitutes Germany. What at times became bitter conflicts over disputed territories with France (Alsace-Lorraine), Denmark (Schleswig), Czechoslovakia (Sudetenland), and Poland (Silesia) stem in no small part from the diffusion of ethnic groups and rival claims to these border regions.¹ The absence of natural borders has also meant that language, physical characteristics, and shared cultural values have been more important national markers in Germany than elsewhere, a cultural theme enhanced and elaborated by German intellectuals over the centuries. Although it now hosts Europe's largest immigrant population, Germany proper today remains quite homogeneous. Over 90 percent of the population is ethnically German, with ethnic Turks making up 2.5 percent and the remaining 6 percent a variety of other European nationalities.

Historical Development of the State

The economic, social, and political forces that swept modernization through much of Western Europe trickled far more slowly into the region that we now know as Germany. National unity, industrialization, and democracy all came later to Germany than to its Western European neighbors. Scholars agree that this relative backwardness profoundly shaped the German state. In France and England, feudalism gave way to states centralized by absolute monarchies that established standardized legal and administrative systems and fostered a coherent sense of nationalism. By contrast, national sovereignty and a centralized state eluded Germany until the nineteenth century. Although the German state was long in coming, once established it loomed very large in Germany's rush to modernize.² As the idea of a German nation became institutionalized in a sovereign state, this unity born of national identity had powerful force. Centuries of decentralization and disunity gave way to intense periods of authoritarian militarism and mercantilism, first under the leadership of the state of Prussia in the late nineteenth century and then again under Nazi direction in the 1930s and 1940s. This relatively late unification and catch-up economic development meant that development of the state preceded industrialization, fostering state-led mercantilist development and authoritarianism.

Relative backwardness also placed Germany behind in the race for colonies and raw materials to feed industrialization, which fostered a voracious and aggressive imperialism that led ultimately to the **Third Reich** (empire), fascist Nazi expansionism, and military defeat. As a democratic and decentralized federal state no longer plagued by disunity, postwar Germany vigorously promoted European integration and pursued a costly program of complete

TIME LINE OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Year	Event
800-900 C.E.	Loose confederation of German principalities forms Holy Roman Empire; later known as the First Reich
1871	Otto von Bismarck unifies Germany; later dubbed Second Reich
1918	Germany defeated in World War I
1919	Weimar Republic formed under difficult conditions
1933	Hitler and Nazis rise to power, establishing the Third Reich
1945	Hitler and Nazis defeated in World War II
1945-49	Germany divided among allies into four occupied zones
1948	Berlin blockade and airlift
1949	Founding of Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the west and German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the east
1952	FRG joins European Coal and Steel Community
1955	FRG joins NATO, and GDR joins Warsaw Pact
1957	FRG participates in founding of European Economic Community
1961	Construction of the Berlin Wall
1969	FRG Chancellor Willy Brandt launches policy of Ostpolitik
1989	Fall of the Berlin Wall
1990	Germany unified with GDR incorporated into FRG
1993	Germany becomes a founding member of the European Union

German unification. As the original German and French architects of integration hoped, the success of the former effort has largely tempered fears that a reunified Germany would pursue militarist expansionism or any undue unilateral political influence.

THE ABSENCE OF A STRONG CENTRAL STATE DURING THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE, 800-1806

Charlemagne founded what came to be known as the Holy Roman Empire in western and central Europe in 800 C.E. By the middle of the ninth century, a collection of German, Austrian, and Czech princes acquired nominal control

of this loosely constituted empire, or **reich**. A feudal empire, it consisted of an odd assortment of hundreds of principalities, city-states, and other local political entities with varying degrees of autonomy and legitimacy, but there was virtually no allegiance to the center. This weak confederation waxed and waned in size and influence over the next thousand years, persisting until the time of Napoleon in the nineteenth century. Whereas comparable feudalism gave way to centralized states in England and France, the Holy Roman Empire remained politically disunited.

The empire took political form with the office of a weak emperor, which rotated among princes, and the imperial *Reichstag*, or, congress. This precursor of the contemporary German parliament began as a royal court composed of prominent princes and dukes who met irregularly to elect the emperor. By the fifteenth century, the Reichstag had become slightly more representative, with lesser princes and free cities also seated. However, the dominant princes, lesser princes, and urban representatives met in separate bodies, which made the Reichstag more divided, weaker, and less representative than its British counterpart. Indeterminate boundaries, centuries of entrenched localism, and mutual suspicions and prejudices among these localities hampered any efforts of unification.

Although religion had earlier served an important role in unifying much of Europe under the banner of Christianity, by the sixteenth century it too had become a divisive force within the Holy Roman Empire in the form of the Protestant Reformation. In 1517, the German monk and professor Martin Luther publicly displayed his writ of complaints about certain Catholic practices and doctrines. Among many other significant outcomes, this revolt split the previously religiously unified Holy Roman Empire and its German core. This religious divide took on political significance, leading to separate and often competing state churches in German locales, giving new sources of legitimacy to these local chieftains and additional justification for resisting unification. The Reformation also touched off the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), a religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants that was fought largely on German soil. For reasons beyond religion, the protracted war came to envelope most of Europe before ending with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This settlement affirmed the sovereignty of local political entities, thereby preserving decentralized German authority and further weakening the Holy Roman Empire.

THE UNIFICATION OF THE GERMAN STATE. THE RISE OF PRUSSIA. AND THE SECOND REICH, 1806–1918

Napoleon's invasion of Germany in 1806 effectively destroyed the empire, inadvertently began the process of German unification, and unleashed the forces of German nationalism that would ultimately lead to the rise of Nazi

fascism. Napoleon's offensive wiped out many of the empire's sovereign principalities (there were some 300 at the time) and compelled others to merge with their larger neighbors for protection. Ultimately, only **Prussia** to the east and Austria to the south were strong enough to resist Napoleon's onslaught and avoid inclusion in the confederation of defeated territories formed by Napoleon. After his defeat in 1815, German allies under Prussian leadership set up a loose confederation of some forty sovereign mini-states that formed for the first time the semblance of a German state.

Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the kingdom of Prussia in eastern Germany gradually acquired the autonomy, capacity, and legitimacy that allowed it to emerge as a viable core for a modern German state. A series of generally enlightened monarchs established an authoritarian state administered by an efficient and loyal bureaucratic staff, supported by a conservative and wealthy landed aristocracy known as **Junkers**, and defended by a large and well-trained standing army. (Voltaire once commented that "while some states have an army, the Prussian army has a state.") As important as the state's monopoly on violence was its mercantilist promotion of economic growth through the development of national infrastructure, the expansion of education among its subjects, and the enhancement of trade. Prussia established a customs union with neighboring German states that by 1834 included all but Austria. This highly capable and autonomous state managed to defend itself from aggressors, expand its territory, grow its economy, and thereby enhance its legitimacy beyond Prussia as it successfully competed with Austria for ascendancy in unifying Germany.

This unification was not accompanied by greater liberalization in the political regime, which can be explained in part by the relative weakness of Germany's commercial and industrial middle class. Much as in China during the early twenty-first century, the educated and intellectual elite of nineteenth-century German society comprised fewer merchants and entrepreneurs and more bureaucrats, judges, and professors largely employed by the state. Though modern in their thinking and in many ways even liberal in their outlook, this portion of society saw the state (in their hands) as a positive and essential instrument in building German national unity, wealth, and power. German intellectuals argued that individual freedom was a luxury or indeed a weakness not fit for the forging of German national identity. It would be militarist and mercantilist "blood and iron," not liberal elections, that would unify Germany.

By the 1860s, Prussia had forceful and capable leadership, a powerful military, and a growing industrial economy. Impressive war victories over Denmark, Austria, and ultimately France drew other German states into the cause and led in 1871 to the establishment of a national German empire, or what came to be known as the Second Reich. Although the Prussian king was

crowned emperor of all Germany, the key figure in the process of expansion and unification was Count Otto von Bismarck, prime minister, or chancellor, of Prussia. A politician, military officer, and member of the Junker landed class, he led a so-called revolution from above in which regime change came not from the lower disenfranchised classes, but rather from an alliance of iron and rye—that is, between the industrialists and the landed aristocracy. Through the savvy use of diplomacy, war, and political machinations, the Iron Chancellor—as he came to be known—dominated German politics for two decades and brought about the first unified modern German state.

Not surprisingly, unified Germany's first national constitution established an authoritarian monarchy with only the trappings of liberal democracy. Sovereignty remained vested in the emperor, or *Kaiser* (derived from the Latin Caesar), and political power flowed from him. Although the constitution established a federal structure in which all of the states were to have equal influence (a nod to the long-standing regional autonomy of the German states), it ensured the dominance of Prussia by mandating that the Prussian prime minister would always become imperial chancellor. Similarly, although the constitution gave nominal deference to the notion of political equality (thus addressing the demands of the small but growing liberal middle class) by granting universal male suffrage for elections to the *Reichstag* (national parliament), it retained aristocratic privilege in Prussian state elections. In addition, the imperial chancellor, the bureaucracy, and the military answered only to the emperor as head of state, not the constitution. The emperor appointed the imperial chancellor, and the Reichstag could not dismiss the government. The emperor, chancellor, and their unelected administrators controlled foreign affairs and the military.

The Iron Chancellor took no chances that the constitution's nominal democratic allowances would get in the way of his force-draft modernization drive. Bismarck bullied or circumvented the Reichstag in those few areas it did have some authority (such as the budget). He encouraged the creation of multiple political parties and then skillfully played them off of each other. Through the promotion of patriotism and German culture and the expansion of national wealth and empire, Bismarck enhanced the popularity and legitimacy of his authoritarian rule. The core of this support remained the landed gentry, military, and industrial elite, but the middle and lower classes were "largely swept along" by growing prosperity and appeals to national pride as Germany's international stature grew.³ Groups opposing his authoritarian rule (including Catholics, liberals, social democrats, and Marxists) were met at times with coercion and other times cooptation. This policy of an "iron fist in a velvet glove" kept the peace through the deft use of both violence and the granting of social welfare benefits, such as health insurance and old-age pensions.

But if democracy found infertile ground in modernizing Prussia, catch-up

industrialization proved much more successful. In 1890, Bismarck was eased out of office, and Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II assumed personal control, continuing the policy of rapid industrialization and imperialist expansion. By the early twentieth century, Germany had surpassed Britain in iron production and had become a leading industrial power. Society became more complex as both the middle and working classes grew in size and political strength, with the socialist movement capturing one third of German votes by 1912. As socialist opposition grew, some traditional sectors of German society, such as small capitalists and landed aristocrats, embraced nationalism and anti-Semitism.

German patriotism, however, prevailed over these social divisions and differences. Frustrations associated with Germany's efforts to expand its empire and suspicions about the intentions of its neighbors stoked feelings of nationalism and unfulfilled destiny and contributed to German willingness to bring about World War I (1914–1917). But as the war pressed on and took a particularly heavy toll on Germany, these differences once again rose to the surface. Political liberals, Catholics, and others began to question openly why they lent their support to an authoritarian government waging war against countries that provided their citizens democratic rights. Workers wondered why they could fight and die but not have an equal vote in the parliament. As the war ground to its bitter conclusion, the emperor made assurances of reform, but these promises offered too little and came too late. German defeat in 1918 combined with urban uprisings prompted the emperor to abdicate and proclaim Germany a republic.

POLITICAL POLARIZATION AND THE BREAKDOWN OF DEMOCRACY DURING THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC, 1919–1933

The political vacuum that followed the collapse of the Second Reich proved to be particularly infertile ground for the establishment of Germany's first republic. One scholar concluded that with radical Communists on the left, reactionary monarchists and militarists on the right, and no historical experience with liberal democracy, German society could claim "virtually no republicans."⁴ No one was prepared for the sudden departure of the emperor, and few had considered how Germany ought to be constituted as a republic with no monarchy. The seeds of cynicism and elitism sown in this era would grow into the extremism and fascist totalitarianism that would spell the republic's doom in less than two decades.

In the face of these and other difficulties, politicians met in the city of Weimar in 1918 to draft a constitution. Promisingly, the majority of socialists retreated from their revolutionary goals and participated in the process. The **Weimar Republic** featured a remarkably democratic constitution that offered universal suffrage for all adults (ahead of both Britain and the United States), universal health insurance and pensions, and the right to employment

or unemployment compensation. Drafters of the constitution looked to the British parliamentary system as a model, retaining a bicameral parliament with a strong, popularly elected lower house (*Reichstag*) and a weaker upper chamber (*Reichsrat*) representing the states. But they mistakenly saw the British monarch as the key to the system's stability and replaced the German kaiser with a strong president, a measure that would ultimately doom the republic. This resulted in a dual executive, semi-presidential system (similar to the current Russian and French systems) in which the president as head of state was directly and popularly elected, could nominate the chancellor as head of government, and could rule through emergency decree under threatening circumstances.

The Weimar Republic also adopted a proportional representation electoral system for the Reichstag with no minimum threshold of votes, which fostered a proliferation of parties, many of them small and representing narrow interests. This meant that no party ever won an outright majority in the Reichstag, and increasingly weak and short-lived coalitions became the norm. Between 1919 and 1933, Germany had more than twenty governments, often functioning as minority coalitions unable to cobble together a majority of seats.

By the mid-1920s, Weimar Germany had achieved some stability, with moderate parties in the center managing to counterbalance the more radical and reactionary fringes (including a failed coup attempt in 1923 by a young firebrand reactionary named Adolph Hitler). The Weimar Republic faced anything but ordinary circumstances, however, struggling with internal and external challenges that might have doomed even the most stable and resilient regime.⁵ These challenges included the humiliation and burden of the Versailles Peace Treaty concluding World War I, which imposed upon Germany billions of dollars of reparations, military demobilization, the forfeiting of portions of German territory to France, and the loss of its overseas colonies; devastating hyperinflation brought on by war reparations and postwar economic turmoil (the inflation rate at one point in 1923 was 26 billion percent); and the consequences of the Great Depression, which caused widespread unemployment in Germany (nearly a third of German workers were unemployed by 1932).

Those opposed to the Weimar regime were able to blame the democratic parties that authored the constitution for all of these ills. A threatened middle class, defeated soldiers, and unemployed workers all proved ripe for recruitment into extreme nationalist and radical Communist movements as the Weimar Republic began to unravel. By 1930, moderate center parties favoring liberal democracy lost their majority in parliament. Germany's Communist Party, which received only 2 percent of the popular vote in the 1920 Reichstag election, had by 1932 garnered 17 percent. In 1928, the **National**

Socialist (Nazi) Party, led by **Adolf Hitler**, running on a platform of militarism and anti-Semitism, commanded less than 3 percent of the vote, but by 1932 obtained 37 percent, the highest total for any party during the Weimar period.

Under conditions of increasing instability, German state capacity weakened as violence replaced legislative politics and Communist and Nazi militias fought regularly in the streets. Following the 1932 election, conservative President Hindenburg and his nationalist supporters faced the difficult choice of forming a coalition government in alliance with moderate parties against the Nazis, declaring martial law and attempting to forcibly shut down the Nazis, or allying with Hitler and the Nazis in an effort to tame them. Hindenburg chose the latter option. In 1933, Hitler used this alliance and mounting disorder to first secure the office of chancellor and then gain passage of the Enabling Act, which yielded the Reichstag's powers to the chancellor, effectively dissolving the constitution and bringing the Weimar Republic to an end.

FASCIST TOTALITARIANISM UNDER THE THIRD REICH, 1933–1945

Unfettered by constitutional restrictions, Hitler moved swiftly to establish the Third Reich, replacing the democratic institutions of the Weimar Republic with those of a Nazi-led fascist totalitarian regime. Although the term *fascism* is often misused to describe the ideologies or motives underpinning various authoritarian regimes and political movements, the term accurately describes the corporatist (rejecting individual freedom), hierarchical (rejecting social equality), and hypernationalist values driving Hitler's Nazi Party. The Nazis imprisoned political opponents, required a loyalty oath of all civil servants, banned opposition political parties, and placed all social organizations including clubs and churches under restrictions or direct party control. Hitler employed state terror and a state-supervised mercantilist economy to achieve the regime's ideological goals of restoring German national power, expanding the German empire, and destroying those political ideologies and ethnic groups that threatened his vision of Aryan supremacy.

It is difficult for us to understand in hindsight how a totalitarian political regime with such reprehensible means and ends could be successful, popular, and even legitimate. For many Germans facing social chaos and economic collapse, the stability, order, and national wealth and pride Hitler promised were far more important values than either freedom or equality. Hitler identified and vilified scapegoats for Germany's ills, resurrected the flailing economy, and united the divided country. With extraordinary charisma, Hitler delivered heroically and almost miraculously on his promises to rearm the nation, reclaim lost territories, and restore Germany's pride, power, and prestige. The Nazi propaganda machine effectively used pageantry and propaganda to amplify Hitler's inherent speaking magnetism. As with other total-

itarian regimes, such as Stalin's Russia and Mao's China, Hitler did not hesitate to use terror at the hands of an extensive security apparatus to intimidate opponents and destabilize and atomize society. In increasingly bold and aggressive measures, Hitler rearmament Germany (in violation of the Versailles Treaty), annexed Austria, occupied Czechoslovakia, and in 1939 invaded Poland, provoking World War II.

But by invading Russia in 1941, Hitler attempted one too many miracles and pushed Nazi aggression, racism, and ultimately genocide beyond the bounds that the world and increasingly Germans themselves would tolerate. Like Napoleon before him, Hitler's vaunted war machine proved no match for the harsh Russian winter or the bravery of the Russian people. But before the Nazi war machine was ultimately defeated in 1945, it had exterminated some 6 million Jews and millions of other noncombatants on racial and ethnic grounds. The war brought more than 50 million casualties in Europe alone. Among those casualties was Hitler himself, who committed suicide in a Berlin bunker in 1945, a week before Russian, American, British, and French allies would overrun and occupy a defeated Germany.

FOREIGN OCCUPATION AND THE DIVISION OF THE GERMAN STATE, 1945–1949

In 1945, Germany found itself utterly defeated, its industry, infrastructure, society, and polity completely in ruins. Germans often describe this complete institutional vacuum from which it would begin to rebuild as zero hour (*Stunde Null*), a starting from scratch. The German state surrendered sovereignty to the four Allied Powers (Britain, France, the United States, and Russia), each of which occupied a portion of the country. The capital, Berlin, was similarly quartered. Territories that had been seized and annexed by the Nazis were carved off and returned to neighboring countries, while parts of Germany were annexed by Poland.

Although initial plans called for cooperation among the four occupying forces in moving toward the reestablishment of German sovereignty, the cold war intervened leading to a de facto division between the Soviet-occupied eastern zone and the regions in the west occupied by the other three powers. In an obvious step toward establishing a separate West German state, the three Western allies established a common currency for their three zones in 1948. The Soviet Union reacted by blocking land access from the West German sector into West Berlin (located in the eastern sector) that same year. Western allies in turn responded to this blockade with the Berlin Airlift, which delivered vital supplies to West Berlin by air for nearly a year. The Western allies also ordered the West Germans to convene a separate constitutional assembly, something the Germans were reticent to do for fear such a move would permanently institutionalize a divided German state. This convention led not to a constitution (deemed too permanent) but to the **Basic Law**, which estab-

lished the **Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, or West Germany)** in 1949 as a democratic and demilitarized state. The Soviets quickly responded by setting up the **German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany)** in the same year. "Independence" for both German states did not, however, bring complete sovereignty; each Germany remained beholden to its cold war patron, exercising what one scholar has labeled semi-sovereignty.⁶ Both the United States and the Soviet Union reserved the right to control much of their respective client's foreign policy and even to intervene in domestic matters as deemed necessary, authority neither patron fully relinquished until the reunification of the German states in 1990.

In West Germany, as in defeated Japan, Western allies and German reformers took steps to weaken those institutions seen as responsible for Nazi militarism, including sweeping de-Nazification. Reformers also devolved authority from the central state to Germany's federal regions and strengthened democratic institutions. They reformed and broadened the party system and encouraged coalitions in an effort to prevent the emergence of narrowly defined interests and ideologies. These measures included bringing together Catholic and Protestant political interests in separate but like-minded wings of the newly established Christian Democratic Union, healing a political divide that had persisted since the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

In the context of the cold war, the United States sought to rebuild the West German economy as an engine of economic revitalization for Western Europe. Like Japan, Germany took up this task of capitalist economic development with seemingly miraculous success, growing rapidly to become one of the wealthiest countries in the world. At the same time, strong democratic leadership brought stable constitutional democracy and a prosperous social democratic political economy to the Federal Republic. Effective chancellors included Konrad Adenauer (1949–1963) who sought to integrate Germany into the Western alliance and bind it to its former military foes in Europe by joining the Coal and Steel Community and NATO, and Willy Brandt (1969–1974), who introduced a pragmatic policy of reconciliation with East Germany known as *Ostpolitik*. Despite political competition among thriving democratic parties, general consensus prevailed across the political spectrum favoring domestic policies of comprehensive social welfare programs and a state-regulated marketplace and a foreign policy promoting growing European integration and pragmatic measures to ease tensions with East Germany and ultimately embrace unification.

In the German Democratic Republic, Stalinist totalitarianism replaced fascist totalitarianism. Because the Soviets blamed the capitalist system both in Germany and more globally as responsible for the Third Reich and both world wars, their first step was to eliminate East Germany's capitalist economy and replace it with a new socialist system presided over by a totalitarian Com-

munist Party state. By the end of the 1940s, the Eastern portion of Germany possessed political and economic systems almost identical to those of its Soviet mentor. With economic growth rates over the first two postwar decades nearly as impressive as those of its western counterpart, East Germany became the economic showcase of the Communist bloc. But like its Soviet mentor, the East German socialist economy ultimately could not keep pace with the capitalist West. Its failure to do so was demonstrated by the grim reality of life in the Democratic Republic. The East German state retained power by force and terror, manifested in its reliance on the *Stasi* (secret police) to squelch dissent, the construction of the fortified Berlin Wall surrounding West Berlin in 1961, and the summary execution of those caught trying to flee.⁷

In fact, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to revitalize Communist rule and the economy in the Soviet Union through his 1980s' reforms of perestroika and glasnost had their more immediate effects not on the Soviet Union but on its central European allies, including East Germany. These political and economic reforms threatened to undermine the Stalinist foundation on which the East German system was built. In early 1989, Hungary opened its borders with Austria, and East Germans vacationing in Hungary quickly took advantage of this breach in the Iron Curtain to leave for the West. Over the next six months, some 2 percent of the East German population emigrated to West Germany. This led to a rapid weakening of the Democratic Republic's legitimacy and its capacity to control events. Gorbachev urged the East German leadership to follow the Soviet reforms, further threatening the regime as the entire Communist system seemed to be crumbling around them. As public protests in East Germany grew and the pace of the exodus to the west picked up, the economy ground to a halt and the party-state lost its capacity to govern. The East German leaders stepped down and announced on November 9, 1989, the opening of the border between East and West Berlin. Crowds swarmed both sides of the Berlin Wall as the gates were opened, and this tangible and iconic image of the beginning of the end of Germany's division and the collapse of the Iron Curtain was televised across the world.

REUNIFICATION OF THE GERMAN STATE, 1990–PRESENT

The collapse of the East German state and the euphoria shared by all Germans propelled events much more rapidly than anyone could have anticipated. East and West German leaders prepared for a gradual process of thawing and increased contacts, but it quickly became apparent that the only source of stability would be a quick process of unification. The flood of Germans migrating from East to West prompted hurried negotiations leading to full reunification in 1990, less than one year after the fall of the wall. In effect, **reunification** meant the incorporation of East Germany into the Federal Republic, with the adoption of the West German Basic Law as the constitu-

tion of a unified Germany and West Germany's capitalist economic system imposed on East Germany. Although the Basic Law called for a new constitution and national referendum upon reunification, thus far, no such action has been taken.

The 1990 merger probably averted a much more disastrous political implosion of East Germany, but the long-sought reunification proved much more difficult and costly than the early optimists had bargained for. The early euphoria of national unification gave way to the cold, hard reality of bringing together two sovereign nation-states that shared a language (for the most part) and a pre-World War history and culture, but little else. The huge inequality in living standards, infrastructure, and income between the western and eastern portions of Germany has been tempered in the two decades since unification, but despite huge transfers of wealth these inequalities are still not resolved. Since reunification, the government has spent nearly US\$2 trillion on eastern Germany in an effort to modernize its infrastructure and stabilize its economy. Following reunification, inefficient and bloated state-owned enterprises collapsed and shrank, leading to massive layoffs. Although unemployment in the former East Germany has declined, it remains at nearly 20 percent, twice the figure of the former West Germany.

POLITICAL REGIME

For students of political science, Germany's political regime since 1949 (often called the **Bonn Republic**, since Bonn was West Germany's capital from 1949 to 1990) is a fascinating example of constitutional engineering. Its founders sought to prevent the breakdown of democracy that doomed the Weimar Republic. Thus, the Bonn Republic's architects sought a better balance between local and national power, between the legislature and the executive, between political stability and representative democracy, and between the power of the state and the rights of individuals. They created an innovative political system that also contained some elements of continuity with Germany's institutional past. The German political system has more checks and balances, and is thus less efficient and decisive, than is the British Westminster model, but to date it has proved remarkably stable and effective.

Political Institutions

THE CONSTITUTION

The Basic Law (intended to serve as West Germany's temporary constitution until its unification with East Germany) was amended in 1990 to incorporate East German states and has become Germany's permanent constitution. The

ESSENTIAL POLITICAL FEATURES

- Legislative-executive system: parliamentary
- Legislature: Parliament
- Lower house: Bundestag (Federal Diet)
- Upper house: Bundesrat (Federal Council)
- Unitary or federal division of power: federal
- Main geographic subunits: *länder* (states)
- Electoral system for lower house: mixed single-member districts and proportional representation
- Chief judicial body: Federal Constitutional Court and Federal Court of Justice

Basic Law is founded on five principles, designed to avoid both the chaos of the Weimar Republic and the authoritarianism of the Third Reich.⁸ First, where Hitler had destroyed the power of German states, the Bonn Republic Basic Law created a system of cooperative federalism, in which the federal government and state governments would share power. Second, the Basic Law guaranteed an elaborate set of basic political, social, and economic rights. Third, to counter the powerful Weimar president, the Bonn Republic established a weak, indirectly elected head of state. Fourth, political power was concentrated in the head of government, the chancellor, elected by and directly responsible to the legislature. Fifth, the Bonn Republic established a powerful and independent judiciary to check the government. Each of these constitutional features will be discussed in more depth in the following sections.

The Basic Law can be amended by a two-thirds majority in both houses. In an attempt to prevent excessive concentration of state power, however, some constitutional features, such as Germany's federal system and individual rights, cannot be altered.

The Branches of Government

THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT AND THE CABINET

German democracy is often referred to as chancellor democracy since the **federal chancellor**, or prime minister, is the most powerful political figure and the chief executive authority in Germany. The Basic Law made the office of the chancellor far more powerful vis-à-vis the head of state to create a stronger, more stable, and more democratic regime than the Weimar Republic.

As is typical in a parliamentary system, the head of government is elected by the lower house of the legislature (the Bundestag) and has always been the leader of the largest party in the legislature. As leader of the largest party or coalition, chancellors expect to see most of their government's policy proposals approved by the legislature. Chancellors appoint and oversee the cabinet, the group of ministers (currently fifteen) who head government departments. Cabinet ministers need not be members of the legislature (though most are). Chancellors may create or eliminate cabinet posts at will. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, for example, created a Minister of the Environment,

Conservation, and Nuclear Safety; his successor, Gerhard Schroeder, combined the ministries of Economics and Labor. Chancellors may fire cabinet ministers at any time, although chancellors who preside over coalition governments may threaten the stability of the government when dismissing a cabinet member from a party that is a coalition partner. Indeed, all German cabinets since 1949 have been coalitions of at least two parties, and coalition

German Chancellors and Their Coalitions, 1949–2008

Bundestag Election Year	Governing Coalition	Chancellor (Party)
1949	CDU/CSU-FDP, DP	Konrad Adenauer (CDU)
1953	CDU/CSU-FDP, DP	"
1957	CDU/CSU, DP	"
1961	CDU/CSU-FDP	" (to 1963)
		Ludwig Erhard (CDU)
1965	CDU/CSU-FDP (to 1966)	Ludwig Erhard (CDU, 1965–66)
	CDU/CSU-SPD (1966–69)	Kurt Kiesinger (CDU, 1966–69)
1969	SPD-FDP	Willy Brandt (SPD)
1972	SPD-FDP	Willy Brandt (SPD, to 1974)
		Helmut Schmidt (SPD, to 1976)
1976	SPD-FDP	Helmut Schmidt (SPD)
1980	SPD-FDP (1980–82)	Helmut Schmidt (SPD, 1980–82)
	CDU/CSU-FDP (1982–83)	Helmut Kohl (CDU)
1983	CDU/CSU-FDP	"
1987	CDU/CSU-FDP	"
1990	CDU/CSU-FDP	"
1994	CDU/CSU-FDP	"
1998	SPD-Greens	Gerhard Schroeder (SPD)
2002	SPD-Greens	"
2005	CDU/CSU-SPD	Angela Merkel (CDU)

Key to Party Acronyms:

CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union)

SPD (Social Democratic Party)

FDP (Free Democratic Party)

DP (Deutsche Partei, conservatives)

Source: Adapted from Simon Green, et al., *The Politics of the New Germany* (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 83.

partners often designate their preferred candidate to occupy the cabinet posts allotted to them.

The actual power of German chancellors has varied over time, depending in part on their ability to dominate their own parties. Two recent German chancellors, Helmut Kohl and Gerhard Schröder, were especially dominant political figures. Kohl was the unquestioned leader of his party, had few powerful rivals, and oversaw German reunification. Schröder also came to dominate his party and his coalition partners, the Greens.

Chancellors have at their disposal considerable resources, including the chief of the chancellery, a chief of staff with broad powers over the government. In addition to naming the cabinet, the chancellor makes numerous political appointments to government posts.

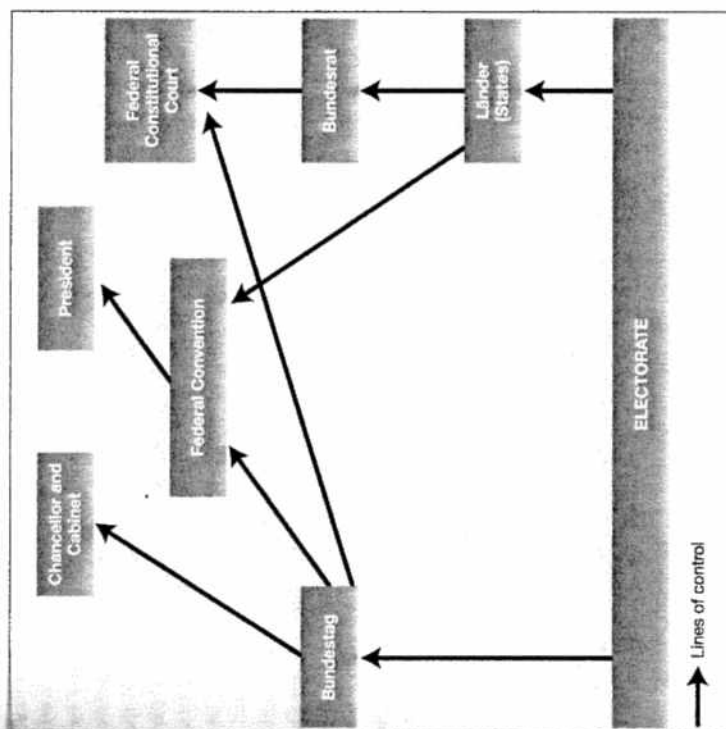
THE HEAD OF STATE

Like most parliamentary systems, Germany's head of state (the **federal president**) is separate from the head of government. In contrast to the Weimar Republic, when the substantial powers of a directly elected president were abused to facilitate Hitler's rise to power, the Basic Law made the president an indirectly elected and almost entirely ceremonial figure who performs mainly symbolic tasks. The president may formally sign bills into law, must sign treaties, and can pardon convicted criminals—but usually only takes such actions at the behest of the chancellor. Presidents can, however, refuse to sign laws they believe contravene the constitution. They formally nominate candidates to become chancellor but are expected to select the head of the majority party in the legislature, or absent a majority, the head of the largest party in the legislature. Those candidates, moreover, must receive a majority of the votes in the lower house of the legislature. In the case of a badly fragmented legislature, the president could conceivably exercise some significant discretion in deciding on a nominee, but to date this situation has not occurred. Presidents also decide whether to dissolve the legislature and call new elections when lacking a majority.

German presidents are elected for a maximum of two five-year terms by a special Federal Convention that includes all members of the lower house of the legislature and an equal number of individuals selected by Germany's state legislatures. Presidents are intended to be consensus choices who are highly respected elder statesmen, and they are expected to behave in scrupulously nonpartisan fashion once in office.

The president, Horst Kohler, a conservative, was elected in 2004; he is a highly respected economist and former head of the International Monetary Fund. Kohler has been a somewhat controversial president. In 2006, he refused to sign a Consumer Information Law passed by the legislature because he viewed the legislation as violating states' rights as enshrined in the Basic Law.

STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNMENT



Kohler was narrowly reelected in May 2009. Traditionally there has been little real opposition to incumbent presidents seeking a second term.

THE LEGISLATURE

In parliamentary systems, the legislature is normally the center of political power. Germany's bicameral legislature, Parliament, is a powerful institution, but the Basic Law weakened the legislature's power vis-à-vis the chancellor in order to avoid problems that undermined the Weimar Republic. The lower

house, the **Bundestag** (Federal Diet), represents the population; the upper house, the **Bundesrat** (Federal Council), represents Germany's sixteen states.

The Bundestag is the more powerful of the two houses. It has 598 deputies who are Germany's only directly elected public officials at the federal level. Deputies are elected for a maximum of four years, though elections can occur earlier. The Bundestag's chief power is its capacity to elect the chancellor. Because no German party has ever won a majority of seats in the legislature, members of the lower house select a chancellor (normally the head of the party with the most seats) who can form a majority coalition among the parties in the legislature. The current chancellor, **Angela Merkel**, was elected after the 2005 elections, when her conservative party was able to form a majority legislative coalition with the Social Democrats.⁹

The Bundestag can remove the chancellor, but only through a "constructive" vote of no confidence. During the Weimar Republic chancellors were often removed from power by the legislature, usually with votes from extreme parties of the right and left who were unable to agree on a new chancellor. The result was a succession of weak chancellors, political paralysis, and the imposition of presidential rule that facilitated the rise of Hitler. As a result, the Basic Law allows the Bundestag to remove a chancellor only if a majority of its members can (constructively) approve a replacement. There have been only two constructive votes of no confidence since 1949, and only one of those (in 1982) was successful. Chancellors may also call for a motion of confidence, and if that motion fails to win a majority, the legislature can be dissolved and new elections can be convened. (This occurred most recently in 2005.)

While the Bundestag must approve all federal laws, the government (not the legislature) initiates most legislation. The lower house can amend and debate legislation submitted by the government. In addition, the lower house can question members of the government during weekly question hours, similar to question periods in the United Kingdom. Members submit written questions to ministers ahead of time but can ask supplementary questions during the debate. The Bundestag includes powerful legislative committees that have the ability to question government ministers and to investigate government activities; they also have the expertise to challenge bills submitted by the government.

The upper house, the Bundesrat, is made up of sixty-nine members who are appointed by the governments of Germany's ***Länder*** (states). Each state appoints between three and six members, depending on its population, and the minister-president (state prime minister, or governor) is usually the head of the state delegation. Within the Bundesrat, delegations of representatives cast their ballots as a bloc, following the instructions of the state government.

All legislation is submitted to the upper house before being sent to the

lower house. The Bundesrat must approve all laws that affect the states (including laws that require states to implement policies of the federal government), giving it an effective veto power over about one third of all legislation. For all other legislation, the Bundesrat's opposition can be overridden by the lower house. When the two houses disagree, joint committees often convene to negotiate a compromise. The Bundesrat must also approve all constitutional amendments.

The Bundesrat has traditionally served as an important check on the federal government because it has very often been controlled by opposition. Since state elections do not coincide with federal ones, the outcome of state elections can alter the balance of power in the upper house. In 2003 a nine-month battle took place over the Social Democratic Party (SPD) Agenda 2010 legislative program (a controversial package of economic reforms). The SPD-Green coalition in the lower house locked horns with the Conservative-dominated Bundesrat. When in 2005 the SPD lost power in Germany's most populous state, thus further eroding its position in the upper house, the SPD government pushed for early elections.

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

In an effort to avoid a repeat of the Weimar Republic, the architects of the Basic Law sought to create an independent judiciary that could safeguard the constitution. The result was the **Federal Constitutional Court** that serves as the ultimate guardian of the Basic Law. The Constitutional Court settles disputes between states, and between the federal government and states. It also adjudicates disputes about elections and hears cases when citizens believe their constitutional rights have been violated. The court only acts in response to cases brought before it by either house of the legislature, by lower courts, or by individual citizens. The court has the power of abstract review, meaning that it can review pending legislation on the request of one third of the members of either house of the legislature.

There are sixteen members of the Constitutional Court, divided into two chambers (called *Senates*). Each house of the legislature selects half of the members of each chamber, and judges must be approved by a two-thirds majority. Judges are elected to a single twelve-year term and must retire by age sixty-eight.

The Constitutional Court has been an important, active, and highly respected institution in German politics. It has ruled on some controversial issues, such as its upholding of the ban on the Communist and Neo-Nazi parties in 1952, its approval of West Germany's treaty with East Germany in 1973, and numerous decisions restricting legalized abortion.

The Federal Constitutional Court is entirely independent from the government and from the rest of Germany's legal system that handles criminal

and civil matters. For all nonconstitutional issues, Germany employs a system of code law, wherein judges interpret and apply complex legal codes, rather than relying upon precedent or common law. Germany has an elaborate system of courts at the state level, and a top tier of courts at the federal level. For all nonconstitutional matters, the Federal Court of Justice of Germany is the highest ordinary court in Germany and the highest appeals court.

The Electoral System

The Basic Law created an innovative mixed electoral system that has since been emulated by other democracies, including three of the cases in this volume (Russia, Japan, and Mexico). Its authors sought a system that would combine the fairness of proportional representation with the voter-representative link that is a feature of single-member district systems. In addition, the framers of the Basic Law envisioned a system that would represent diverse political interests but avoid the legislative fragmentation and instability that characterized the Weimar Republic.

Half of the seats of Germany's lower house are elected by proportional representation (PR). Seats are awarded to parties from their party lists according to the proportion of the vote won by each party. The entire country serves as one large PR district. The remaining seats are elected using 299 single-member districts, where seats are allocated according to first-past-the-post criteria (that is, the candidate with the most votes wins the seat). Thus, when voting for the Bundestag, Germans vote once for a national party list and once for a representative in their district. The proportional representation seats are subject to a 5 percent threshold; to win seats from PR lists, a party must win at least 5 percent of the vote nationally, or win three single-member districts seats. That threshold has successfully limited the number of parties in the Bundestag, including small extremist parties, and has prevented the kind of fragmentation and polarization that plagued the Weimar Republic.

The German electoral system contains one additional feature that is often confusing for German citizens and students of German politics alike. If results from the single-member district produce a Bundestag with a membership that does not accurately reflect each party's national support (as determined by the PR list vote), additional seats can be awarded to parties that are underrepresented. In the 2005 election, the two largest parties (the CDU/CSU and the SPD) did particularly well in the single-member districts, giving them more seats in the Bundestag than their national percentage of the vote would indicate. The German system allowed them to keep their "overhang" seats, and the list system was used to award additional seats to parties whose percentage of the national vote merited greater representation in the lower house. Consequently the number of seats in the Bundestag can change from election

to election. The minimum number of seats is 598; after the 2002 elections, there were 603 members of the lower house, and following the 2005 elections there were 614.

The implications of Germany's electoral system are profound. First, political parties are strengthened because the national party lists are drawn up by party leaders. Parties are thus directly responsible for selecting half of the lower house, and they can more easily enforce internal discipline. Proportional representation means that parties (at least those large enough to win 5 percent of the vote or three single-member districts) can have a voice in the legislature. Only once since 1949 have the centrist Free Democrats been able to win a single-member district seat, but they have won PR seats in every election. Because of the electoral system, a small party like the Free Democrats has had far more influence in Germany than the UK's Liberal Democrats, even though the Liberal Democrats consistently win a higher percentage of the vote. The presence of more parties in Germany has also meant that no German political party has ever won a legislative majority. Whether this is a positive or negative feature can be debated. The absence of a clear majority can sometimes lead to prolonged negotiations after elections (as was the case after the 2005 elections). The German political system, however, represents a wide range of political views, and the need to form coalitions means that political compromise is a built-in feature. The German electoral system is certainly complex, but it has produced stable and effective governments; turnout for elections, moreover, has been consistently high.

Local Government

The Basic Law provides for a system of federalism that is a rarity among Western Europe's mostly unitary systems. Germany's sixteen states share power with the federal government, which controls some areas, such as defense and foreign policy; the states have exclusive power over education, administration of justice at the state level, culture, and law enforcement. For all remaining areas not covered by the Basic Law, power is given to the states. German states implement much of the legislation passed by the federal government. States also have a direct check on the federal government via their representation in the upper house. Unlike U.S. states, German *länder* and municipal governments do not possess the power to raise taxes, and they are dependent on revenues allocated by the federal government. States control over half of German government spending.

Each German state has its own unicameral legislature (elected for four years), which in turn selects a **minister-president** (governor). Minister-presidents are often powerful figures in German politics, and German chancellors have often built their political careers in state politics.

POLITICAL CONFLICT AND COMPETITION

The Party System

As in most parliamentary systems, political parties are the central political actors in German politics. The founders of the Basic Law believed that a highly structured party system could prevent the kind of charismatic authoritarian leadership that doomed the Weimar Republic. The Basic Law thus envisions representation of the people through political parties, rather than through direct elections for a head of government or head of state, or referenda (which are not permitted at the federal level). As a result, the German state provides about one third of the budget of the major political parties, in addition to free advertising on public television and radio during campaigns.

Since 1949, Germany has had a remarkably stable system of political parties, even taking into account reunification and emergence of new political forces in the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁰ From 1957 to 1983, the party system was dominated by two large forces (the center-right CDU/CSU and the center-left SPD) and one smaller party (the liberal FDP). During that period, those three parties won all the seats in the Bundestag. In the early 1980s, the Greens were able to break into the legislature and occupy political space to the left of the SPD. Reunification in 1990 led to a fifth political force composed mainly of former East German Communists (currently named The Left).

The two German political parties that have provided every chancellor since 1949 (the CDU/CSU and the SPD) have been characterized as **catch-all parties**. During the Weimar Republic, parties aimed their appeals at narrow constituencies based most often on social class or religion. Aided by the climate of the cold war, the dramatic postwar economic recovery, and the advent of television, catch-all parties represented a more modern, mass party that appealed more broadly to voters of all types. Such parties therefore presented a more centrist image.

THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS

The notion of a modern catch-all party was best illustrated by the creation in 1945 of the **Christian Democratic Union (CDU)**.¹¹ Together with its Bavarian ally, the **Christian Social Union (CSU)**, it emerged as a pro-business, anti-socialist, Christian political party that for the first time in German history appealed to both Catholics and Protestants. The CDU established itself both as a strongly pro-West party with close ties to the United States and as a staunch supporter of a European union.

Two CDU chancellors, Konrad Adenauer and Helmut Kohl, were dominant figures in the history of the CDU/CSU. Under Konrad Adenauer's long chancellorship (1949–1963), the CDU/CSU was able to steer the German right in a modern, market-oriented, and pro-European direction.

ANGELA MERKEL: GERMANY'S FIRST FEMALE CHANCELLOR

Germany's current chancellor, Angela Merkel, is the first woman to hold that position and the first to be raised in the former German Democratic Republic. The daughter of a Protestant pastor, she was trained as a scientist (she has a doctorate in chemistry and physics) and managed to avoid membership in the Communist Socialist Unity Party. She was elected to the Bundestag in 1990, during the first elections that included East Germany. She gained a series of ministerial posts under Helmut Kohl's chancellorship in the 1990s. In 2002, the CDU passed her over for the nomination to oppose SPD Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.

After being elected head of the CDU in 2000, Merkel pushed hard to change the conservative's traditional policy orientation. On the one hand, she moved the party toward the center on such social issues as immigration and the environment. On the other hand, she encouraged the party to adopt free-market policies more similar to those of Britain's Conservatives. Under her leadership, the CDU has promoted tax cuts and reforms to the health care system, and it has been closer to the United States in foreign policy.

Helmut Kohl, who was chancellor from 1982 to 1998, was responsible for Germany's rapid reunification after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Voters initially rewarded the CDU/CSU under Kohl for its support of reunification. In 1994, however, they punished it for the consequent economic and social costs of his policies. Kohl's political comeback was derailed in the late 1990s when he admitted to accepting illegal campaign contributions. Although the CDU/CSU is a pro-business party, it has broadly accepted Germany's welfare state, and some of its members even opposed market-oriented reforms proposed by the Social Democrats in recent years.

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

Unlike the CDU, the **Social Democratic Party (SPD)** is an old party (it was founded in 1863) and was a major actor during the Weimar Republic.¹² The SPD had a Marxist orientation and defined itself as a party of the working class. In part because of its radical orientation, the SPD won less than 30 percent of the vote in the first two elections of the new democracy.

Party leaders realized they needed to broaden the SPD's appeal. At its 1959 party convention, the SPD renounced Marxism and adopted a strategy to market the party to Germans of all social classes. This approach paid immediate electoral dividends. The SPD's vote grew steadily through the 1950s and 1960s; by 1966, the SPD had gained enough respectability to be included in a Grand Coalition government with the CDU/CSU. In 1969, the SPD finally formed the first coalition government of the left under SPD leader Willy Brandt. He promoted better relations with the Communist bloc and increased worker par-

THE INDECISIVE BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS OF 2005

After Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's Social Democrats were defeated in the pivotal state of North Rhine-Westphalia in May 2005, the opposition gained a majority in the upper house. In a controversial move, Schröder then intentionally lost a motion of confidence and asked the president to dissolve the legislature and convene new elections.

The results of the 2005 elections were equally controversial. With a typically high turnout of about 78 percent, no party came close to winning a majority of seats. The governing Social Democrats lost 29 seats, and the main opposition party, the CDU/CSU, lost 22 seats. The centrist Free Democrats and The Left gained seats. Both major parties claimed victory. The CDU/CSU claimed it had won the most seats, but the SPD countered that the CDU and CSU were formally separate parties, and that therefore the SPD was actually the largest party and should head any new coalition. The CDU could not cobble together a majority, even with support from the centrist FDP. The SPD was unable to form a majority coalition with smaller parties to its left. After lengthy negotiations, a coalition between the CDU/CSU and SPD was formed. In November 2005, Merkel was elected chancellor by the Bundestag; cabinet posts were split evenly between the two parties.

participation in the management of private enterprise. The SPD continued its success between 1974 and 1982, under the chancellorship of Helmut Schmidt.

Hurt by its ambivalent support for reunification, the SPD found itself out of power until the election of Gerhard Schröder in 1998. Schröder formed a coalition with the Greens and backed some controversial environmental policies, such as a phasing out of nuclear power, a proposed speed limit on Germany's *autobahn* (expressways), and new taxes on carbon emissions. On economic matters, Schröder represented the more conservative wing of the SPD, and his call for fundamental reforms to Germany's welfare state and his foreign policy alienated the SPD left, led by Oskar Lafontaine, who would eventually take his supporters out of the SPD to form a party called The Left. The SPD-Green alliance narrowly won the 2002 elections, but Schröder's gamble of calling early elections in 2005 backfired: the SPD narrowly lost the election, and although his party entered government as a junior coalition member, Schröder lost the chancellorship.

In 2008, the Social Democrats selected the popular foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a longtime aid to Schröder, to lead the party in the 2009 general elections.

THE FREE DEMOCRATS

The **Free Democratic Party (FDP)** has been a staunch defender of free-market economic and civil liberties and has consistently drawn support from

professionals and upper-middle class Germans. Since 1949, support for the FDP has ranged from a low of just under 6 percent (1969) to a high of about thirteen percent (1961). Nevertheless, from 1949 to 2008, the FDP was a junior coalition partner in thirteen of eighteen German governments, making it a crucial "hinge" party that could determine the nature of coalition governments.

In the early years of German democracy, the FDP was a natural ally of the conservatives, given its support of free-market policies. In the late 1960s, the FDP found common cause with the Social Democrats over social reforms and foreign policy. In general, the FDP has been less socially conservative than the CDU/CSU but less supportive of the welfare state than the SPD.

In the past decade, the FDP has faced new challenges. It has suffered internal divisions, and its advocacy of civil liberties, personal freedoms, and a less cumbersome bureaucracy has been supplanted somewhat by the rise of the Greens.¹³ The FDP has been unable to join a coalition government since 1998, although it managed to poll almost 10 percent in the 2005 elections.

THE GREENS

In the 1970s, some Germans became disenchanted with the three main parties, all of whom shared a broad consensus on promoting rapid industrial growth via the market economy. While coalescing around environmental policies (especially opposition to nuclear energy), the **Greens** represented a host of postmodern issues, such as women's rights, gay rights, pacifism, and grass-roots democracy.¹⁴ It initially viewed itself as an "anti-party party" that would not behave like the established parties and would not compromise its principles in pursuit of power.

The Greens won their first Bundestag seats in 1983, bringing with them a fresh style of politics. Green members of the Bundestag wore blue jeans, sported long hair, and boasted a less hierarchical internal party structure. From the start, the Green movement was divided between moderates (known as *realos*) and radicals (known as *fundamentalists*, or *fundis*). The moderates sought to achieve Green goals by entering into coalition governments and exercising political power. The radicals feared that such tactics would compromise Green values and destroy the distinctive identity of the movement.

Electoral realities tipped the balance of power within the Greens toward the moderates: in 1990, the West German Greens failed to reach the 5 percent threshold and were shut out of the lower house (although the East German Greens, known as Alliance 90, were able to win seats). The Greens reevaluated their previous opposition to electoral alliances, and in the 1994 and 1998 elections a new alliance of East and West Greens (known as Alliance 90/The Greens) increased its share of the vote and won Bundestag seats. In a controversial decision, the Greens entered a coalition government as junior partners of the SPD in 1998 and again in 2002, gaining control of three

cabinet seats. By entering government, the Greens and their leader, Joschka Fischer (who became vice chancellor and foreign minister), gained new respectability and a high profile but also became subject to new political contradictions and pressures. The Greens' traditional pacifism clashed with the SPD-Green government's policy of German intervention in Kosovo and Afghanistan, leading some members to abandon the party. Even a policy to phase out nuclear power by 2020, spearheaded by a Green Environment Minister, disappointed radicals within the party, who sought a more immediate end to nuclear power.

The 2005 elections failed to deliver a victory for the SPD-Green coalition, and the Greens left the government, even though the Greens lost only one seat in the Bundestag. In 2008, the Greens entered a first-ever coalition with the conservative CDU in the Hamburg state government, demonstrating a further willingness to compromise to advance some of its policy goals.

THE LEFT

The newest political formation with seats in the Bundestag is **The Left** (*Die Linke*), founded in 2007 through a merger of the heirs of the former East German Communists and some leftists who abandoned the SPD.¹⁵ After reunification, the remnants of East Germany's Communist Party reformed into the renamed Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS). The party performed poorly in the 1990 elections and struggled to surpass the 5 percent threshold in subsequent elections, winning only two single-member district seats in the 2002 elections. After the merger with disgruntled Social Democratic defectors, led by the charismatic Oskar Lafontaine (a former SPD party chairman), The Left's political fortunes increased, as did its appeal in the west of Germany. In 2005, The Left won almost 9 percent of the votes and fifty-one seats.

The platform of The Left is still evolving, but the party opposes the policies of privatization and tax cuts that have been pursued by recent German governments, and it has been a fierce opponent of both the SPD and CDU/CSU foreign policy. In a posture reminiscent of the early Greens, The Left has called itself Germany's only real opposition party, vowing not to enter into coalitions with any of the major political parties. However, The Left has entered into coalitions with the SPD at the state level and currently shares power with the SPD in Germany's capital, Berlin.

OTHER PARTIES

Because of Germany's history with totalitarianism, the Basic Law was designed to prevent the emergence of extremist parties on the left or right, and there has been less tolerance in Germany of parties that are deemed to be anti-system than in other European democracies. Far right parties, for example the National Democratic Party (NDP), were tolerated in Germany,

Seats in the Bundestag, 2008

Party	Number of Seats	Percent of Seats
CDU/CSU (Conservatives)	226	36.8
SPD (Social Democrats)	222	36.2
FDP (Free Democrats)	61	9.9
The Left	54	8.8
Alliance 90/Greens	51	8.3
Total	614*	100

*In this total, 209 seats were awarded in single-member constituencies. The other 209 seats were awarded via the national party PR list. The extra 11 seats are "overhang" seats that were awarded to two parties (8 for the SPD and 3 for the CDU) to make their legislative seats equivalent to their proportion of the national vote.

and they have won seats in state legislatures. But they never surpassed the 5 percent threshold at the federal level. The Communist left was banned by the Constitutional Court in the 1950s, and until reunification no party of the extreme left was able to win seats in the legislature.

Elections

The sixteen German federal elections since 1949 have enjoyed consistently high voter turnout, ranging from a low of 77.7 percent in 2005, to a high of 91.1 percent in 1972, although turnout has been decreasing since the 1970s. German campaigns have traditionally centered around parties and their platforms, but in recent elections they have become more Americanized, that is, more about personalities and slick advertising. Because of the dominance of the CDU and SPD, German campaigns inevitably become a battle between titans. For example, in the 1998 electoral campaign, the SPD attacked CDU Chancellor Kohl for having underestimated the costs of reunification, labeling Kohl the "unemployment chancellor." In 2002, the SPD played up Chancellor Schroeder's popular opposition to the Iraq war, while the CDU attacked rising fuel taxes under the SPD-Green coalition government. In the 2005 campaign, the focus became the economy, with the CDU's Merkel calling for tax cuts and faster reform of the economy, and the SPD proposing a tax on wealthy Germans.

Civil Society

German citizens did not greet the return of democracy with much civic enthusiasm. The experience of Nazism and Germany's defeat in World War II ren-

dered most Germans apathetic about politics. In the early decade of the Bonn Republic, opinion polls showed lingering support for authoritarian ideas. Germany's only real experience with democracy during the Weimar Republic had been short-lived, unsuccessful, and traumatic.

Nevertheless, we have seen that Germans after 1949 regularly turned out in large numbers to vote, and that they overwhelmingly rejected parties on the political extremes. With Germany's spectacular economic recovery, Germans came to support democratic politics, and German civil society began to germinate. Recent opinion surveys reported that more than half of all Germans were interested in politics, over half had signed a petition, over a third had attended a lawful demonstration, and almost 10 percent had joined in some type of boycott. A 2007 study showed that Germany had the second-highest level of protest activity in Western Europe.¹⁶

LABOR UNIONS AND BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

In comparative perspective, trade unions in postwar Germany have been both strong and influential. The Federation of German Labor (DGB) represents most of Germany's trade unions, and during the postwar period about two thirds of workers were unionized. The DGB enjoyed a close relationship with the Social Democratic Party and played a key role in German policy making.

German trade unions, however, have experienced a rapid decline in membership since the 1990s. Between 1991 and 2006, the DGB lost almost half its membership for a variety of reasons. Reunification flooded the labor market, unemployment soared, and economic growth rates declined. Over half of German workers are presently covered by collective bargaining agreements between unions and employers, but that percentage has dropped considerably and rapidly over the past two decades.

German business is also highly organized. The Federal Association of German Employers (BDA) and the Federation of German Industry (BDI) are powerful groups with close ties to the CDU. This level of organization can be traced to Germany's use of neocorporatism, which we discuss in the section on political economy below.

OTHER GROUPS

German society experienced growth of a variety of political groups in the 1960s and 1970s, as was the case in many Western democracies. These groups challenged various aspects of the German model of economic growth, including its reliance on nuclear energy, pollution, the status of women, and the dominance of the major political parties. Some of the groups were later integrated into the Greens, reflecting the centrality of political parties in the German system; other groups remained autonomous from the party system.

The German women's movement has been particularly influential. In the Bonn Republic, women have organized regarding unequal pay, access to legal

abortion, and other political rights. In the 1980s, the Greens established a quota for female candidates, spurring most other political parties to adopt similar policies.

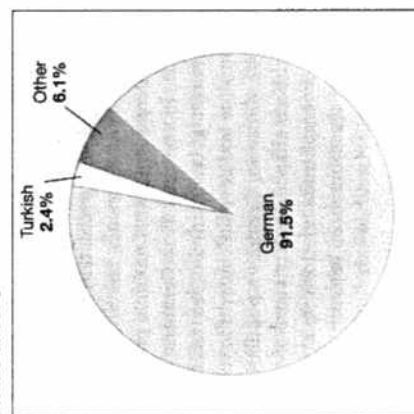
German churches have also been an important interest group since 1949. Before reunification, over 90 percent of West Germans belonged to either the Catholic or Protestant Church, and the German state provided those churches with generous economic support. Of the two churches, the Catholic Church has been more outspoken on social issues and has a closer relationship to the CDU/CSU. In Communist East Germany, the Protestant Church was an important political actor as one of the few autonomous organizations permitted. The influence of organized religion is likely to decline in the future as religiosity and church attendance has declined. Moreover, the inclusion of East Germans, over half of whom are nonreligious, has weakened the power of organized religion.

SOCIETY

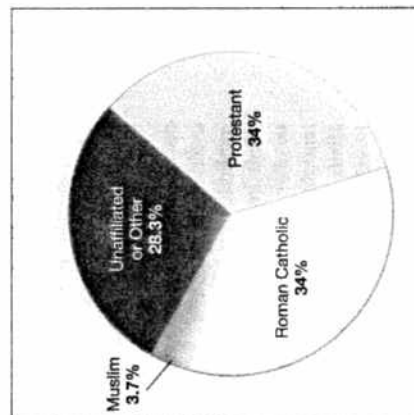
Ethnic and National Identity

As with many other European countries, Germany is relatively homogeneous in terms of its ethnic identity. Although unification came late to Germany, a strong shared cultural and even national identity has bound Germans together for a much longer period. Important cultural figures, such as Beethoven, Wagner, and Goethe, helped generate the idea of a single German people, even if

ETHNIC GROUPS



RELIGION



what bound these individuals together was not territory, constitutions, or regimes. Interestingly, then, a shared German identity developed long before there was a single German state; indeed, a single state, encompassing all Germans, has never existed (except under the Nazi regime). Austria, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, and Luxembourg are also countries where German is a state language. One result of this gap between national identity and a single state has been a weak German attachment to the state and state symbols. Such attachments were further weakened by the effects of World War II, wherein nationalism became the fuel for war and genocide. That war also destroyed the Jewish population of Germany, further reducing its ethnic and cultural diversity, while large portions of eastern Germany were annexed by Poland.

At the level of national identity, there remain important distinctions across the country, again a reflection of late unification. Recall that Germany can be seen as a fusion of two different systems: the Prussian empire in the north, and a series of "free states" and kingdoms in the south. This distinction remains important particularly in the state of Bavaria, which still calls itself a *freistaat* (a republic) indicating both its historical role as an independent country before unification and a sense that the region remains separate from (and superior to) much of the rest of Germany.

Bavaria is noted for its high level of economic development and the still-strong role played by Catholicism. Indeed, the current Pope, Benedict XVI, hails from Bavaria and is noted for his religious conservatism (a source of pride for many Bavarians). In contrast, northern and eastern Germany is overwhelmingly Protestant, though religious affiliation or identity is much weaker. It may be a stretch to think of Bavarians (or any other German cultural subgroups) as a distinct ethnic identity, but these groups do identify themselves by custom, dialect, and even particular stereotypes regarding attitudes and behavior.

These distinct, if relatively weak, identities have become more diverse over the past fifty years, through immigration and unification. First, unification with East Germany brought into the country a new population whose historical experiences were quite different. For West Germans, the aftermath of World War II brought de-Nazification, a deep suspicion of national pride, and an emphasis on democratic institutions. In contrast, East Germans largely avoided de-Nazification, as the Communist government instead redirected public identity toward the East German state and gave little attention to such events as the Holocaust. At the time of unification, Germany's population in the East embodied an identity that had been shaped by fifty years of socialism; that is, strongly secular and having a complicated relationship to nationalism. Germans as a result often speak of the differences between *Ossi* and *Wessi*; how distinct these differences are, or will remain, we shall discuss more below.

Another second factor that has transformed national and ethnic identity has been the role of immigration. Germany's postwar economic growth created a demand for labor that the country could not meet; as a result, Germany turned to *gastarbeiter* (guest workers) to fill this role. Guest workers, primarily from Turkey, were expected to stay only temporarily in Germany and were therefore not part of any formal plan for naturalization. Far fewer guest workers returned home than was expected, and eventually entire families and children became part of the German population. By 2000, the total number of individuals of Turkish origin was over 2 million. This growing Turkish population has created significant challenges for the German state and nation. In the past, German identity, including citizenship, centered on notions of race. As such, descendants of ancient German communities in Russia, for example, could gain citizenship, while Turkish children born and raised in Germany had no similar rights. Since 2000, the citizenship laws in Germany have been reformed to recognize and integrate non-German immigrants, but their social integration is far more difficult. Many Germans still have difficulty imagining nonethnic Germans as so-called true Germans, and concerns about political Islam have added a new tension to the situation. Some Germans worry that the country's failure to integrate its Muslim population is leading to the development of a "parallel society" disconnected from democratic institutions and susceptible to fundamentalism.¹⁷

Ideology and Political Culture

We have already alluded to many of the central facets of German ideology and political culture. German political identity is complicated both by the legacies of late unification and by the rise of fascism. The war and de-Nazification led to a strong undercurrent of national shame and the conclusion that nationalism and even patriotism were values that, at least for Germany, were dangerous and unacceptable. For most of the postwar period, then, the emphasis on democratic institutions was less an expression of national or patriotic identity than a belief that such institutions were a necessary bulwark against extremism and a recurrence of past policies. German political culture emphasized a greater pride in the country's economic achievements than in the state or nation, both of which had taken on negative connotations.

Over the past thirty years, a significant percentage of the population (30 to 40 percent) has consistently stated that they are not proud of their country; compare this with France and the United Kingdom, where close to 10 percent of the population responds with this answer. Germans show overwhelming support for democracy, even if their confidence in their own democratic institutions (such as the legislature) is rather low. The former citizens of East Germany still show lower levels of support for democratic institutions

(compared to West Germans), as well as a weaker awareness that they have particular democratic rights (such as free speech).¹⁸ Some of this is understandably generational, as these differences between westerners and easterners are much smaller among people under twenty-five. The concern about a lingering *mauer im kopf* (Berlin Wall of the mind) still separating the two peoples seems to be fading. Ideologically, too, there is similarly strong support among eastern and western Germans for a political regime that emphasizes collective well-being over individual rights and favors a system that combines capitalism with consensus.

One dramatic shift in Germany's political culture was the rise in post-materialist values (such as participation, feminism, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues) and a decline in bread-and-butter materialist concerns (such as economic growth, jobs, and order). In 1973, only 13 percent of Germans felt postmaterialist concerns were a priority, but 43 percent took that position in 1995.¹⁹ Postmaterialist values have become more pronounced in all advanced democracies, but they are by far the strongest in Germany—perhaps explaining why Germany has had one of the world's most successful Green parties.

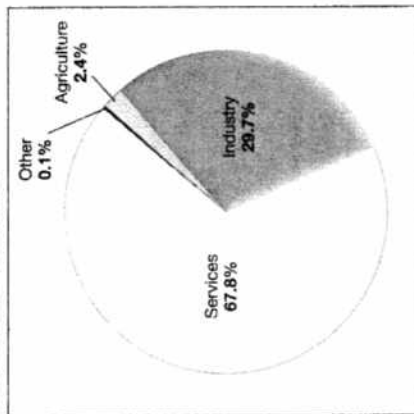
POLITICAL ECONOMY

If Germany must still carry the legacy of Nazism and war, casting a shadow over its national identity, then it is in the area of its economy in which Germany can be rightly proud. Many observers would assert that the *wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) of the 1960s was in part a way in which Germany could reinvest national energy and identity around institutions and projects that were removed from the symbols of the fascist past. This is similar to Japan, both cases in which imperialism was replaced by occupation and demilitarization, followed by rapid industrial growth with the support of the United States.

The German political economic structure is manifestly capitalist, but within a social democratic mold. German political culture strongly emphasizes the importance of collective rights within the context of private property and the marketplace. This can be found across both the left and the right, with those on the left influenced by social democratic ideas of the state role in the economy and those on the right shaped by Christian democratic values that similarly favor a "moral" marketplace.

One of the most important institutional expressions of this emphasis on consensus in the economy is German **neocorporatism**. By *corporatism* we mean a system in which the ordinary elements of civil society, such as unions, are sanctioned by the state and given authority to represent particular groups.

LABOR FORCE BY OCCUPATION



This can be found in some authoritarian countries, and was part of the Nazi system of totalitarian control. In contrast, neocorporatism is a democratic variant in which business, labor, and the state work within an explicit framework to guide the economy toward particular goals. While many European countries have elements of neocorporatist policy making, Germany has a particularly strong model. Beginning in the 1960s, in an attempt to stimulate economic growth, German governments sought to bring business and labor groups together to negotiate labor agreements and to coordinate economic policy. For decades the German state regularly coordinated meetings between the main labor and business representatives. Beyond regular meetings, one particularly controversial aspect of German neocorporatism is the policy of **codetermination**, advocated by the Social Democrats, in which unions are given half of all seats on the board of directors in Germany's largest private firms.

The neocorporatist model has been credited with fostering rapid growth rates and with limiting conflict between labor and business. However, the model has not been without its critics. German business resisted codetermination and unsuccessfully fought it in the courts. German unions became extremely powerful, often at the expense of other civil society groups that were not part of the neocorporatist system. Critics on the left also argued that neocorporatism did not really give workers power over major economic decisions.

These concerns have been negligible for most of the postwar period, as Germany developed a sophisticated economy (the fifth largest in the world) and one of the world's most prosperous societies. German industry is famous for its advanced industrial and consumer products, such as automobiles and chemicals, and built much of its economic structure around exports. However, by the 1990s the economic miracle began to show signs of strain for several reasons. First, one of the results of neocorporatism and a high degree of social expenditures has been the growing cost of labor. Over time, the German workforce has become less competitive as costs have risen. Second, globalization and the rise of other regional economies have also rivaled German exports with their lower costs and increasing technical sophistication. German firms, too, have in many cases chosen to invest overseas rather than at home. This has been particularly dramatic in Eastern Europe, where German capital could find an inexpensive yet relatively productive workforce close to

home. The expansion of the European Union eastward has only increased this investment, thus increasing concerns among Germans. Finally, although Germany has spent an enormous amount of money revitalizing eastern Germany (over \$100 billion per year since 1990), the region remains much weaker in terms of productivity, entrepreneurialism, and investment. Assumptions that massive government spending on infrastructure and new technologies would lead to significant private investment and growth in the east have not borne out.

Growing concerns about the potential decline in German competitiveness in the global economy have led to reforms, although not without resistance. In 2003, the Social Democratic government proposed what was known as Agenda 2010, a series of measures meant to liberalize the economy. Agenda 2010 met with fierce resistance from labor unions in particular, limiting its implementation. However, changes that did occur included restructuring unemployment benefits, the generosity of which had led to a large number of permanently unemployed recipients. In addition, the increased pressures of the global economy have forced many labor unions to recognize that increased flexibility may be the only way to compete in the global market.

That said, Germany has a long road ahead of it. Economic difficulties across Europe and the United States, alongside a strong Euro, have hurt German exports; these concerns have weakened support for further reform. Unemployment remains high, GDP growth has been on the decline since 2006, and Germany faces a growing underclass—which is particularly disconcerting for a country that has prided itself on its concern for equity.²⁰ There is widespread pessimism about the future performance of the economy, but Germany's consensus-based policies make significant reform difficult to enact.

FOREIGN RELATIONS AND THE WORLD

As in many other areas of German politics, the country's position in the international system is complicated and freighted with history. For the past half century, the legacy of Germany's role in World War II and subsequent denazification has been a strong sentiment of pacifism and a wariness of national pride or patriotism. Even though Germany regained its sovereignty and rebuilt its military after World War II, it made the conscious decision to bind its foreign policy to larger international institutions and objectives. Germany became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and a strong partner of the United States, which saw Germany as the front line of the cold war and a possible war with the Soviet Union. As a result, the United States could rely on Germany even in controversial decisions, such as the deployment of American nuclear missiles on German soil. In addition to NATO, Germany became one of the central actors within the European Union.

IN COMPARISON		MILITARY FORCE	
Sometimes military force is necessary to maintain order in the world. Percent who agree:			
Country	Percent		
India	90		
Brazil	84		
United States	77		
South Africa	72		
Mexico	72		
Canada	71		
United Kingdom	67		
France	67		
China	66		
Russia	61		
Japan	60		
Germany	41		

*Data on Iran not available.
Source: Pew Center for the People and the Press, 2007.

²⁰Data on Iran not available.

Source: Pew Center for the People and the Press, 2007.

Indeed, many viewed the EU as driven by a French-German "axis" that provided much of the impetus for integration. Resolving age-old animosities between France and Germany, and binding Germany to international military commitments, was seen as a way to solve "the German problem" once and for all. At the same time, Germany developed a strong pacifist streak, contributing to the emergence of the Green Party (which was as much anti-war as environmentally focused), and remained literally divided into East and West Germany.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the East German regime placed "the German question" back on the table for the first time in decades. There were widespread fears that German reunification, combined with the dramatic changes in East-West politics, would set the stage for a resurgent and potentially dangerous Germany. In retrospect, these concerns were unfounded. If anything, a great deal of energy and effort were directed inward for integrating East Germany into the country as a whole and modifying institutions to accommodate these dramatic changes.

But this does not mean that German foreign policy is the same as it was during the cold war. Although Germany has remained a central actor in NATO and the EU, it has also sought to play a more independent role in foreign affairs. This has led to mixed results. In the 1990s, Germany was an important player in brokering the breakup of Yugoslavia, providing support for Croatia and Slovenia in their quest for independence. This raised concerns that Germany was siding with its former wartime allies and that this support contributed to the brutal wars that followed. In 1999, violence between Kosovo Albanians and the Serb-controlled Yugoslav government led NATO to carry out airstrikes against Yugoslavia, with German participation—its first military action since World War II. Germany has several thousand troops in Kosovo and Bosnia, and since 2001 has also played a combat role in Afghanistan. In all of these situations, however, the German military has avoided a direct combat role—even in Afghanistan, where its troops are not in the front lines of battle against the Taliban. Germany has taken on a greater—albeit limited and cautious—role in the international system. Indeed, even its international deployments to date have required constitutional review.

A lack of clarity about Germany's international role has become particularly evident within the European Union and in Europe's relationship to Russia. Since the formation of the European Union, Germany has been one of the central engines of integration, working in partnership with France to expand the European Union. Germany was also an important actor in securing EU membership for many of the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe, where Germany has long had strong ties. Much of the impetus driving Germany forward within the EU was the desire to solidify relations with France and build a strong Europe that would avert war. This is one of the European Union's greatest accomplishments; the notion that EU members would wage war against each other now seems absurd, even though the last conflict occurred just over fifty years ago.

With these accomplishments has come increased uncertainty about Germany's future role in the international system. Most notably, while German foreign policy has become increasingly independent of the United States, this has not translated into a greater leadership role in the European Union. France and Germany's traditional partnership inside the EU has, in fact, become more strained of late, affected in part by France's increased focus on the Mediterranean and Middle East while Germany's attention has been directed eastward—each reflecting their traditional spheres of influence. A clear example of these difficulties was seen in the brief war between Georgia and Russia in 2008. One might expect that given its own history and ties to former Communist countries, Germany might have supported a strong EU position against Russian occupation of Georgian territory. But Germany is also highly dependent on Russian energy: nearly a quarter of German energy is in the form of natural gas, and nearly half of that comes from Russia. This creates worries

that poor relations with Russia could have a disastrous effect should the latter ever choose to turn off the taps. As a result, the European Union found itself divided over how to respond to Russia, with Germany urging a more cautious approach. This disagreement has continued to shape debates within the EU over whether to pursue trade talks with Russia (which Germany has favored). In the future, relations between Russia and Europe as a whole are likely to remain strained, even as German dependence on Russian energy is likely to increase. This raises the possibility of an increasingly fractured policy toward Russia from within the European Union, with Germany losing its ability to act as a leader in this area.

German foreign policy remains uncertain and unclear. At one level, the country emerged from the cold war unified, with a strong belief in the importance of democracy, peace, and international institutions. At another level, however, Germany seems to lack a clear sense of its own mission in Europe or the world as a whole and the extent to which it should take the lead and bear the possible repercussions of such a leadership role. It may take another generation before Germans can clearly articulate their role in Europe and the world.

CURRENT ISSUES

TERRORISM AND ISLAM IN GERMANY

Germany is no stranger to terrorism. From the 1970s to the 1990s, Germany faced its own homegrown terrorism in the form of the Red Army Faction, which used bombings and kidnappings in its attempt to bring about a revolution. In addition, Germany was frequently the battleground for the conflicts in the Middle East. Best known are the events surrounding the 1972 Munich Olympics, when terrorists from the Palestinian group Black September took a number of Israeli athletes hostage, a standoff that ended in a botched rescue mission and seventeen deaths.

Since September 11, 2001, there has been growing concern that Germany is once again becoming a central launching point, if not a target itself, for terrorism. Much of the planning for the September 11th attacks was done in Germany; Mohammad Atta, one of the central planners, received his graduate education in Germany and coordinated the attacks from Hamburg. Radicalization among some of Germany's Turkish population and Germany's participation in the war in Afghanistan raise the possibility that Germany may be next. In 2007, two bombs were placed on German trains but failed to explode; a group planning attacks on U.S. military installations and other American institutions in Germany was arrested. Clearly the threat of terrorism is very real, as is the threat that the fear of terrorism will worsen relations between ethnic Germans and the Muslim and Turkish communities in Germany. The fundamentalist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, which promotes

the creation of a single pan-Islamic state, has been active in Germany. Although the organization disavows violence, it has been banned from public activities; it operates openly, however, elsewhere in Europe. Even such basic issues as the construction of new mosques in Germany have led to student conflict. Such divisions could further alienate Muslim and non-Muslim Germans and create the opening for dangerous radicalization among some citizens.

THE GENDER GAP IN GERMANY

It is often assumed that Germany, a strongly social democratic country, emphasizes gender equity, perhaps akin to that found in the Scandinavian countries. Germany has long had a strong women's movement, as anecdotal evidence would seem to prove: for example, Prime Minister Angela Merkel seems to be strong evidence that there is no glass ceiling for women in Germany. Moreover, approximately a third of the Bundestag is comprised of women. A far greater presence than in the EU on average. But in general the country is less egalitarian than we might think. Much of this is a function of German culture, which still stresses the importance of women in raising children as opposed to being in the workforce. As a result, the state has been less generous in such areas as child care, and German women's pay is nearly a quarter below that of men, among the lowest rates in the European Union. Given the weakness of state support and lower wages, many women feel that they are forced to choose between family and career, with the result that the country has a very low fertility rate. Prime Minister Merkel herself has no children.

While gender inequality has long been the norm in Germany, it has become a growing source of debate, particularly when linked to the prospects of a declining German population. The government has increased the amount of pay for parental leave and proposed expanding child care nationwide, with the hope that such reforms will not only increase the birthrate but also encourage women to stay in the workforce to help reinvigorate the economy. Also necessary, however, is a cultural shift in the perception of women's role at home and in the workforce, a discussion that is just now beginning.²¹

NOTES

1. These disputes in many cases continue to simmer. See, for example, Mark Landler, "Lawsuit Reopens Old Wounds in Polish-German Dispute," *New York Times*, 25 December 2006, p. A1.
2. See Michael Hughes, *Nationalism and Society: Germany, 1800-1945* (London: Edward Arnold Press, 1988).

3. Monte Palmer, *Comparative Politics: Political Economy, Political Culture, and Political Interdependence* (New York: Wadsworth, 2005), p. 139.
4. Arnold J. Heidenheimer, *The Government of Germany* (New York: Crowell, 1967), p. 15. Or as Dahrendorf describes the Weimar Republic: "a democracy without democrats." See Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York: Doubleday, 1967).
5. On the Weimar Republic, see M. Rainer Lepsius, "From Fragmented Party Democracy to Government by Emergency Decree and National Socialist Takeover: Germany," in Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds., *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978), pp. 34-79.
6. See Peter Katzenstein's discussion of West Germany's "semi-sovereignty" in Peter Katzenstein, *Policy and Politics in West Germany: The Growth of a Semi-Sovereign State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).
7. For an excellent discussion of the Stasi, see Timothy Garton Ash, *The File* (New York: Vintage, 1998).
8. Adapted from M. Donald Hancock and Henry Krish, *Politics in Germany* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2009), pp. 80-103.
9. For an insightful analysis of Merkel's rise to power, see Sarah Elise Wilarty, "Angela Merkel's Path to Power," *German Politics*, 17, no. 1 (March 2008), pp. 81-96.
10. On the German party system, see Charles Lees, "The German Party System(s) in 2005: A Return to Volkspartei Dominance," *German Politics*, 15, no. 4 (December 2006), pp. 361-75.
11. A good treatment of the CDU is "Ulrich Lappenküper, 'Between Concentration Movement and People's Party: The Christian Democratic Union in Germany,' in Michael Geller and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Christian Democracy in Europe Since 1945*, Vol. 2 (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 25-37.
12. On the SPD, see William Paterson and James Sloam, "Is the Left Alright? The SPD and the Renewal of German Social Democracy," in *German Politics*, 15, no. 3 (September 2006), pp. 233-48, and Dan Hough and James Sloam, "Different Road Maps. Similar Paths? Social Democratic Politics in the UK and Germany," *German Politics*, 16, no. 1 (March 2007), pp. 26-38.
13. On the Free Democratic Party, see "Liberals in the Wilderness," *Economist* (27 August 2005), www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?storyid=E1_OPNSTOP (accessed 30 December 2008).
14. On the Greens, see Margit Mayer, *German Greens: Paradox Between Movement and Party* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), and Mark Hertsgaard, "Green Power," *The Nation* (30 January 2006), pp. 21, 22.
15. Jonathan Olsen, "The Merger of the PDS and WASG: From Eastern German Regional Party to National Radical Left Party?" *German Politics*, 16, no. 2 (June 2007), pp. 205-21.
16. Taehyun Nam, "Rough Days in Democracies: Comparing Protests in Democracies," *European Journal of Political Research*, 46, no. 1 (January 2007) pp. 97-120.
17. "Paving the Way for a Muslim Parallel Society," *Der Spiegel* (29 March 2007).
18. See, for example, the World Values Survey 1981-1999, "Views of a Changing World 2003," Pew Center for the People and the Press.
19. Russell J. Dalton, *Citizen Politics* (New York: Chatham House, 2002), p. 84.
20. Olaf Groh-Samberg, "Increasing Persistent Poverty in Germany," DIW Berlin Report, no. 4 (2007). www.diw.de/english/products/publications/weekly_report/volume_2007/55079.html?weekly_report_diw (accessed 30 December 2008).

21. "Equality Between Men and Women, 2008." European Union, Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/> (accessed 30 December 2008).

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

- Basic Law** Germany's current constitution.
- Bonn Republic** Nickname of the Federal Republic of Germany, named after West Germany's capital city.
- Bundesrat** Upper house of Germany's legislature.
- Bundestag** Lower house of Germany's legislature.
- catch-all parties** Parties that attempt to attract voters of all classes and are, therefore, generally centrist in their platforms.
- Christian Democratic Union (CDU)** Germany's largest conservative party.
- codetermination** System requiring that unions occupy half of all seats on the boards of directors of Germany's largest private firms.
- federal chancellor** Germany's prime minister and head of government.
- Federal Constitutional Court** Germany's powerful court that interprets the Basic Law.
- federal president** Germany's indirectly elected and largely ceremonial head of state.
- Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)** The official name of democratic West Germany during the postwar division of Germany.
- Free Democratic Party (FDP)** Small centrist party that has often formed part of governing coalitions.
- gastarbeiter** "Guest workers" or foreign workers allowed to reside temporarily in Germany to provide much-needed labor.
- German Democratic Republic (GDR)** Official name of Communist East Germany during the postwar division of Germany.
- Greens** Germany's environmental party.
- Hitler, Adolf** Nazi leader who led the Third Reich and led Germany to defeat in World War II.
- Junkers** Politically powerful Prussian landed aristocrats.
- länder** German states.
- The Left** The furthest left of Germany's major parties; an alliance of leftist Social Democrats and remnants of former East German Communists.
- Merkel, Angela** Germany's current conservative chancellor.
- minister-president** Governor of a Germany state.
- National Socialist (Nazi) Party** Hitler's fascist party.
- neocorporatism** A political economic model in which business, labor, and the state work within an explicit framework to guide the economy toward particular goals.

- Prussia** The most powerful German state before Germany's unification.
- reich** The German term for empire.
- unification** The 1990 integration of East and West Germany.
- Social Democratic Party (SPD)** Germany's oldest party, located on the center left.
- Third Reich** The name Hitler gave to his fascist totalitarian regime (1933–1945).
- Weimar Republic** Germany's first democratic republic (1919–1933), the collapse of which led to Hitler's totalitarian regime.

21 B LINKS

- Germany's Christian Democratic Party www.cducsu.de
- Germany's Free Democratic Party www.fdp-fraktion.de
- Germany's Green Party www.gruene-bundestag.de
- Germany's Left Party www.linksfraktion.de
- Germany's legislature www.bundestag.de
- Germany's Social Democratic Party www.spd.de/
- Information about Germany www.deutschland.de/ a one-stop portal
- Major daily newspapers of Germany www.deutschland.de/unterrubrik.php?lang=2&category=157&category2=160&category3=199