

REGIMES OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY GERMANY

From Historical Consciousness to Political Action

MARC T. VOSS



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Marc T. Voss
Chapman University, USA

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	vii
<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Abstract</i>	xii
<i>Translated Terms</i>	xiii
<i>Symbols and Abbreviations</i>	xvi
1 Introduction	1
2 Research Subject, Objectives, and Hypotheses	4
3 On the Need to Incorporate an Action Component in History Didactics	9
3.1 Preserving peace and freedom: an axiomatic historical perspective	10
3.2 Conceptual consistency with the role and goals of history didactics	19
4 Review of Select Previous Research	29
4.1 Theoretical and conceptual contributions	30
4.2 Empirical research to date	74
4.3 Conclusions and implications	97
5 A Concise Theory of Action Consciousness	101
5.1 Action consciousness as an integral dimension of historical consciousness	101
5.2 Factors that shape action consciousness	113
5.3 Historical thinking and political action	117
5.4 Synthesis and implications	119
6 Research Methodology and Approach	123
6.1 Research design and scope	123
6.2 Survey questionnaire and measurement reliability	138
6.3 On headline news induced bias	145

7	Research Results	149
7.1	National Socialist Germany	149
7.2	SED dictatorship	177
7.3	Empirical relevance of expanded model assumptions	200
8	Extending the Reach and Role of History Didactics	211
	<i>Appendix A: Questionnaire (English text)</i>	215
	<i>Appendix B: Questionnaire (German text)</i>	232
	<i>Bibliography</i>	250
	<i>Index</i>	262

List of Figures

(All figures drawn by M. Voss. With the exception of the parenthetical sources listed below, all other data is derived from the August 2013 study by M. Voss).

4.1	Pyramid of Historical Consciousness (based on von Borries, 1988 in Pandel and Rösen, 1994, 129)	51
4.2	The Theory of Historical Construction (based on Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 461)	55
4.3	The Theory of Historical Cultural Socialization (based on Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 31)	58
4.4	Pandel's Model of Historical Consciousness (based on Pandel, 2005, 8)	68
4.5	Consciousness and Sociality in Pandel's Model (based on Pandel, 2005, 16)	71
4.6	Impact of Works on Perceptions and Feelings about the Holocaust (taken from Voss, 2010)	82
5.1	Linking Action Consciousness with Pandel's Seven Dimensions	105
5.2	Action Consciousness as the Eighth Dimension (based on Pandel, 2005, 8, expanded by M. Voss)	110
5.3	Action Consciousness in the Context of Historical Construction (based on Pandel, 2005, 8, and Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 31, expanded by M. Voss)	112
5.4	Factors Shaping Action Consciousness	114
5.5	Historical Thinking and Political Action	117
6.1	Internet Adoption in Germany (based on Statistisches Bundesamt, 2012)	128
6.2	Educational Attainment Categories	133
6.3	Composition of Protest Group Sample	137
7.1	Knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust	151
7.2	Knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust by Region	152
7.3	Percentage Distribution by Level of Knowledge Category	153

7.4	Size of Knowledge Segments by Educational Attainment	154
7.5	Size of Knowledge Segments by Generation	155
7.6	Degree of Holocaust Condemnation	157
7.7	Magnitude of Extenuation of NS Regime	158
7.8	Interest in the NS Topic and Personal Consternation	158
7.9	Putting the NS Topic to Rest	159
7.10	Regional Differences in Regard to Consternation about the NS topic	160
7.11	Current State of Action Consciousness – NS Regime and Holocaust	162
7.12	Size of Action Consciousness Segments – NS Regime and Holocaust	163
7.13	NS Regime-related Action Consciousness by Educational Attainment	164
7.14	NS Regime-related Action Consciousness by Knowledge	165
7.15	NS Regime-related Action Consciousness by Age	166
7.16	Strength of Attitudes and Action Consciousness – NS Regime	167
7.17	Action Consciousness and Expressed Desire to Act – NS Regime	168
7.18	Sources of Knowledge and Feelings about the Holocaust and the NS Regime	170
7.19	Impact of Sources on Knowledge – NS Regime	172
7.20	Impact of Sources on Action Consciousness – NS Regime	173
7.21	Works Seen or Read – NS Regime and Holocaust	174
7.22	Impact of Erudition – NS Regime	175
7.23	Erudition by Education and Age – NS Regime	175
7.24	Effectiveness of Forms of Historical Cultural Socialization – NS Regime	176
7.25	Knowledge of GDR History	179
7.26	Knowledge of GDR History by Region	180
7.27	GDR History Knowledge Segments	180
7.28	GDR History Knowledge Levels by Region	181
7.29	Knowledge of GDR History by Educational Attainment	182

7.30	Knowledge of GDR History by Age	183
7.31	Degree of Condemnation of SED Regime	184
7.32	Magnitude of Extenuation of GDR Regime	185
7.33	Scope of Anti-Reunification Sentiment	186
7.34	Nostalgia and General Attitudes about the GDR by Region	186
7.35	Current State of Action Consciousness – SED Regime	188
7.36	Size of Action Consciousness Segments – SED Regime	189
7.37	SED Regime-related Action Consciousness by Educational Attainment	190
7.38	SED Regime-related Action Consciousness by Knowledge	190
7.39	SED Regime-related Action Consciousness by Age	191
7.40	Strength of Attitudes and Action Consciousness – SED Regime	192
7.41	Action Consciousness and Expressed Desire to Act – SED Regime	193
7.42	Sources of Knowledge and Feelings about the GDR	195
7.43	Impact of Sources on Knowledge – SED Regime	196
7.44	Impact of Sources on Action Consciousness – SED Regime	197
7.45	Works Seen or Read – SED Regime	198
7.46	Impact of Erudition – SED Regime	198
7.47	Erudition by Education and Age – SED Regime	199
7.48	Effectiveness of Forms of Historical Cultural Socialization – SED Regime	200
7.49	Attitudes of Protest Movement Participants towards the SED State	202
7.50	Protest Movement Participants' Level of Nostalgia	203
7.51	Knowledge and Action Consciousness of Protest Movement Participants	204
7.52	Protest Movement Participants' Motives to Act	205
7.53	Attitudes about Democracy and Liberties	206
7.54	Current Action Consciousness and Implied Actions	207
7.55	Present Authoritarian Tendencies	208
7.56	Current Scope of Protest Potential	209
8.1	Extending the Reach and Role of History Didactics	213

List of Tables

(All Tables compiled by M. Voss)

6.1	Design Elements and Attributes of Research	124
6.2	Sizes of Representative Sample by Segment	134
6.3	Identification of Protest Movement Participants	136
6.4	Multiple Item Scale Measurement Reliability	145

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Abstract

This project is about the overriding thesis that history didactics can and should contribute to preserving freedom and peace by incorporating an action component into historical consciousness research, and by broadening its charter along age-related target groups, interdisciplinary, and international dimensions. This thesis is investigated both on a conceptual and an empirical basis with specific focus on the two dictatorships of 20th-century Germany.

Specifically, this book focuses on three objectives: (1) Furthering the conceptual development of historical consciousness research by incorporating an action component labeled action consciousness; (2) empirically researching knowledge, attitudes, and action consciousness of adults as well as the forms of historical cultural socialization with respect to both the NS and the SED dictatorships; (3) deriving recommendations for the further development of history didactics.

Based on these objectives, the review of research to date in Chapters 3 and 4 reveals that action consciousness represents an important dimension that has not yet been conceptually developed and integrated into historical consciousness research. Subsequently, in Chapter 5, a concise theory of action consciousness as an integral part of historical consciousness including the linkages to political action is proposed. Based on a discussion of the chosen research methodology in Chapter 6, the subject of Chapter 7 is to review the results of the empirical study involving more than 1,600 respondents from Germany. This review suggests that targeted initiatives are required to strengthen knowledge and action consciousness in regard to dictatorships in general and the two regimes of twentieth-century Germany specifically.

Finally, Chapter 8 focuses on discussing recommendations for further developing history didactics along the dimensions of contents, age-related target groups, and internationalization.

Translated Terms

Abgeschlossene Lehre	completed apprenticeship
Abitur	baccalaureate
Aktionsbewusstsein	action consciousness
Aufarbeitende	working on coming to terms
Vergangenheitsbewältigung	with the past
Ausdrückliche	express confrontation
Auseinandersetzung	
Bundesländer	Federal states
Bundestag	Federal (German) Parliament
Bürgerbewusstsein	community consciousness
Diffuse Beschäftigung	diffuse employment
Dimensionen der Verarbeitung	dimensions of processing
Einsatzgruppen	special death squads
Es gibt/nicht	there exists/does not
Figuren der Sinnbildung	figures of formation of meaning
Gegenwart	present time
Geschichtlichkeit	historicity
Geschichtsbewusstheit	historical consciousness
Geschichtsbewusstsein	historical consciousness
Geschichtsbewusstsein, Strukturierung des	historical consciousness, structure of
Geschichtsbewusstseinsforschung	historical consciousness research
Geschichtsbild	historical image
Geschichtsdidaktik	history didactics
Geschichtsdidaktiker/innen	history didactics researchers/ feminine
Geschichtsforschung	historical research
Geschichtskultur	historical culture
Geschichtskulturelle Sozialisation	historical cultural socialization

Geschichtsverlangen	historical desire
Geschichtswissenschaft	science of history
Gesellschaftlichkeit	sociality
Grunddimensionen des Geschichtsbewusstseins	basic dimensions of historical consciousness
Handlungsleitende Erkenntnis	action guiding knowledge
Handlungskompetenz	competency to act
Historische Einsicht	historical insight
Historische Erinnerung	historical remembrance
Historische Konstruktion, Theorie der	historical construction, theory of
Historisches Denken	historical thinking
Historizitätsbewusstsein	historicity consciousness
Ich-Identität	I/me identity
Identitätsbewusstsein	identity consciousness
Kritische Geschichtsreflexionen	critical historical reflection
Meister	(crafts) Master
Meisterbrief	(crafts) Master Certificate
Montagsdemonstrationen	Monday demonstrations
Moralisches Bewusstsein	moral consciousness
Narrativierung von Zeit	narrativization of time
Ökonomisch-soziales Bewusstsein	economic-social consciousness
Ostalgie	nostalgia for East Germany
Pfadmodell zur Genese des Geschichtsbewusstseins	path model to the genesis of historical consciousness
Politisches Bewusstsein	political consciousness
Pyramide des Geschichtsbewusstseins	pyramid of historical consciousness
Reichskristallnacht	Night of Broken Glass
Schichten der Codierung	layers of coding
Schlussstrich/debate	to put to rest (the Holocaust)/ debate
Sinnbildungsmuster	meaningful education patterns
Sonderweg	unique/special path

System von Gleichgewichten und Transformationen	system of equilibriums and transformations
Temporalbewusstsein	temporal consciousness
Unbewusste Präsenz	unconscious presence
Unterhaltungsbedürfnis	entertainment needs or desires
Verantwortliches Handeln	responsible action
Vergangenheitsbewältigung	coming to terms with the past
Verknüpfungen der Zeitebenen und Geschichtsoperationen	links of the layers of time and historical operations
Wende	turning point (refers to the collapse of the GDR)
Wir-Gruppe	we/us group
Wirklichkeitsbewusstsein	reality consciousness
Zeitzeugen	eyewitnesses
Zukunft	future

Symbols and Abbreviations

APW	Akademie der Pädagogischen Wissenschaften (Academy of Educational Sciences)
AVG	average
B-sample	boost sample (non-representative)
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany)
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic)
FR	France
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GE	Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IT	Italy
JP	Japan
n	sample size (number of respondents)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NS	National Socialist
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist Workers Party)
PL	Poland
R	Pearson correlation coefficient
R ²	squared Pearson correlation coefficient
R-sample	representative sample
RU	Russia
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SIG	significance level
Σ	sum
SP	Spain
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
VEB	Volkseigener Betrieb (state-owned enterprise)
ZfJ	Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung (Central Institute for Youth Research)

1

Introduction

The twentieth century saw the rise and fall of many dictatorships that subjugated and killed millions of people. With two totalitarian regimes, twentieth-century Germany holds a special place not only in the minds of historians and other academics but of the international community as a whole. Amongst the most infamous regimes of the era is National Socialist (NS) Germany, which, in its short existence, fundamentally transformed the European landscape on multiple levels. The Holocaust in particular, which stands for the horror of Nazi crimes committed against humanity, genocide, and the cruel extermination machine that murdered about six million Jews and countless others, marks the by far darkest chapter in German history.

Dictatorship and authoritarianism in Germany, however, is not a new concept and had much deeper roots than the frequently cited Third Reich. The founding of the German state by Prussia meant that '[its] constitution was highly authoritarian; the army was outside civilian control, under direct command of the king, and the Prussian parliament was elected by ... the Junkers (an influential and powerful group of aristocratic landowners)' (Gilbert and Large, 2002, 70).¹ With such a structure in place well before the rise of Germany's most gruesome dictatorship, it becomes ever clearer why some scholars argue and have argued that Germany possessed a *Sonderweg*²

¹ The Junkers belonged to the traditional elite of Germany and maintained their power up until the end of World War II when the land reforms in East Germany expropriated their property.

² Meaning 'special path'. This was supposedly characteristic of German historiography and defines Germany's unique socio-economic development which was unlike that of England and France.

2 Regimes of Twentieth-Century Germany

unique from the historiography of other nations in Europe, most notably those of England and France.

The Germany that emerged after National Socialism found itself torn between a pro-communist regime (German Democratic Republic or GDR) in the east and the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD) in the west. When in 1946 Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated that an 'iron curtain has descended across the Continent' (Churchill, 1946),³ Europe, Germany, and its capital Berlin found itself at the heart of a greater struggle between the repressive Soviet-supported systems in the east known as the Warsaw Pact or Eastern Bloc countries and the NATO member countries in the west.⁴

Today, more than 65 years since the end of World War II, and more than 20 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the reunified Germany has not only transformed into a democratic and internationally respected open society, but has even emerged as one of the pivotal leaders driving the European integration process. Yet, since freedom and peace should be appreciated as a fragile gift that cannot be taken for granted, to what extent is the collective memory of the Holocaust, the NS dictatorship, and the GDR regime still alive, and what are the attitudes in regard to these past events today? Since the end of World War II, countless empirical and theoretical contributions from various disciplines have tried in one way or another to address certain aspects of this important question. From a historian's perspective, or more specifically, from a history didactics perspective, research of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*⁵ and of the *Formen der geschichtskulturellen Sozialisation*⁶ represents the conceptual basis for many theoretical and empirical studies aimed at assessing knowledge, understanding, and attitudes relating to important past events.

Among the frequently cited concepts, Hans-Jürgen Pandel's multi-dimensional model of historical consciousness, a model that combines seven dimensions (*Temporalbewusstsein*, *Wirklichkeitsbewusstsein*, *Historizitätsbewusstsein*, *Identitätsbewusstsein*, *Politisches Bewusstsein*, *Ökonomisch-soziales Bewusstsein*, and *Moralisches Bewusstsein*) into an integrated

³ Winston Churchill delivered a speech after World War II on 5 March 1946 at Westminster College, Missouri about the state of Europe and the Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. For the full speech, see Winston Churchill (1946) *The Sinews of Peace*, quoted in Mark A. Kishlansky (ed.) (1995) *Sources of World History* (New York: HarperCollins), 298–302.

⁴ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization. For further information on the history of NATO, see John C. Milloy (2006) *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1948–1957: Community or Alliance?* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press).

⁵ 'Historical awareness' or 'historical consciousness'.

⁶ 'Forms or representations of historical-cultural socialization' (e.g. museums, monuments, remembrance days, films).

framework of overall historical consciousness, be it on an individual or societal level, has been used as the foundation for much of this research (Pandel, 2005, 8).⁷ Most of the empirical Holocaust research performed to date has focused on assessing the status of what students know and how they think about the Holocaust. Some studies have aimed specifically at measuring knowledge and/or attitudinal changes resulting from the effect of an isolated stimulus or an individual representation, such as a film, a memorial visit, or a didactic learning experiment.

Likewise, empirical research on the history of the GDR and its infamous SED⁸ regime has frequently focused on assessing the *Geschichtsbewusstsein* of students and the resulting implications for history didactics. While this research has undoubtedly added valuable transparency to important aspects of the discourse, such as the state of awareness, knowledge, or attitudes concerning the Third Reich and/or the GDR, and, as a result, has helped in establishing the necessary preconditions for coming to terms with the past, one critical set of questions still remains largely unanswered and is subject to an ongoing debate: How do we know if we as a society have not only learned history, but learned *from* history?

In view of the sequential collapse of twentieth-century totalitarian regimes in Germany and Eastern Europe, to what extent has the collective memory of the horrific events helped society in learning from the past and preventing history from repeating itself in a comparable fashion? What can and should history didactics contribute to preserving the precious gift of freedom and peace for current and future generations? Translated into a more specific set of research questions, what do people know about the crimes committed by the Nazi regime today? What do they know about the most recent dictatorship, that is, the SED regime? How do they think about these dictatorships and their crimes, or in the terms of history didactics, what is the *Geschichtsbewusstsein* in regard to the Nazi regime, in particular the Holocaust, and also to the GDR? Most importantly, how determined are people to stand up against the rise of potential future dictatorships and crimes against humanity? What is the impact of individual forms or *Formen der geschichtskulturellen Sozialisation* on knowledge and attitudes regarding the SED and NS regimes, and in particular the Holocaust? What are the conclusions and implications for the further development of history didactics?

⁷ 'Temporality', 'reality consciousness', 'historicity', 'identity consciousness', 'political consciousness', 'socio-economic consciousness', and 'moral consciousness'. For a detailed discussion of Pandel's model refer to section 3.1.3.7.

⁸ Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany).

2

Research Subject, Objectives, and Hypotheses

The purpose of this theoretical and empirical study is to help find answers to some of these fundamental questions. Specifically, my objectives are threefold: (1) to contribute to the conceptual development of historical consciousness research by introducing an eighth dimension to Pandel's model that encompasses individual or societal determination to engage in peace and freedom-preserving actions and that I will label *action consciousness* or, in German terms, *Aktionsbewusstsein*;¹ (2) to explore the current state of knowledge and attitudes with specific focus on *Aktionsbewusstsein* in regard to twentieth-century Germany's dictatorships and their crimes, and assess the impact of the forms or *Formen der geschichtskulturellen Sozialisation* on knowledge, attitudes, and *Aktionsbewusstsein*; and (3) to synthesize the implications and develop a set of recommendations for the further development of history didactics.

In terms of scope, it is my goal to explore the current state of and factors determining knowledge, attitudes, and *Aktionsbewusstsein* toward Nazi Germany, notably the Holocaust, and the SED regime primarily for Germany. To validate the results and to further explore the importance of *Aktionsbewusstsein* for preventing the rise of potential future dictatorships, I will conduct an in-depth comparative empirical analysis of the NS and SED regimes, focused on East and West German adults. That said, I will also selectively draw on the database of my 2010 international Holocaust study (Voss, 2010) to juxtapose and complement the implications of the Germany-focused research in an

¹ 'Felt need to act', or 'action consciousness'.

international context.² To accomplish these objectives, I investigate three sets of hypotheses:

- (1) *The need to broaden the conceptual scope of Geschichtsbewusstsein research:* The current conceptual discourse on *Geschichtsbewusstsein* is predominantly focused on fostering an in-depth understanding of historical events, investigating the forms of representations and their impact on historical consciousness, and, as a result of such research, on optimizing didactical teaching and learning approaches. Acquiring knowledge from the past, however, ultimately involves the determination to engage in preventing similar horrific events from occurring in the future. Introducing an action component that can be labeled *Aktionsbewusstsein* should therefore broaden the scope of Pandel's model of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* in didactics in general and history specifically.
- (2) *The need to strengthen knowledge, attitudes, and Aktionsbewusstsein of former East and West Germans in regard to the SED and NS dictatorships, notably the Holocaust:* Despite the special moral responsibility of Germany for much of the past events, the need to strengthen knowledge, perceptions, and *Aktionsbewusstsein* in regard to the NS and SED dictatorships applies to both former East and West Germans.
 - (a) With the passing of over 65 years since the fall of the Third Reich and over 20 years since the collapse of East Germany, enough time has passed to put the Nazi dictatorship topic to rest. However, nostalgia for the former East Germany continues to exist amongst former East Germans and to a significantly lesser extent amongst West Germans.
 - (b) Former East Germans have a tendency to downplay the shortcomings of the SED State and the repressive police apparatus. In general, a more favorable view of the GDR exists amongst former East Germans. West Germans, however, have a more negative opinion of the GDR and its former leadership.
 - (c) Identification with a shared Nazi past is less likely amongst East Germans than those of the West, the former holding West Germans largely responsible for National Socialist crimes and criminal behavior; this attitude being more common amongst older generations.

²The database consists of survey results from more than 4,500 respondents from nine countries.

- (d) The historical awareness of NS and SED regimes varies substantially between East and West Germans on the one hand, and younger and older generations on the other. East Germans had their own view of the SED, different to that of Germans living under NS rule in the West – a separate historical consciousness exists regarding both regimes.
 - (e) The level of *Aktionsbewusstsein* differs between former East and West Germans. While in hindsight many East Germans downplay the repressiveness of the SED dictatorship, those East Germans that actually rose up against the regime, for example, by participating in the *Montagsdemonstrationen*,³ have developed a much higher level of *Aktionsbewusstsein* than West Germans and those East Germans who did not engage in the protest movement. This higher level of *Aktionsbewusstsein* can not only be observed toward the SED dictatorship, but also in regard to the NS regime and the Holocaust.
 - (f) With higher levels of *Aktionsbewusstsein*, there is a greater chance that an individual and a society will defend its freedom from entities that wish to destroy it.
- (3) *The need to extend the reach and role of history didactics*: Since the strengthening of knowledge, attitudes, and *Aktionsbewusstsein* is a life-long task that applies to every country, history didactics is uniquely positioned to broaden its reach and role along three dimensions:
- (a) While schools and universities contribute positively to both the strengthening of knowledge and understanding of modern Germany's regimes, and to the building of *Aktionsbewusstsein*, other forms of representations and institutions, such as museums, TV documentaries, film, and literature have an equally high or overall even higher and more lasting relative impact, because they also foster emotional involvement.
 - (b) In addition to the research of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* and *Geschichtskultur*, history didactics is focused on student instruction and on developing the didactically most effective learning approaches. This focus, however, may be too narrow, because it doesn't reach those who have already completed their education. In view of the fact that ultimately adults will have to play the pivotal role when it comes to resisting totalitarianism and changing the course of events to improve political freedom and

³ Prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the so-called Monday demonstrations took place in cities across the GDR to protest against the SED regime.

socio-economic conditions, for example, history didactics needs to broaden its charter to include and develop effective concepts for older generations as well.

- (c) Revitalizing the discourse on dictatorships and building *Aktionsbewusstsein* is an international task, requiring joint coordination but country-specific implementation to deal with differing education systems and priorities. Humanities in general and history didactics in particular can and should take the lead in facilitating such an international initiative as these disciplines most closely deal with the topic.

The remainder of this work is structured into six chapters. In Chapter 3 I briefly address two questions: (1) why it is important to incorporate an action component into the research of historical consciousness, and (2) why history didactics is uniquely positioned to assume the role of driving the thought process in this area.

The objective of Chapter 4 is to lay the foundation for developing the theory of action consciousness. Specifically, I discuss select theoretical and conceptual contributions and models of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, review the status of relevant previous empirical Holocaust and GDR research, and summarize the implications for addressing the hypotheses of this study.

In Chapter 5 I attempt to develop a concise theory of action consciousness as an integral dimension of historical consciousness. Starting from a detailed definition of *Aktionsbewusstsein* and its characteristics, I argue that action consciousness can and should be incorporated into Pandel's model as an eighth dimension. Based on this discussion, I assess the factors determining action consciousness by linking *Aktionsbewusstsein* to the forms of historical cultural socialization, and, lastly, I expand the concept further by investigating the necessary linkages between action consciousness and political action.

In Chapter 6 I describe the questionnaire, methodology, and design of the empirical study that was carried out between 5 and 16 August 2013 with the support of Harris Interactive, one of the world's leading online panel market research firms. Overall, more than 1,600 people from Germany between the ages of 21 and 69 participated in this research.

Chapter 7 focuses on discussing the findings of the study in detail. This involves an assessment of current NS and GDR dictatorship-related knowledge, attitudes, and action consciousness differentiated by former East and West Germans, and those East Germans that participated in the resistance movement vis-à-vis those that did not. I also analyze

the effectiveness of forms of *geschichtskultureller Sozialisation* relating to fostering *Aktionsbewusstsein*, and selectively juxtapose these results with some additional analyses from my 2010 international Holocaust survey database, consisting of more than 4,500 respondents from nine countries.

Based on this analysis, the objective of Chapter 8 is to synthesize the survey's key results against the main theoretical hypotheses developed in Chapter 5. Chapter 8 concludes with a set of implications and recommended next steps to broaden the reach and role of history didactics as well as a brief assessment of the need for further research in this area.

3

On the Need to Incorporate an Action Component in History Didactics

In his highly acclaimed speech, *Education after Auschwitz*, that was broadcast on public radio in 1966, influential German educator and philosopher Theodor Adorno declared as the pedagogic imperative goal of all education that an event as horrific as the Holocaust must be prevented from recurring by all means: 'Die Forderung, dass Auschwitz nicht noch einmal sei, ist die allererste an Erziehung. Sie geht so sehr jeglicher anderen voraus, dass ich weder glaube, sie begründen zu müssen noch zu sollen [...]. Jede Debatte über Erziehungsideale ist nichtig und gleichgültig diesem einen gegenüber, dass Auschwitz nicht sich wiederhole' (Adorno, 1970, 92).¹

While focused on the Holocaust, the scope of Adorno's dictum goes beyond this unprecedented event in world history in that preventing crimes against humanity and preventing the prerequisites of these crimes (the rise of dictatorships from happening again), must be a primary goal of all humanity. Yet, since history has shown that humanity has not been very successful in preserving freedom and peace, one could be tempted to argue that education may have succeeded in disseminating and teaching knowledge about horrific past events but, at least in some countries, failed in guiding students to become critical and self-determined adults that will actively, or at a minimum passively resist, any potential reawakening of hatred, tyranny, and crimes against humanity. In this chapter, I briefly investigate society's

¹ 'Preventing Auschwitz from happening again must be the primary goal of all education. This imperative is so evident that I don't see any need or reason to justify it [...]. Any debate about education ideals is void and invalid as compared to the one that Auschwitz may never happen again' (own translation; Voss, 2010, 1–2).

frequent failure to prevent tyrannical governments from rising to power from an axiomatic historical perspective, conclude that an action component should be incorporated into the research of historical consciousness, and argue that history didactics is well positioned to take on this task as such research is fully consistent with its functions and goals.

3.1 Preserving peace and freedom: an axiomatic historical perspective

Tyranny in all its forms represents the failure of humanity to move beyond the cycle of oppression, destruction, and death that is so commonplace on the pages of history. For every attempt philosophically and realistically to create a society where peace, harmony, dignity, and morality are central and provide the highest levels of humanitarian and social development, multiple examples of repression and the crushing of the human spirit exist. While some political scientists have argued that life without government would be a jungle that is cruel, brutish, and short, I argue that this is a perspective that would be unlikely considering the social nature of human beings that bind individuals into families and from these create communities that each form intrinsic power structures.

In this sense, the institution of government represents the largest form of dominance and power relationships within and among groups of people – as in a community – and societies. Going along with Lord Acton's famous statement that '[Power] tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely' (Bartlett, 1968, 750) the imperative to keep the institution of government, which is the largest form and concentration of power in a society, in check becomes all the more clear. Machiavelli wrote on the phenomenon of power relationships between the people and their leading elites by saying that 'one cannot satisfy the nobles in a manner that is just and does not harm the people, but one can so satisfy the people, because their aspirations are more just than those of the nobles: The nobles want to oppress them, but the people want only not to be oppressed' (Machiavelli, 1532, cited in Constantine, 2008, 45).

What can be gathered from both John Acton's statement and Machiavelli's observations is that government oppression seems to be an inherent quality and a trait of those who desire to possess control over the people. Furthermore, oppression at the hands of a government, whether it is labeled an empire, kingdom, regime, or dictatorship, also

appears to be a consistent theme throughout history that shows how little humanity has progressed towards universal peace and harmony. Therefore, more work and discussion is required on how to bring an end to the continuous cycle of repression and human suffering.

There are ample examples throughout history that show that the biggest unnatural killers of man are governments. In the one hundred years that make up the twentieth century, conservative estimates suggest that over 260 million people were murdered at the hands of their government (Rummel, 1994).² These figures include the mass killings under Mao's regime in China, the Soviet Union, National Socialist Germany, and figures from regimes that emerged in countries after World War II as well.³ Since these numbers only reflect the massive scale of death by government throughout the twentieth century, it is not entirely certain how many ordinary people were murdered at the hands of fiefdoms, kingdoms, monarchs, despots, or empires of earlier centuries. History, however, has shown that efforts for change and discontent with the ruling elite did take shape and manifested in various forms time and again.

Events such as the French Revolution and the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau⁴ and proto-communists like François-Noël Babeuf⁵ that fundamentally transformed the social and political landscape first within France, and whose influences later spread to other thinkers and throughout Europe, are key examples of a break with the old oppressive order. The revolutions of the 1830s and 1840s, specifically 1848, represent moments of turmoil that have spawned what was considered radical intellectual thinking on how to create a better society and ultimately utopia. It was the impact of the French Revolution, its leading philosophers and thinkers, and under the conditions of the revolutions of the 1840s

² Rummel has undertaken several studies that highlight the extent of death by government. Another of his works I recommend for further research is, Rudolph J. Rummel (1997) *Power Kills: Democracy as a Method of Nonviolence* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers).

³ Rummel focused on death by government throughout the 20th century, some of which incorporated killings committed by successive regimes or leaders from the same country after World War II. These include communist and nationalist China, Pol Pot, and North Korea among several others.

⁴ The writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau greatly influenced the Jacobin Club during the revolution in France. See Leo Damrosch (2007) *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt).

⁵ François-Noël Babeuf has been considered a proto-communist because of his engagement as a political agitator during the French revolutionary period. For an in-depth examination, see R. B. Rose (1978) *Gracchus Babeuf: The First Revolutionary Communist* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press).

that intellectuals, political theorists, and philosophers like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels conjured up ideas of classless and harmonious societies – and most notably their works on socialism – that were admired and adopted by twentieth-century communist and socialist regimes.

The inequality and overt repression ultimately inspired the thoughts and revolutions that followed. With the demise of the *Ancien Régime* in 1789, the social order of legally inherited and entrenched hierarchy that supported the notion of men being born into particular tiered stations of society ordained by God was finally destroyed (Priestland, 2009, 3). The Industrial Revolution of the 1800s was in its own right a paradigm shift away from the old land-holding aristocracy and led to the formation of new industrial elites that helped displace power from the traditional leading castes of the old system. In Germany, however, the transformation and shift followed a different direction known as the *Sonderweg*, which saw the formation of a dual-track economy that did not see the same change or revolution as in Britain or France (Gilbert and Large, 2002, 70). Although Germany's story is different, it is nonetheless relevant because of how the NS regime dealt with and manipulated its way into power.

Ultimately, this time period saw intellectuals grappling with the issue of forming just societies that steered clear of the aristocratic order that had previously enslaved so many people. In this context, the allure of communism and the strength of the movement can be better understood because it seemed like the answer – a powerful replacement to the old aristocratic system. To support the view of the positive attitudes toward communism as well as the case in point, Karl Kraus, the Viennese owner of the magazine *Die Fackel*⁶ gave an insightful look at the favorable perspective on communism by angry and disenfranchised intellectuals. In November 1920 Kraus captured the appeal of communism when he wrote,

Communism is in reality nothing but the antithesis of a particular ideology that is both thoroughly harmful and corrosive. Thank God for the fact that Communism springs from a clean and clear ideal, which preserves its idealistic purpose even though, as an antidote, it is inclined to be somewhat harsh. To hell with its practical importance: but may God at least preserve it for us as a never-ending menace to those people who own big estates and who, in order to hang on to them, are prepared to dispatch humanity into battle, to

⁶ *The Torch*.

abandon it to starvation for the sake of patriotic honour. May God preserve Communism so that the evil brood of its enemies may be prevented from becoming more bare-faced still, so that the gang of profiteers ... shall have their sleep disturbed by a few pang of anxiety. (Kraus, 1920, as cited in Priestland, 2009, 109)

The words of Karl Kraus are both powerful and give a unique insight into the mindset of individuals who strongly believed that communism was the answer to the oppressive power structures of the old order. What can also be derived from Kraus' thoughts is that he and fellow believers reached to varying degrees a historical and political awareness of the social inequalities and, on a more defined level, the oppression of the old political and hierarchical system. This phenomenon and the overall mass enthusiasm for a new world order of a classless and equal society shows that the ideals transmitted by a group of intellectuals and thinkers were able to spread their message to a larger audience. Considering the two features of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, namely the historical desire and learning elements, a historical consciousness was fostered through various modes of transmission, and with varying degrees of accuracy, that animated individuals to support an ideology that seemed to be a move away from a cycle of despotism of the few over the many. They have fostered a fundamental change in perspective on the old order and viewed oppression as something that violated the ideas and values of freedom and liberty.

Even though communism and eastern-style socialism together turned out to be one of the most tragic human disasters in modern history, the mass enthusiasm and support for the movement is undeniable, especially in the more optimistic days of the 1920s and 1930s. Here too, the trend of using history to push an ideology that opposed the oppressive aristocratic order played a central role in how people interpreted the role of the movement within the construct history, and of its own significance to current events at the time. In other words, the prophets and proponents of communism animated within people an understanding that freedom and liberty for all is an unquestionable axiom that ultimately requires actively engaging in the formation and rise of a state that will save them from slavery. In Russia, a tipping point was reached that ultimately resulted in the overthrow of the tsar, who represented and was the symbol for the repression and suffering of his people.

The revolutions, both the successful ones and the many failed attempts throughout the years, indicate a popular desire, yearning for, and struggle towards a brighter tomorrow. An example of this endeavor was witnessed by John Scott, an American who went to work at the

Magnitogorsk metallurgical complex in 1931 and described the spirit of self-sacrifice so prevalent in the earlier phases of the Soviet regime: 'In Magnitogorsk I was precipitated into a battle ... Tens of thousands of people were enduring the most intense hardships in order to build blast furnaces, and many of them did it willingly, with boundless enthusiasm, which infected me from the day of my arrival' (Scott, 1973, as cited in Priestland, 2009, 150).

Scott's description of what he witnessed in Magnitogorsk and his specific reference to the zeal and enthusiasm despite the adversity faced by the workers can partially be explained by their belief and fervor that their sacrifices now will lead to a greater and happier future in their communist state. Rapid industrialization played a profound role in the USSR, yet despite the hardships faced by many of its citizens the inner drive to create a utopia or an ideal state showed their commitment to the goals of the revolution to actively change and support the new order that promised freedom, equality, and social justice. These qualities, since they were fought so hard for time and again, can thus be seen as unquestionable and worthy of unconditional support and protection from powers that wish to suppress them.

While there are multiple factors and dimensions behind the support and conviction of the believers in the movement, a central aspect behind, and the genesis of, their animation and conviction for communism can be explained through the notion of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* because their support for the movement stems from and is activated and strengthened by the dimensions described and defined in Pandel's model. Although Pandel's construct and other historical consciousness theories describe the phenomenon quite clearly, an understanding of how this historical and political thinking led to the revolutions and ultimately the counter-revolutions against the communist systems in the late 1980s and early 1990s remain unclear and under-researched.

The *Geschichtsbewusstsein* of the millions of pro-communists and their actions provide evidence that a certain threshold was crossed that mobilized them against the current political order – the tsarist state. Since historical consciousness is made up of memory (and remembrance communities) as well as historicized facts or assumed facts, memory is significant because it is tied to what is experienced. Considering the living conditions which average Russians endured under Tsar Nicholas II, the memory of their continued suffering, combined with other dimensions of the structure of historical consciousness, led to action consciousness, or an awareness that action had to be taken to put an end to their misery. This development suggests that consciousness

can develop to a point beyond which one moves from that condition into the state of real world action.

The awareness of the many forces at play and their perceived role in the course of current events moved from historical thinking to political action. A key aspect to this understanding is that the historical information does not necessarily have to be accurate in order to incite activism. The multiple dimensions of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* within an individual must, however, be stimulated enough and fulfill certain criteria to foster *Aktionsbewusstsein*. Ultimately, the Bolshevik revolution was a disaster that was responsible for millions of deaths the world over, in part because the revolutionary energies ended up in the form of a dictatorship first led by Lenin and then solidified and exacerbated under Stalin. More elements made up the rise and fall of communism than are listed here, but it is important to note that the science of history and more specifically *Geschichtsbewusstsein* on both an individual and communal level helped shape the course of events.⁷

The list of attempts and failures so far shows not only that government oppression is common throughout history, but also that history didactics is uniquely positioned to further address the previously discussed phenomenon. Since historical learning and imagining, memory, and present conditions are part of the research focus of history didactics, the discipline provides a basis for further explicating how the past can be used as a means to prevent a comparable form of it from repeating itself and harming human rights and freedom. It may have taken about seventy-five years for people to rise up against the oppressive Soviet system that was born and then deposed in Russia, but nevertheless the communist states of Eastern Europe can be seen as further failures to safeguard and promote freedom, peace, and human rights. Considering the authoritarian environment that was cultivated by the socialist regimes what, psychologically, motivated ordinary Russians, and more specifically ordinary East Germans, to protest against their governments?

The GDR did not have its own German version of Gorbachev leading the way to Glasnost and Perestroika, yet, while he became a popular figure to many East German citizens, the SED apparatchiks maintained their conservative hard line and ultimately ousted Erich Honecker, who became a problematic figure for the regime because he refused to follow

⁷ At a certain point individual memory blends into the realm of collective memory that is fostered and supported by a given community. See section 4.1.2.1 for an in-depth analysis of collective memory.

Gorbachev's example, which was popular among the citizenry. The German Democratic Republic is especially interesting because it shares the same past as that of the German Federal Republic, namely the dark history of National Socialism, genocide, and global war. Considering Germany's more recent past, did the *Geschichtsbewusstsein* of the Nazi dictatorship play a role in motivating ordinary East Germans to demonstrate against their leaders despite the consequences?

This question illuminates the debate over creating a society where human misery is vanquished and replaced with happiness, peace, and harmony. These debates should not be considered extinct and must be developed further because we as humans have not been able to break free of the monotonous cycle of oppressors over the oppressed, of tyranny over the human spirit. This suggests that preserving peace and freedom is desirable and a fundamental goal for all humanity that education, specifically history didactics, can foster and help perpetuate as a moral and social axiom for the present and future. Central to this understanding is the study of history and, on a conceptual level, historical consciousness, because only if one has a consciousness of the past can progress and change be implemented. Germany's recent regimes and their histories provide powerful examples to test whether historical consciousness over the Nazi dictatorship helped build an underlying awareness and desire to challenge the repressiveness of the SED regime and to reform the country in the late 1980s. Since the November revolutions of 1989 have already become an important turning point in history, the revolutions in the GDR can provide a foundation for empirical research into the action consciousness of those Germans who witnessed or participated in the movements that overthrew their socialist government.⁸

Considering the alarming results of Rummel's findings and the overall bloody nature of human history, it is clear that there is a strong interconnectedness between politics and history, indicating that they share certain aspects with one another. Thus, when one talks about history, one also talks about politics and vice versa. Therefore, a conceptual foundation that addresses the need to act as part of the paradigm of historical learning is required. In the broadest understanding of this concept, integrating an action component into historical research would reflect the notion that action must be taken to prevent similar past tragedies from happening again, and that something must be done

⁸The empirical segment of this research project addresses this phenomenon in greater detail.

to foster the creation of or steering towards a harmonious freedom-guarding and the preservation of a future for all human beings.

The paths to understanding history in terms of human nature and psychology are difficult to navigate because on an individual level these elements, their development, and how they are perceived become very diverse and nebulous in the broader spectrum of historical events.⁹ Due to the nature of remembrance and history, experienced events shape and expound views of the past. Quantitative approaches focus on the underlying trends empirically uncovered at any given point and these are subject to change over the course of time as well.¹⁰ It is important, then, to take into consideration what the values and senses of normality were not only at the time the research was conducted but also of the era the participants are being questioned on. The sense of normalcy, morals, and values are determining factors not only regarding the interpretation of a historical event. They also play a fundamental role in the shaping, or the lack thereof, of the perceived need to resist the repetition of a particular event in history.

An example of the importance of values and what is perceived as normal is the phenomenon of nostalgia and longing for the return of the life remembered under Stalin, or more specifically East Germany, that has even taken on a renewed life in the post-communist era. Some post-revolution surveys of former East Germans have shown an increasingly positive view of their former country: 'In evaluating the statement "One felt spied upon. You couldn't trust anyone" 43 percent of East Germans answered "True. That's exactly how it was" in 1992, but only 25 percent gave the same response by 2004 (...) 72.6 percent of East Germans claimed in 1990 that there was "complete surveillance" in the GDR whereas only 42 percent would agree with that claim in 1995' (Bruce, 2010, 9). This example of empirical research on this phenomenon is intriguing yet understandable because the witnesses – those who lived in the GDR prior to its collapse and those who were not persecuted or singled out for repression by the Ministry for State Security – have fond memories of life in their former state. The remembrance of family outings, vacations, past loves, and other happy moments in the lives of

⁹ Thießen takes this a step further by addressing the issues and concerns around the practice of history, specifically those regarding problems with sources, with witnesses and those of the *Zeitgeist*. For a more in-depth analysis, see Thießen (2011), 9–31.

¹⁰ For a more concise discussion of previous empirical work, see section 4.2.

individuals in East Germany can partially explain why *Ostalgie*¹¹ has become such a factor in the now unified Germany.

Indeed many East Germans felt as though they lost out in the unification and the rapid takeover and even closure of former VEB¹² factories, along with the fleeing of East German professionals to better jobs in the West, and the overall unpleasant attitudes created disdain between the once-divided Germans.¹³ It is quite possible that for East Germans yearning for the good old days, the protest movements for change and reform may have appeared to them as having gotten out of their control and led to a less than ideal assimilation with the BRD. To further strengthen the example, the repression system of the GDR was unlike that of the Gestapo of Nazi Germany.¹⁴

For example, the Stasi¹⁵ would employ, especially in its later years, a tactic known as *Zersetzen*,¹⁶ which was a much different approach to the often physically violent methods of the Gestapo. Instead of eliminating state enemies through physical and oftentimes bloody means, the Stasi would prefer methods that broke down individuals over time through covert and subtle manipulations of a target's life. This led one observer to say that the Third Reich left behind mountains of corpses while the GDR left behind mountains of catalogue cards (Bruce, 2010, 140).¹⁷ Although the statement may seem banal, the differences between the two repression apparatuses may make some East Germans view the Stasi in a better light in comparison. Despite the ultimate outcome of unification and the erasing of most of the socialist culture and identity of the GDR, it is important to focus on the forces that so fundamentally transformed Germany and the world as a whole. Specifically, what factors

¹¹ This is a unique term combining *Ost*, or east, with the word nostalgia, used to describe a yearning for the German Democratic Republic.

¹² State-owned enterprise; a state-owned and -operated facility.

¹³ The post-*Wende* period was marked with corruption, the dismantlement and privatization of state-owned property, and the disappearance of the uniquely East German culture. Because the aftermath of the collapse and consolidation of the GDR is beyond the scope of this project, see Barnstone (2005), 92. For further information on the collapse of the GDR, see also Kupferberg (2002).

¹⁴ The *Geheime Staatspolizei*, or the secret state police of the Third Reich.

¹⁵ Also known as the *Staatsicherheit* that functioned as the secret state police.

¹⁶ 'To corrode, undermine, subvert or disintegrate'. This was a tactic used by the Stasi to slowly break down the credibility and life chances of a target in order to dissuade him/her from further actions they deemed detrimental to the state.

¹⁷ The statement was quoted by the author during an interview with Tenbrock on 2 May 2006, who quoted philosopher Margherita von Brentano.

motivated ordinary East Germans to protest and oust the Socialist Unity Party and their cohorts?

In order to answer this question and to evaluate what it takes to motivate an individual and the larger community to actively resist a repetition of tyranny and oppression, a framework must be developed that will help and guide individuals to understand their role in fostering and/or preserving the rare gift of freedom, peace, harmony, and happiness for the individual and the collective. Throughout history, from the French Revolution to the writings of Karl Marx, attempts have been made to create long-desired free, equal, just and peaceful societies. Despite these attempts, the French Revolution led to the rise of a dictator and the writings of Karl Marx led not to the socialist paradise he envisioned. Instead, a dystopian socialist society took root following the destruction of National Socialism in Germany, even though the ideals for the society were positive in theory. In practice, however, East Germany became a state with one of the most ruthless, effective and widespread surveillance and police apparatuses in modern history, along with a single party that exerted tight control over its citizens.

These failings, along with the long list of other regimes that oppressed their people, show that human beings have been largely unsuccessful in promoting, founding, and maintaining truly free and peaceful societies. Cultivating and preserving peace, liberty, and freedom ought not to be seen only as beneficial for human society but as indisputable axioms that are inalienable and apply to all people for the betterment of life on earth. With history as a guide and education as the means, it is important to use these tools as a method for preserving the axioms that the past has shown to have never truly been achieved.

In conclusion, the frequent failure of humanity to prevent wars, tyranny, and dictatorships that are the primary perpetrators and originators of such crimes against humanity, suggests that the need to prevent detrimental past developments from resurfacing should become a more pronounced part of the historical discourse. This implies that it is important to incorporate an action component into historical research and learning.

3.2 Conceptual consistency with the role and goals of history didactics

In this chapter, I am proposing that history didactics, both in terms of its educational mission and its research focus on historical consciousness is uniquely positioned to incorporate an action component into the historical discourse.

With regard to its educational mission, didactics of history provides the foundation for fostering the predisposition to act if negative past events or developments reoccur in a similar fashion. The simplest understanding of the role of education, which makes up the foundation of gathering information, is that knowledge is gained that will help an individual, and in turn a society, evolve, grow, and strengthen the future prosperity of humanity. Education is thus institutionalized by modern societies so that a basis of knowledge is cultivated within all members and on which more knowledge can later be built that will help the community thrive as well as the individual. History, in its most basic form, is important because it transmits not only culture and stories but also past lessons learned on to future generations. The role and addition of history didactics as a part of this practice is therefore uniquely positioned to address history as a part of institutionalized education as well as beyond those boundaries, including how historical images of the past are formed within individuals. The multi-faceted approach of history didactics as a part of history specifically, and education as a whole, then adds new meaning and a broader role to its study and education. It sheds light onto the factors of history as well as the educational discipline that is the study of history. In the following paragraphs, I will comment on the significance and role of history didactics with specific emphasis on the NS and GDR regimes in more detail.

The political and ideological split in Germany after the founding of an East and West German state following World War II divided much more than territory and resources between the two opposed spheres of influence. The division of Germany into two uniquely different states meant that two separate social, political, and educational paths were being followed simultaneously. This meant that education and history in particular were being treated differently on both sides. This is noteworthy because these differences influenced the basic knowledge of these two separate societies that ultimately impacted and shaped the future. Because societies educate their members, how education is treated thus influences the successes and failures of pursuing change for the future.

There are several differences that ought to be examined in the education systems of the former East Germany and those of the Federal Republic which are significant factors in how history was taught and learned. The differences and factors of these educational institutions are significant because they influence how the axiomatic foundation is formed and what it entails. Understanding the goals of education in the GDR, for example, must therefore be elaborated on, so that the

historical knowledge can be gauged more effectively. In East Germany, the entire education system was to be reformed along a new anti-fascist line, which can change historical learning because it is a significant aspect of the core curriculum. One of the main issues with the new direction was that the recruiting of teachers was problematic since around 'drei Viertel des Lehrpersonals Mitglied der NSDAP gewesen waren und größtenteils ausscheiden mussten'¹⁸ (Schroeder, 1998, 52). Ultimately, the party insisted on having more influence over the education system and purged from schools and universities former National Socialists and even conservative professors who refused to bend to their will (Schroeder, 1998, 52). The process of the SED meddling directly with education meant that children and young adults were exposed to party thought and ideology, which significantly alters perceptions especially with the subject of contemporary German history.

To begin, the focus of education in the GDR can be concisely summed up by clarifying the major purpose that it was intended to serve, most notably the party and state. One of the primary functions of the system in East Germany was to first educate the youth in the basics of mathematics, science, reading and writing, and then continue on to train the individual for specific fields, trades, or jobs. While this is a relatively common approach even beyond the borders of the GDR, one which still serve many nations throughout the world, it is only a functional aspect of the overall goal of education. The second aspect strove for the formation of a national consciousness and, of course, to foster a socialist personality. This tied ideology and party ideals into education, which in turn influenced how subjects like history were taught. Ideological indoctrination was indeed part of the curriculum and even among the intellectually disabled topics like 'Hate against the imperialists' and 'The love towards the Party' were part of their education (Barsch, 2008, 3).

For history education this also had a significant impact because it led to a much different interpretation of the German past when compared to that of the Federal Republic. The official view of the German Democratic Republic was that it embodied all that was progressive and positive in German history and, for example, that the Weimar Republic was seen as the logical predecessor to East Germany (Federal Research Division of the

¹⁸ Own translation: 'Three quarters of the teaching personnel were members of the NSDAP [National Socialist German Workers Party] and most had to be withdrawn from service.'

Library of Congress, 2012).¹⁹ Rehabilitation of historical figures previously considered too reactionary was also a tool for the leadership. This view supported a selective interpretation of history and important figures of the past to help foster a stronger national identity separate from the West, as well as to make East Germany appear as the better, friendlier, and more caring nation. This may also help explain why nostalgia for the GDR persists to this day. In fact,

[The] fall of the Wall was greeted with almost universal joy and relief. When the euphoria had died down, however, many Easterners experienced a feeling of loss, almost of bereavement, for the passing of their state and their socialist principles. The ideas and ideals which had guided their lives for so long were discredited. The result was a feeling of profound sadness and anomie. The Wende was a shock to the whole personality structure. (Pritchard, 1999a, 18–19, as cited in Phillips, 2000)²⁰

Hand in hand with national identity, the manipulated and selectively interpreted past including indoctrination with state-chosen socialist personalities, may be responsible for how former East Germans view their long-lost country. This is important on several levels because community self-image can lead to an individual reflecting fondly on a dictatorship they have studied or lived under. It must be taken into account that the formation of remembrance communities can provide, both intentionally and unintentionally, a historical self-image that the individual members and the community as a whole can accept. It can be stated, therefore, that certain groups will exist that support a positive view of dictatorships and regimes that are seen by the larger public as gruesome.

The GDR education example is one that can also be applied more broadly on all education systems because each community inputs their value system into the education of their youth. Therefore, the West German State and even the unified Germany have varying perspectives on the same history. The East German example also shows that

¹⁹ For an overview, see Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 3 December 2012, *East Germany: Development of an East German National Identity*, <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-5075.html>.

²⁰ David Phillips (ed.) (2000) *Education in Germany since Unification*, Oxford Studies in Comparative Education (Oxford: Symposium Books). Also see Rosalind Pritchard (1999b) in regard to education restructuring.

communicating desired perspectives on the past is not only possible, but effective as well. Therefore, education can foster an axiomatic foundation for preserving freedom, peace, and liberty if the society values these ideals and makes them a priority in the education system. The former East Germany ought to be seen as a remembrance community separate from West and even reunified Germany. Since both the GDR and the BRD are two national and German entities that arose out of the ashes of the National Socialist state, they both share the exact same history. While this may be the case, the past was dealt with and taught differently between the two German states, which begs the question as to whether these two unique remembrance communities view their shared Nazi past contrastingly or in a more or less similar fashion. More importantly, did the history of National Socialism exert an influence on those who protested against the SED regime in 1989?

The answer to these questions may not be straightforward, yet it can be addressed. By using education as a means to spread a message of preventing dictatorships, an axiomatic foundation to preserve freedom, peace, and liberty can be cultivated in young people who will inherit the roles of citizens and potential future leaders. As a further example, it may be helpful in making students more receptive to learning if clear reasons and explanations for why we study history are provided. Second, once this basic idea is in place, it is equally important to make an individual aware that the past is indeed an older reflection of the present and that the continuous cycle of repression throughout the world and ages has not stopped, despite the examples of attempted breaks with the elite ruling order responsible for suppression. When an individual comes to the realization that, for example, *something is not right in the way things are today and what is happening resembles something out of Stalin's Russia*, then a point has been reached where the person is beginning to ponder what can be done about this. In the case of the East German protestors, the shortcomings of the ruling party and government, and the gulf that lay between them and ordinary citizens, combined with an overall lack of ideological fervor, eventually reached a tipping point that led to the upheaval and collapse of the regime in Eastern Germany. Multiple, cumulative factors were responsible for the absorption of the GDR by the BRD; however, of noteworthy interest, especially for the *Regimes of Twentieth-Century Germany* study, is the historical element. History didactics as part of an education process is crucial in the process of safeguarding the imperative of peace and freedom.

Ultimately, the field of *Geschichtsdidaktik*, or history didactics, can facilitate the study of how individuals and communities can learn *from*

history because the discipline is one that shines a unique light onto the traditional examination of the past. This discipline partly examines history through theories and approaches just as the practice of literary theory does to works of literature. Through a sizeable array of concepts, notions, and ideas, literary theoreticians attempt to add meaning to and a better understanding of particular texts or pieces of literature. In the same way, history didactics as a discipline incorporates many theoretical and conceptual approaches and is under continual development, addressing both larger historical eras and smaller specific events.

The Greek word *ἱστορία* (*historia*) defines history as knowledge acquired through investigation, or knowledge through inquiry (Joseph and Janda, 2008, 163), and *Geschichtsdidaktik* follows this logic but takes it into a different direction that makes history ever more relevant for the present and future. This places history didactics into the unique position of strengthening the role of history into one that can help preserve freedom and peace as axioms. Supposing history is defined as an aspect of memory, and memory as '(...) ein menschliches Bedürfnis, eine menschliche Fähigkeit und eine Notwendigkeit'²¹ (Bergmann and Rohrbach, 2001, 8), then it is also something that can be passed on through culture by the means of traditions and family, or by society through museums, memorials, film, art, poetry, and music. If history is the collection of discovered information about past events that is then examined, what does history didactics add to this practice? Ultimately, one would have to ponder the question of why we even study history. If one argues that we learn history so as not to repeat the same mistakes, then it is significant to further the study of *Geschichtsdidaktik*, for it is in this field that, among other aspects, we can gauge as individuals and as a society whether we have learned from the past; for example, from such human tragedies as the Holocaust. A deeper investigation into *Geschichtsdidaktik*, however, is still necessary to explain its functions and goals more precisely.

Generally speaking, there exists a plethora of subfields that make up the study of history because, like math and science, it is a core discipline that is a part of the standard curriculum of grade schools in virtually every society. Since most people have gone through a school system that provided them with a foundation of general knowledge in a wide spectrum of subjects, the history class is often remembered as a lecture of clearly defined and chronologically ordered sequences of eras,

²¹ (Memory) 'is a human need, a human capacity and a necessity'.

periods, and events, of which specific dates and people are of noteworthy importance. Yet, history represents much more than a list of dates, people and facts and is much broader since it includes such fields as world history, which became popular as a response to globalization, the philosophy of history, prehistory, ancient history, *Geschichtsdidaktik*, and many more.²²

Traditional historical research includes looking through archives, sifting through documents, or doing research in the field. *Geschichtsdidaktik* adds relevance to a historical period by analyzing how this particular event impacts our modern perception of that period, as well as what individuals and groups know about it and how they view this event in the present. The traditional study of history strives to unearth facts about a past event, yet it can stop short of addressing how a historical event is relevant to the present and future. In terms of memory and shaping individual perspectives, traditional history teaching and learning is primarily focused on the relevant data and information that specifically mark the time period and area of research. In other words, there is little or no focus on the processes or theories that help explain how students and adults make sense of the past and rationalize how a historical era or time period affects the present and any repercussions this may have in the future. For *Geschichtsdidaktik* on the other hand, there are two major fields that distinguish this discipline and make it an important category that ought to be included in the overall study and curriculum for learning and teaching the subject of history. In order to gain a greater understanding of what *Geschichtsdidaktiker/innen*²³ study, further detailed elaboration is necessary to clarify the purpose and aims of history didactics in greater detail.

I have briefly touched upon what history didactics' basic objective in the understanding of the past really is. There is, however, much more to discuss. History didactics is seen as a part of the field of *Geschichtswissenschaft*,²⁴ which allows the subject to create and expand on its own research methods. Jochen Huhn suggests that *Geschichtsdidaktik* is one of three important dimensions of *Geschichtswissenschaft* that influences and impacts *Geschichtsforschung*²⁵ as well as the *Theorie der*

²² There exists a multitude of fields and subfields that make up the discipline that are too numerous to list here. For more information on those that are mentioned, see Gran (2009). Also see Berkhofer (1995) and Carr (1961).

²³ 'History didactics researchers'.

²⁴ 'The science of history'.

²⁵ 'History/historical research'.

*Geschichtswissenschaft und der Geschichte*²⁶ aspect in significant ways (Huhn 1985, in Hasberg, 2002, 62).²⁷ Wolfgang Hasberg defines the aims of history didactics further, saying that the theory, the analyzing and fostering of planned didactics dealing with history; pragmatics, the clarification of the theoretical foundations of mediation; and the empirical aspects in explorations of dealing with history (Hasberg, 2002, 61) are central factors for history didactics that move into the other dimensions of historical research mentioned by Huhn.

A key pillar of *Geschichtsdidaktik* is the theory known as *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, which Hasberg describes as being ‘ihre [history didactics] zentrale Kategorie’²⁸ (Hasberg, 2002, 59). This would suggest that *Geschichtsbewusstsein* is not merely a significant theory but an entire field of study on its own. It can therefore be surmised that historical consciousness is something that can not only be studied and examined but also partially developed in and transmitted through the traditional school system as well as other methods. Since didactics refers to the science of teaching, the goal of *Geschichtsdidaktik* is not simply to represent what an individual or group has learned about a past event. Rather, it is a multi-faceted approach that attempts to show how history is taught, internalized, understood, and transmitted through the various cultures and societies, and viewed through contemporary impressions, thoughts, and attitudes.

It goes without saying that school definitely plays a central role in the building of historical consciousness among younger generations since this is where a substantial amount of general knowledge is attained in early years. There are, however, a number of contributing factors that build up a historical consciousness that goes beyond knowledge learned and acquired in a classroom. Historical facts and information acquisition build awareness within individuals and on a broader level in societies, but how knowledge of a specific period in history influences the emotions or attitudes of an individual is just as important as the factual information, for it is these that impact change as much as what a person knows about a similar past event. They are important aspects of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, and vital for the formation of a perceived need

²⁶ ‘Theory of history and the science of history’.

²⁷ For further information and a more in-depth perspective, see Huhn’s *Stellung und Aufgaben der Geschichtsdidaktik im Kontext der Geschichtswissenschaft* chart, in Hasberg (2002), 62. For more on history didactics, also see Huhn (1994).

²⁸ ‘Its central/main category’.

to act and a meaningful part of *Geschichtskulturelle Sozialisation*.²⁹ All of these terms, including the ones yet to be discussed, comprise part of the specific study of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, and *Geschichtsdidaktik* in a more general sense. To get an idea and direction of historical consciousness, the theories that comprise the basis of and which come closest to an all-encompassing definition of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* must be investigated.

There are numerous theories and concepts that have been developed over the past decades that provide perceptions, answers, and steps in this field. These include recommendations not only on the learning and teaching processes currently being implemented, but also evaluate the current standpoint of historical knowledge – the impressions and attitudes, how and where this knowledge was acquired, whether through textbooks or from teachers or family members. Also considered is what a particular period in history, such as the Nazi era, means, and what impacts, if any, it has on the daily lives of the person or group in question.

Hasberg has discussed that central to the role of *Geschichtsdidaktik* is the theory of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. Considering the depth of meaning and what is to be understood as historical consciousness, a singular definition of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* that describes its role or function may be difficult to build and has so far eluded researchers over the decades. Much debate and further developments therefore continue to this day. It is not likely to be destined to remain this way because, as history didactics researcher Bernd Schönemann has concluded, several models for the explanation or definition of historical consciousness have been pioneered – they may not preclude one another, but may simultaneously not be compatible either (Schönemann, 2000, 45).

Thus, an understanding of many terms, models, and concepts that describe the phenomenon of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* is needed, even if they happen to vary in scope or contradict one another, such as, for example, the differing yet equally significant approaches of Pandel, von Borries, Rösen, and many others. Much of the debate in this field indicates that history didactics is positioned to revise the important role of historical research and learning from the currently distant and disconnected approach to one that has immediate relevance to the present and future. The discipline is therefore well suited to expand the role of history into one that can ultimately foster and perpetuate positive

²⁹ ‘Historical cultural socialization’. See section 4.1.2.6 for a more in-depth discussion on Zülsdorf-Kersting’s theory.

elements like peace and freedom. For that, an action component should be included into the theoretical discourse.

In conclusion, because history didactics is an important interface between education and historical consciousness research that focuses on a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach, it is well positioned to address such an action component, which I will label *action consciousness*, as an integral dimension of historical consciousness.³⁰

³⁰ For more detail on a theory of action consciousness, see Chapter 5.

4

Review of Select Previous Research

The complex sequence of events that led to the Holocaust, the rise and subsequent fall of the Third Reich, and the founding of the German Democratic Republic and its ultimate collapse have been the subject of many debates and discussions within and outside of Germany. The approaches that deal explicitly with the topic of National Socialism, the Holocaust and/or the GDR range from historical representations, survivor accounts, sociological, philosophical, political, and psychological analyses to cultural representations including music, film, art, memorials, museums, literature, and poetry. In terms of academic examination and inquiry, the number of contributions and publications that focus on research related to the Holocaust, Nazi Germany, and/or the SED dictatorship, be it on a theoretical, philosophical, or empirical level, is so vast that even attempting to cover all research in these areas would by far exceed the scope of this research project.¹ In this chapter, I will therefore concentrate on reviewing a select number of contributions that lay the groundwork for the development of the theory of action consciousness and that are particularly relevant for validating the main hypotheses outlined in Chapter 2. Although the range and scope of previously published concepts and approaches exceed what is necessary for this work, the following subchapters explicate relevant research and theories for the understanding of history didactics even though they

¹ For example, in regard to the Holocaust thirty million historical documents with fifty million individual records are archived in Bad Arolsen alone (Flor and Neusüs, 2010, 9). There are more than 40 theoretical approaches with numerous individual contributions that focus on explaining the Holocaust. For a discussion of these approaches and further references, see Heinsohn (1995), Rosenfeld (1999), Bauer (1982), Hasberg (2001), and Fleming (1984).

may not address the need to complement historical consciousness with an action component. Aside from directly investigating specific models, empirical and theoretical studies regarding the regimes of twentieth-century Germany will also be examined to provide further evidence for the need of an action component that can transform learning history to learning from history.

History didactics research was conducted in the former East Germany, but considering the nature of its closed society it was a separate academic field of study compared to its Western counterparts, with different methods and focus on topics pertaining to historical methodology. It is important to examine GDR didactics research in its own right, while integrating it with the more recent works in the field following the *Wende*² because it not only gives an insight into how this subject was treated in a closed and tightly controlled society, but also because no East German – or West German – studies have been identified that comprehensively deal with action as part of historical consciousness. Therefore, the subchapters will not only discuss the relevant models and approaches but also a selection of significant Holocaust and GDR studies including some didactics studies that were conducted during the existence of the SED regime. Among the theoretical concepts I will also discuss the notion of historical thinking along with the role and goals of history didactics. Based on this review, I will argue that, for the purpose of this research project, a broader approach is necessary if a society is to learn from history, rather than limiting history to strictly learning about specific facts and dates.

4.1 Theoretical and conceptual contributions

To understand the direction of this research, it is important to keep in mind that much of what is discussed, expounded, and reviewed either stems from or is intended for the further development of history didactics. With this discipline as the major contributor to concept development, it is important to continue building on existing research, initiate new studies and expand the subject's reach to a larger audience. The notion of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, for instance, is one of the key pillars of history didactics and represents the conceptual foundation for

² Meaning 'turning point'. This term was applied after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 because it was seen as a major change in the history of the divided Germany specifically, and between East and West as a whole.

countless theoretical and empirical publications. Among the many contributions in this field, I will briefly address some basic concepts and thoughts from Rösen, Jeismann, von Borries, and Pandel, since they have shaped the debate and represent an important starting point for developing some of the core hypotheses of this research. Yet, despite the major headway made by history didactics researchers thus far, the link between historical consciousness and action to prevent historically similar detrimental events from happening again has not been a significant focus of theoretical research to date. Therefore, the following models and approaches represent a selection of the state of development that has been achieved so far.

4.1.1 Historical thinking

To foster a greater understanding of the basis of historical consciousness, one has to ask the question '[How] does one remember?' (Landsberg, 2001, 64). This question, which was originally posed by Elie Wiesel,³ broadly asks how memory of a past event is formed, yet it can be used to address the conscious and unconscious dimensions and the various aspects and elements that influence the way individuals and societies come to terms with and internalize the past. According to Jörn Rösen, *Geschichtsbewusstsein* can be understood as the basis of all historical teaching and learning of societies and cultures in the past (Rösen, 2008, 74).⁴ This suggests that the basis for all historical discourse, thought, and imagining has to be cultivated in the form of consciousness regardless of how developed this consciousness is. *Geschichtsbewusstsein* is therefore a mental process, which Rösen calls *Historisches Denken*,⁵ and is based on three different categories of consciousness – content related, formal, and functional, which are all related to history in general or certain historical events in particular.⁶ It can be considered, then, a significant contribution towards developing an integrative definition for historical consciousness. This makes historical consciousness a reflective, internal, and even impulsive mental operation that is founded within individuals, whether it is a conscious effort or not.

A closer examination of Jörn Rösen's work on *historische Erinnerung* provides a good starting point for further discussion because he proposes

³ See Landsberg (2001), 64.

⁴ My own translation.

⁵ 'Historical thinking' or 'historical thought'.

⁶ Historical thinking includes not only the learning process but also personal experiences. See Rösen (1983) in Zülsdorf-Kersting (2007), 15.

the idea that the basis, source, and target of all historical thought are founded in contemporary everyday life (Rüsen, 1983, in Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 15).⁷ This concept is widely supported by other history didactics researchers like von Borries, and it leads back to the role memory plays within individuals. Remembrance is fundamental if the individual wishes to situate him/herself in a moment in time and, as Rüsen notes, try to reconstruct or alter what he calls time in a natural sense into human time that can be better understood because it is consciously addressed in one form or another. Researchers like Günther-Arndt explain this notion similarly by saying that people consult or turn to the past either consciously or unconsciously, and that they do this through the process of remembrance (Günther-Arndt, 2003, 24). For Rüsen, the mental operation of remembrance is a key feature of historical thinking. This also means that what is personally experienced in the daily lives of individuals needs to be factored in as well. Yet, how can something be remembered if it was not experienced? For example, how can the younger generations born after the fall of the Third Reich or the GDR remember the events that transpired if they were not alive to witness them?

In such cases, Rüsen differentiates between historical and autobiographical remembrance by saying that historical remembrance goes beyond the boundaries of one's life span while the latter remains well within it (Rüsen, 1994, 7). It must be noted then, that while experiences in life can be remembered, anything that is beyond that dimension must be developed. The forms of historical cultural socialization – the museums, memorials, and/or artistic expressions – as well as schooling definitely aim at influencing this development in individuals. These developments will then also differ according to which remembrance community or society an individual belongs to, since each have their own historical consciousness (Hasberg and Körber, 2003, 183–4). Because Rüsen differentiates between autobiographical remembrance and historical remembrance, every moment in time in which all of the witnesses, or *Zeitzeugen*,⁸ have passed away and the more time that has passed since the event and today, thus needs to move into the realm of historical culture, remembrance, and collective memory.

This transition from the autobiographical remembrance of the eye-witnesses to what Rüsen refers to as *Historische Erinnerung* is necessary to keep the memory of the events alive and relevant for the younger

⁷ He refers to it as *lebenspraxis*, which translates into 'the practice of living'. Refer to Rüsen (1983) in Zülsdorf-Kersting (2007), 15.

⁸ 'Contemporary witness', or an 'eyewitness'.

generations of today and the future. His idea of historical remembrance is that there must be a 'bewusst vollzogene[n] Verbindung der Gegenwart mit der Vergangenheit (...) der geistigen Tätigkeit, die sich als Erzählen identifizieren lässt'⁹ (Rüsen, 1983, 55). Important for Rüsen is that a conscious effort to connect the present and the past with or through historical narration and learning results in the formation and development of historical consciousness. Therefore, Rüsen's theory of *Historische Erinnerung* suggests that a conscious effort exists – that historical learning shapes and develops *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. On a societal level, this conscious effort expresses itself in the forms of historical cultural socialization. He also mentions that an unconscious element plays a role in the formation of historical remembrance, yet this direction was not thoroughly addressed.

What Rüsen, Zülsdorf-Kersting, Hasberg, and Körber have described in their work are some of the dimensions of what influences the construction and formation of historical images within individuals and on a broader scope of collective construction. A rational reflection, however, is important in the understanding of the past, and Karl-Ernst Jeismann states that

Geschichtsbewusstsein erinnert deutlich die vergangene Zeit als Horizont der Gegenwart im kommunikativen Kontakt kultureller und sozialer Spannungsgefüge und wird auf der Stufe der Reflexivität zur ‚Geschichtsbewusstheit‘ dessen, der über das Zustandekommen und die Bedeutung von Geschichtsbewusstsein nachdenkt.¹⁰ (Jeismann, 1988, 11, in Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 13)

For Jeismann, *Geschichtsbewusstheit*¹¹ is a rational approach that makes it its own category as a part of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* and is significant for individuals and especially for those who study historical consciousness. Important here, too, is the notion that these impulsive and reflective mental operations come from a conscious desire that Jeismann calls *Geschichtsverlangen*.¹² He suggested that *Geschichtsverlangen* exists before

⁹ 'Deliberately consummated connection to the present with the past (...) where the mental activity identifies itself as narration'.

¹⁰ Own translation: 'Historical consciousness reminds specifically that the past is a horizon of the present in the communicative contact of cultural and social power structures and is at the level of reflexivity to "historical awareness" of the one who thinks about the existence and importance of historical consciousness.'

¹¹ 'History consciousness/awareness of'. The meaning has subtle differences from historical awareness, even though this meaning is blurred in its English translation.

¹² 'Historical demand or desire'.

and underneath all historical reflection and is thus its life raw material. It frequently blocks itself against distanced rationality, yet it is the essential basis for all forms of self-ascertainment (Jeismann, 1988, 12).

Jeismann's focus on the rational look at history, while an integral part of historical consciousness, only explains the actively conscious dimension of an individuals' internalization and remembrance processes. His theory does, however, touch upon the idea that a degree of entanglement between the instinctual and the rational colloquial takes place. Jeismann stresses, therefore, that while both a rational and instinctual process exists, it is the historical desire, the *Geschichtsverlangen*, which always comes first and is consequently the basis of historical understanding and thinking. In essence, a desire for history must be present before imagining or rational interpreting and learning can begin. Thus, *Geschichtsverlangen* and *Geschichtsbewusstheit* are closely related and interdependent but must be differentiated between because *Geschichtsverlangen* directs more attention towards historical desire or imagining while the other is heavily dependent on rationality.

Both forms, however, play an integral role if one wishes to see historical consciousness deliver real-world results for change, even if they do not explain the consequences or results directly. For example, the regime changes and the events leading up to the subsequent collapses witnessed in the Soviet bloc countries in the late 1980s may be rationally studied and understood through *Geschichtsbewusstheit*, yet the desire to look into the matter must be in place prior to the rational discourse. Even these two elements of historical consciousness do not fully explain what motivated ordinary citizens to overthrow the communist regimes that so fundamentally transformed the geopolitical landscape in the East.

Jeismann's and Rüsen's theories are significant contributions to the theory of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, yet further investigation and a more complete view of the unconscious aspects need to be explored since they have only been mentioned but not fully developed. This makes these contributions aspects of, but not integrative approaches to, historical consciousness. When Schönemann called for a singular definition of historical consciousness back in 2000, however, he went even further and suggested that the various experiences and interpretations an individual has already cultivated should be integrated into an individual's horizons of understanding, knowledge, and historical sense elements (Schönemann, 2002, 83). Specifically, the historico-cultural experiences and interpretations Schönemann is referring to relate to the type of influence that past experiences and the various forms of historical culture have on an individual's historical consciousness and on its formation.

This is important because it suggests that personal experiences and current perceptions impact historical consciousness. He shares the idea that *Geschichtsbewusstsein* and the creation of historical images is an individual construct, which builds up in internalization and socialization processes. The individual construct of history that influences *Geschichtsbewusstsein* therefore has what Schönemann describes as dialectical exchange relationships with the collective construct of historical culture (Schönemann, 2000, 44, in Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 12). In other words, the construct of history in individuals is stimulated by the collective construct, which is itself represented by the various forms of historical cultural socialization.¹³ Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting, a researcher whose theory of historical construction was a response to Schönemann's desire for an integrative definition of historical consciousness, describes his theory of historical cultural socialization as a method that aids in explaining what he labels historical construction, a model that helps define an underlying understanding of how historical consciousness is formed and transformed (Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 16, 30–2).¹⁴

It is important to keep in mind, however, that historical cultural socialization is a concept aside from the one Zülsdorf-Kersting has labeled in order to describe his theory of historical construction. Wolfgang Hasberg and Andreas Körber expand on the idea of dialectical exchange relationships between the individual and the larger community by suggesting that these individuals are a part of various communities of remembrance that overlap one another and require a degree of harmony between their various definitions and offerings of meaning, along with their own historical consciousness (Hasberg and Körber, 2003, 183–4). Each collective construct, and in turn the remembrance communities with their historical consciousness, are versatile aspects of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* that all depend on the mental processes of individuals and their historical understanding. Hasberg and Körber's idea implies that individuals make up specific communities, each with their own interpretation and understanding of the past. This notion is significant because it suggests that historical consciousness is formed by environmental factors like school or the family and community, which is also significant for and influences historical thinking. Taking their understanding in combination with Zülsdorf-Kersting's theory, historical construction helps expose

¹³ These dialectical exchange relationships take place within a cultural community and are thus in agreement with the historical self-image of the remembrance community.

¹⁴ For more detail on this theory, see section 4.1.2.5.

the interrelationships that exist between and are evident in individual and societal interpretations of the past.

The forms of historical cultural socialization, which include museums, memorials, literature, film, art, poetry, music, and others utilized to represent history, are the external societal sources that, like schools and universities (Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 12–13),¹⁵ aid in an individual's internal formation of his or her *Geschichtsbild*, or historical image. This point is important because it shows that there is a relationship between the individual construct and the sources created and distributed by a society, which become central to the idea of historical thinking since it helps shape this form of discourse. Societal forces therefore influence historical thinking within and among individuals and thus have exchange relationships that cultivate individual historical consciousness.

For von Borries, in contrast, *Geschichtsbewusstsein* may be a process, but he has developed the idea of a system of equilibriums and transformations within and between four categories that takes on a significant focus on forming a perspective on the past – layers of coding, figures and formation of meaning, historical connections between times and events, and dimensions for coming to terms with the past (von Borries, 2001, 239–80).¹⁶ The strength of this model is von Borries' notion that all of these categories are interrelated and mutually impact each other. This approach explains why the results of historical analysis, learning, and comprehension can differ substantially by time, location, and people involved. Von Borries' model of equilibriums and transformations¹⁷ further strengthens this notion because it shows the results of historical analysis differing by time, region, and individuals involved (von Borries, 2001, 239–80).

Yet, one of the most comprehensive approaches to the study of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* is Pandel's concept that brings historical thinking into a multidimensional level and a step towards an all-encompassing definition of historical consciousness. As I will describe in more detail in section 4.1.2.8, Pandel's model consists of seven

¹⁵ He specifically talks about individual constructs being based on and shaped by those of the larger society to which an individual belongs. For more on historical construction, see section 4.1.2.5.

¹⁶ See Bodo von Borries (2001) *Geschichtsbewusstsein als System von Gleichgewichten und Transformationen*, in Jörn Rüsen (ed.) *Geschichtsbewusstsein. Psychologische Grundlagen, Entwicklungskonzepte, empirische Befunde* (Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau).

¹⁷ A more in-depth investigation of von Borries' model is provided in section 4.1.2.4.

dimensions that make up historical consciousness – *Temporalbewusstsein*, *Wirklichkeitsbewusstsein*, *Historizitätsbewusstsein*, *Identitätsbewusstsein*, *Politisches Bewusstsein*, *Ökonomisch-soziales Bewusstsein*, and *Moralisches Bewusstsein* (Pandel, 2005, 8–22). The first three dimensions comprise what Pandel calls *Geschichtlichkeit*,¹⁸ and the remaining four represent societal dimensions, which he calls *Gesellschaftlichkeit*¹⁹ (Pandel, 2005, 8). Pandel speaks of dimensions, which suggests that the basis of historical thinking can be traced to, found in, and cultivated within these seven dimensions, although the degree to which of them influence or are shaped by historical thinking is open to debate.

A singular definition for *Geschichtsbewusstsein* is difficult to construct and when examining Jeismann's approach one sees that more work is needed in order to achieve this goal. Since he defines his work as a subcategory of historical consciousness, his theory of *Geschichtsbewusstheit* attempts to address both the rational and the instinctual historical desire aspects, even though the rational remains its main focus. Despite their close relationship and interdependence, his theory does not quite go far enough in the sense that the unconscious aspect of historical desire did not receive as much attention as the rational. Any wish for an all-encompassing integrative definition of historical consciousness thus remains addressed but not entirely fulfilled by Jeismann's work. Rösen's theory of *historische Erinnerung* and Jeismann's *Geschichtsverlangen* are two steps closer to an all-encompassing definition for *Geschichtsbewusstsein* that Schönemann had called for. Yet Rösen's theory left a significant gap that makes his work a contribution to, but not a complete underlining concept of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. To get to the basis of what is to be understood when historical consciousness is being discussed, an analysis of other concepts and approaches will be undertaken in the subsequent chapters: Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting (who took Rösen's idea, among several others, a step further) and his *Theorie der historischen Konstruktion*,²⁰ von Borries' models, and Pandel.

So far we have seen a range of approaches that deal explicitly with the creation and morphology of a theoretical foundation for *Geschichtsbewusstsein* and its influence on and relationship with historical thinking. While Rösen's, von Borries' and, in particular, Pandel's multidimensional models of historical consciousness cover many aspects that come together to form an overall image of history, they may not be going far enough because they

¹⁸ 'Historicity'.

¹⁹ 'Sociality'.

²⁰ 'Theory of historical construction'.

require further development and neglect the action component, which make them subcategories of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* instead of all-encompassing theories. How do we know if, and how can we ensure that, as a society we have learned from the past? An important part of the answer comes from Dietmar von Reeken, who defines history ‘[als] ein[en] Prozess der Rekonstruktion und Konstruktion von Vergangenheit aus der Perspektive der Gegenwart mit der Zielsetzung, in Gegenwart und Zukunft die eigene Fähigkeit zum Verständnis gesellschaftlicher und individueller Prozesse zu vertiefen und Handlungskompetenz zu gewinnen’²¹ (Reeken, 2004, 5).

The words *Gegenwart*, *Zukunft*, and *Handlungskompetenz* imply and suggest that learning from the past involves a willingness to act and respond to current and expected future events. Knowing historical events and where and how this knowledge was acquired, especially on major tragedies like the Holocaust or repressive police states like the GDR, is vital information for the researcher as well as for the student. But it does not answer the question, if and to what extent knowledge and a profound understanding of historical events will cause the individual and, in aggregate, society to actively resist a historically comparable past event from repeating itself. What is needed is a paradigm shift from a ‘history of the past’ to what Michel Foucault calls the ‘history of the present’ (Foucault, 1975, 30–1),²² or if one goes further, the ‘history of the future’ that will be determined by concrete actions of today and tomorrow. This underscores the importance of incorporating an action component into the conceptual discourse. Ultimately this raises the question, at what point *historisches Denken* or *Erinnerung* will lead to political action.

In order to answer this question and to enhance our understanding of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, it is important to discuss the concepts above in greater detail, precisely explain their functions and aims, broaden the understanding of these and other models beyond the notion of historical thinking, and to examine the notion of collective memory and the role this plays in a given society. As these approaches currently stand, they can be seen as subcategories of, and not singular definitions for the genesis of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. The theories of von Borries, Günther-Arndt, Rösen, Zülsdorf-Kersting, Jeismann, and Pandel among

²¹ ‘A process of reconstruction and construction of the past out of a perspective from the present with the objective of deepening a person’s understanding in the present and future of social and individual processes to gain competence in the subject [of history].’

²² Also see Habermas (1989), 226–7, on pre-reflexively shared identity forming traditions in conjunction with the *Historikerstreit*.

others all set the framework for an understanding of the functions and role of historical consciousness and thinking. The aforementioned groundwork, or more specifically the concepts of Rüsen and Jeismann on historical thinking, has provided an important conceptual understanding for some fundamental dimensions of historical consciousness, although it lacks action consciousness. In the following sections, a concise analysis of the aforementioned topics and approaches and their significance for *Aktionsbewusstsein* will be discussed in greater detail.

4.1.2 Concepts and models of historical consciousness

Over the decades much debate and a multitude of models, theories, explanations, and descriptions of and for the genesis of historical consciousness have been developed. The issue remains, however, that of the numerous contributions, many either contradict one another or are considered by their authors as central categories of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. Thus, the singular definition Schönemann spoke of may not be achievable.²³ A plethora of previous theories that built on each other have paved the way toward this goal but have either become subcategories of historical consciousness or contradict other approaches that aimed to define it. One major issue with previous research studies is that they all neglect the action component that would bring them closer to an integrative and all-encompassing definition of historical consciousness. The works of von Borries, Rüsen, Pandel, and others have over the years developed or created theories that can be seen as expansions and even stepping stones toward an all-encompassing model for historical consciousness, yet even these significant contributions fall short of addressing action consciousness.²⁴

As for research conducted with a specific focus on National Socialism, the Holocaust, or the German Democratic Republic, these have been, and in the case of GDR studies are becoming, quite numerous and insightful. Yet to date no prior research has been identified that specifically addresses the notion that a desire or predisposition to act on what was learned from the past has been measured, discussed, or evaluated. Considering the nature of the NS dictatorship and its crimes against peace and humanity, the Holocaust in particular, and

²³ Schönemann writes about the various theories and how they are valid, yet not all compatible with one another, which he describes in greater detail. See Schönemann (2000) *Geschichtsdidaktik und Geschichtskultur*, in Zülsdorf-Kersting (2007).

²⁴ For a complete understanding of action consciousness, see Chapter 5.

the SED regime with its extensive list of human rights abuses, none have seriously looked into how these examples in history can be utilized as a tool to not only teach about but also prevent these atrocities from happening again. These topics, especially the mass extermination of the Jews, represent moments in history that can and ought to be learned from in such a way that they can be prevented. However, most research tends to focus on a specific goal or on knowledge levels or attitudes towards the subject without measuring or addressing how society can learn from history to resist dictatorships and foster a peaceful and harmonious future.

Much of the previous research, as some of the examples already discussed have shown, have a tendency to deal explicitly with the reflexive approaches to history or have explored specific areas of research in detail, leaving other fields open for further discussion. It is the unconscious dimensions, however, which earlier studies either briefly touched upon or ignored completely, that now add increased relevance to the more recent approaches that deal with conscious and unconscious thought. Despite some advances, these concepts must still be expanded on, to include an action component that will make history more relatable and important for today and tomorrow.

Theories like Pandel's multidimensional model, von Borries' system of equilibriums and transformations, and Zülsdorf-Kersting's historical construction are all examples of approaches that aim at being the definitive model of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. It is important, therefore, that theories of historical consciousness meet specific basic criteria before they can be considered all-encompassing approaches in this field. This means that in order for a theory to not become an aspect or subcategory of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, it must include conscious reflexive aspects as well as unconscious elements at a fundamental level. It must then also be able to be operational in field research. Therefore, a model of historical consciousness must include a deductive theoretical approach and an inductive empirical aspect that can back up the theoretical and hypothetical claims.

Beyond this, however, it is also significant to look at research that has been explicated outside of the German-dominated sphere of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* research. Although von Borries' *Pyramidenmodell des Geschichtsbewusstseins* and his *Pfadmodell zur Genese des Geschichtsbewusstseins*²⁵ are two relevant examples that have been thoroughly

²⁵ 'Pyramid model of historical consciousness' and 'Path model for the genesis of historical consciousness'.

developed and examined, even if they were not necessarily extended to include action consciousness, they are nonetheless German approaches along with those of Pandel, Rüsen, Jeismann, and Zülsdorf-Kersting. Therefore, the following section addresses a field of study that was predominantly focused on Western research known as collective memory. Although collective memory is more of an area of research rather than a single model, some basic thoughts and concepts will be elaborated on because collective memory has shaped a significant portion of the debate and explains a key feature that is also frequently discussed in historical consciousness research. The following sections will therefore not only address a selection of prior relevant models and research, but also the notion of collective memory in greater detail.

4.1.2.1 Collective memory

Patterns of repetition or events that reoccur in a similar fashion time and again are attributes that can be seen throughout the course of history. It can be argued, for example, that the most common embodiment of political control and government in the 20th century was some form of repressive authoritarian regime, whether it was a military dictatorship like that of Manuel Noriega of Panama, a fascist one like that of Benito Mussolini, an occultist and racialist one like the National Socialist state in Germany, or any other form of individual or single party domination of life and national politics. In short, in the 20th century, authoritarian and totalitarian dictatorships and regimes could be found in many countries all over the world. Germany's long history of authoritarianism and the dark shadows cast by recent regimes have left a lasting impact on the entire nation to this very day. The monumental atrocities committed by the National Socialists against the Jews and other minorities deemed racially undesirable by Hitler's government, and those the SED regime suppressed and tormented with its police apparatus, both played a major role in shaping what has since become a harmonious and peace-loving nation in the European and world community.

For the Germans specifically and the Europeans as a whole, the crimes committed by the Nazis during the Holocaust present a human tragedy that must be prevented from happening again. Since the conclusion of the World War II and the liberation of the concentration camps, substantial efforts have been made to preserve the memory of the tragedy that was spread throughout Europe and Russia under the swastika. Everything from memorial days dedicated to the liberation of Auschwitz, public lectures, memorial sites, museums, schooling, poetry, film, art, and music have all contributed to the formation of historical

consciousness in individuals and collectively. What the function and role behind all of these contributions to history are, and what kind of influence they have, is subject to an ongoing debate within and outside of Germany. These representations, however, are forms of historical cultural socialization that are intended to keep the memories of the mass murder at the hands of government alive and to prevent the erosion of general knowledge about these authoritarian dictatorships. If the ultimate goal behind learning and preserving history is to prevent or perhaps even end human suffering and to strive for a brighter tomorrow, then these contributions and representations of past tragedies must be sustained and perpetuated so that real change can be achieved and a course can be set away from seeing similar past events reoccurring. Since all of these efforts play a role in shaping memory, they must therefore also have an impact on the collective memory of a nation or community.

Unfortunately, the end of the last world war has not seen with it the end of dictatorships, repressive regimes, or death by government. The rise and fall of the many authoritarian regimes all over the world and even the genocides that have been committed despite the desire to never repeat an episode as horrible as the mass extermination of the Jews again shows that a concerted effort to effectively prevent the rise of tyranny and all of the nightmares that come with it must be strengthened. The failure to prevent the death and destruction caused by rogue governments becomes difficult for history to tell because of the unique nature of each regime and the magnitude of the crimes they have committed. History didactics, on the other hand, is in a unique position to allow individuals and societies to learn from the past to help prevent similar events from occurring again in the future.

While it can become problematic, for instance, to compare the NS dictatorship to that of the East German example, both are unprecedented in nature and since one regime was followed by the other within the same country, they ought to be studied in detail and not forgotten. Elie Wiesel once asked the ‘famous question – “How does one remember?”’ (Landsberg, 2001, 64) when he spoke of preserving the Holocaust in history. For him, it is important that the Holocaust be preserved in collective memory. This notion can be expanded on to include dictatorships and repressive regimes as a whole. While there are countless theories on collective memory, French theorist Maurice Halbwachs²⁶ proposed early on that mental images of the present are

²⁶ Maurice Halbwachs published his work *La mémoire collective* in 1950.

used to reconstruct the past. He is one of the supporters of the concept of remembrance communities that Hasberg and Körber spoke of because he also suggests that individuals are shaped by the culture and society they belong to. This also implies that since each remembrance community is unique and has its own historical consciousness,²⁷ each community thus has a different approach to how they deal with and internalize the past. Kenneth Foote suggests that

[The] relationship between tragedy and the negotiation of meaning suggests an important connection between landscape, culture, and social or collective 'memory'. In one sense culture refers to collective beliefs and values, the social conventions and traditions that bind individuals to a group or community. These are values that shape everyday life but transcend the individual and surpass the individual's ability to change them. They are values that build gradually, change slowly, and sweep from generation to generation. Culture is, in this sense, a sort of collective or social memory. This concept of memory provides an important bond between culture and landscape, because human modifications of the environment are often related to the way societies wish to sustain and efface memories. (Foote, 1997, 33)

This makes the Holocaust, which involved continental Europe and Russia²⁸ an event that is remembered differently depending on multiple factors including ethnicity, nationality, cultural background, and much more. This means that each community has its own methods of preserving history and that the culture of a particular community, which broadly contains accepted and perpetuated moral and social values and beliefs, shapes what is known as collective memory.

While common efforts utilized by the nations of Europe to preserve memory include building monuments, running museums, celebrating commemoration days, and making the history of World War II, the Third Reich, the Holocaust, and the Cold War a standard part of education,

²⁷ The study of collective memory overlaps with the study of historical consciousness because the two fields are interrelated. Therefore, collective memory theories mirror much of the broader studies on historical consciousness. For related collective memory research studies, see Connerton (1989) and Judt (1992), 83–118.

²⁸ Europe, Russia, and especially Poland were all directly affected by the Holocaust. The impact of the Holocaust can be broadened to include the world because Jews fleeing Europe were not always welcomed. A fitting example would be the SS *St Louis* tragedy, when many nations rejected the fleeing refugees on board the ocean liner.

the possibility of forming or altering perceived truths into myths that support the positive self-image of a group is an issue that can and does occur. Collaboration with the Third Reich is an especially touchy subject among the formerly occupied nations of Europe. One such example of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*²⁹ comes from the divided German nation itself. Memorial sites commemorating non-Jewish victims are a part of the German landscape and point out that ordinary Germans suffered and were victimized as well. This sheds light on the fact that an effort to raise awareness of their suffering exists. Going further, memory and responsibility for Nazi crimes in Europe was not viewed the same way in the GDR as it was in the BRD. In the GDR, the SED declared that the anti-fascist democratic upheaval between 1945 and 1949 completely eradicated National Socialism and therefore they could not be charged with liability (Wolfrum, 2008, 4).

Even in Holland there are monuments dedicated to resistance fighters, while the commemoration of the Jews murdered through collaboration with the enemy has not been a priority for many years (Jong, 1988, 68). While this has changed and monuments commemorating the Jews murdered in the Netherlands have been erected since, it is nonetheless an interesting phenomenon that can be seen in other countries as well. All of these issues are aspects of collective memory, which strives to create a knowledge and awareness base that at least the majority of a community will internalize.

The action of shaping memories is one that countless historical consciousness and collective memory theories and approaches have dealt with. The process of historical imagining, as previously discussed, is not necessarily formed on factual material and is prone to falsification and the creation of myths. This notion, however, is only an aspect of a broader psychological phenomenon that does not limit itself to historicized events. Harald Welzer suggests that the human brain may unconsciously be responsible for not remembering, distorting real events, inventing new ones, or falsifying the truth about events that did take place (Welzer, 2005, in Voss, 2010, 10). Humans may do this on an individual basis, but the idea can also be applied on a broader spectrum to cultures and societies – remembrance communities – since the self-image of a group also plays a role in how the past is remembered.

The difficulty arises when creating a representation of the past. The issue specifically lies between the two extremes of historiography

²⁹ 'Coming to terms with the past'.

on the one hand and memory, which is mostly compatible with the self-image of an individual or group, on the other. This means that there is a divide between hard historical facts and how people remember the historical event. Historian Saul Friedlander says that 'historical consciousness [is a] necessary conjunction of both extremes in any significant attempt at understanding, explicating, and representing the yesterday that affects the shaping of today' (Friedlander, 1993, viii). This notion is significant because it helps explain the delicate balance that representations of history are exposed to in their attempt at providing the most historically accurate picture of the past. This also suggests that depending on the group in question, the views on an event may be conflicting or vastly different from that of another group. The availability of new information would therefore also influence the perception of an event over time as well.

Considering the scope and magnitude of the atrocities committed by the National Socialists in Europe, there are many different viewpoints on the subject even among victims, non-victims, and perpetrators. Opposing arguments exist between and among former East and West Germans regarding the GDR as well. *Der Spiegel* published in 2009 an opinion poll conducted by political scientist Klaus Schroeder which revealed that "'(Not) even half of young people in eastern Germany describe the GDR as a dictatorship, and a majority believe the Stasi was a normal intelligence service'" (quote cited in *Spiegel-Online*, Bonstein, 2009, 1). The article continues, stating that 57 percent of eastern Germans defended the former GDR and did not identify with the current socio-political system (Bonstein, 2009, 1).

While both examples represent different eras and different regimes, it becomes evident that a struggle with memory exists between different groups within Germany, between victims, and between and among groups in other nations. Friedlander puts the issue over the NS dictatorship best by saying that

(The) history of Nazism belongs to everybody. Indeed, for Germans, it is an essential issue in terms of national self-perception and identity, in terms of understanding not only their own past, but their present-day society as well. For this reason, the historicization of the Nazi era may mean different things to different groups within the Federal Republic, according to their ideological and political choices. But the same past may mean something else to the victims of Nazism, whoever they may be, and for them, there are other, no less legitimate modes of historicization. (Friedlander, 1993, 80)

To expand on this idea, it can be applied not only to the other German regime but generally to other historical topics as well.

Collective memory can be seen as a construct with several open areas for further investigation. More specifically, there is no single monolithic form or interpretation of any given historical event. That said, collective memory may be applicable in terms of particular groups, yet within each group variations and degrees of memory can exist. The focus of collective memory is also one on the multiple representations and forms of historical cultural socialization, since each representation of a historical event includes unique variables that either explicitly deals with a particular angle, viewpoint, or position, or they can shape the opinions of a group or individual. Friedlander's statement about the history of Nazism being for everyone can thus also be applied to other historical topics like the GDR or the Cold War in general.

Ultimately, the argument over collective memory must also focus on the representations of the past themselves and the effectiveness of these modes of historicization on their audiences. Each form, as in museums, memorials, films, literature, and more all have a significant impact on collective memory. They can vary in effectiveness based on what they intend to influence on a deeper level. Literature, for example, may have a greater impact on an individual because it has an emotional effect that is formed in congruence with increasing knowledge and awareness. Part of this phenomenon is that a strong correlation between the amount of knowledge gained from a given source and how that knowledge is used can lead to a profound impact on how one feels about the topic.

In that regard, since television is one of the most widely used sources for entertainment, news, and information, documentaries could prove to be an effective method of influencing emotions, attitudes, and knowledge because of the medium's wide reach and popularity, and the entertaining and informative approach that can be employed. Motion picture films shown in theaters or on television are also widely accessible, yet historical accuracy can be trumped by the creative and artistic efforts of storytelling. This is both intriguing yet potentially detrimental because the overuse of one particular source can lead to a warped or inaccurate view of a historical event.³⁰

³⁰ 'Source' can be expanded to also mean a viewpoint. An extreme example would include the overuse of the state-sponsored and -endorsed broadcasts on the outbreak and causes of the Korean War presented to the North Koreans. Since they only had access to their government's perspective, the population had no choice but to support this self-image.

Other sources such as historical fiction novels also have a tendency to focus more on the narrative adventure than on accurately portraying factual information. It must also be noted that an author's interpretation may be infused with the evidence and information he or she presents. The same phenomenon can also apply to state-funded representations such as museums and even memorial sites. This can lead to the conclusion that the viewpoint of an author or the proponents of a memorial or museum in a specific remembrance community may be responsible for the unintended consequences of promoting a perspective that correlates with the self-image of a person, group, or nation.

While the nature of history, memory and collective memory as a whole may become difficult to navigate, it is important to keep in mind that multiple perspectives of history exist and ought to be taken into account. Collective memory, however, is largely fostered through the forms of historical cultural socialization that represent a historical event. Each form, or source, influences the construct of the collective memory of the community for which it was created. The collective knowledge these sources reinforce aims to create a fact-based resistance to prevent, for example, the nightmares of the NS dictatorship or the Stasi police state from re-establishing themselves in a similar form. This means, for example, that the strong focus on the Holocaust in German schools, the memorial sites, museums, lectures, the continuous stream of television documentaries, and the many films all contribute to the construction of a German collective memory that strives to uphold and strengthen the peace-loving and harmonious atmosphere that exists in the country today.

The danger of over-saturating students and other individuals with information pertaining to unpleasant past events, such as the Jewish Holocaust, may occur to varying degrees depending on the group in question. This constant exposure to the Holocaust topic in Germany has led to one of the most controversial debates in which Martin Walser suggested putting the topic to rest. This has become known as the *Schlussstrich*³¹ mentality regarding the mass extermination of the Jews that has since gained momentum. Germany is a country that discusses the war years and those of the Third Reich quite extensively, which may seem like a positive effort to preserve collective memory. While this

³¹ Martin Walser is responsible for starting the *Schlussstrich Debatte* over putting the Holocaust topic to rest on receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in October 1998. See Walser (1998), 10.

may indeed be the case, it is also very likely to have the unintended consequences of making a segment of the population take up Walser's proposal. While this may seem like an alarming trend, however, it does not necessarily indicate a rise in an eagerness for Holocaust denial (Voss, 2010, 74–80). On the other hand, it does indicate that a degree of over-exposure to material regarding the topic has been responsible for encouraging a desire to move on and focus on other historical events.

These trends do show that there are concerted efforts within these nations – remembrance communities – to preserve and advance knowledge about past events. There is, therefore, a split between the efforts to preserve memory in all generations within the community and the desire to keep discussions about the event going. On the one hand is the wish to prevent the nightmares of National Socialism from happening again through a continuous drive to educate the wider public. On the other hand is the factor of over-saturation with information, even if it is agreed that it is vital to keep memory of the atrocities alive. That is significant because it shows that a consciousness shaped on anti-genocide attitudes has been formulated that could lead to preventative measures or awareness that action will be required to actively resist a reoccurrence of genocide, at least within the community itself. Each remembrance community is thus responsible for fostering such attitudes. This means that country-specific initiatives are required to strengthen knowledge and attitudes specifically regarding the Holocaust. This can and should be expanded to include rising up against and curbing the formation of authoritarian regimes in all remembrance communities of the world.

The dark history of National Socialism transcends the national boundaries of the European nation-states. The war, the occupation, the genocide, and the overall destruction caused by the rogue Nazi government are remarkable because their crimes were truly global and far-reaching. This event, which is becoming more and more historicized as the witnesses to the atrocities pass away, must be preserved in memory in order to prevent a similar tragedy from happening again.

While the NS regime is unique to history and a reoccurrence of this form of dictatorship is unlikely, many of the authoritarian and totalitarian elements of the regime were borrowed from previous examples, such as in Prussia, and those postwar dictatorships that took on some of the characteristics of Hitler's regime – the sheer brutality of Saddam Hussein's police force in Iraq, for example, shows that the Orwellian-style of government continues to thrive in contemporary history.

Today, examples of authoritarian police states still have their place on the map. Even though the end of World War II saw the demise of

the Nazi dictatorship, the liberated and occupied portion of Germany that became the German Democratic Republic, loyal to Stalinist Russia and later the post-Stalinist USSR, represents, to a degree, the continuation of dictatorship in Germany. Despite the ongoing debate over the crimes committed by the ruling elite, it is vital to remember the GDR for what it actually was. Arguments pertaining to both of Germany's regimes have been made suggesting that they were a paradise, or not as bad as commonly believed, for those who were not targeted by the government for repression. Indeed, for those who profited from the power elite, life may have been quite prosperous. The issue, however, is to instill within every individual the desire to preserve freedom, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness against the removal of these inalienable rights by repressive governments. For all generations who did not experience dictatorship, it is important to shape their historical consciousness in such a way so that the majority will take any form of action to preserve freedom and stop the hand of tyranny.

For the most part, post-World War II research associated with the notion of collective memory primarily focuses on a single aspect of historical consciousness, namely the remembrance dimension. There have been numerous initiatives, concepts, and ideas, both public and private that have all contributed to building and preserving a collective memory through culture, which is expressed through the forms and institutions of historical cultural socialization. These forms may have influenced the *Geschichtsbewusstsein* of individuals but historical consciousness research is still missing the dimension of action consciousness. These efforts, as influential and significant as they may be, are therefore not going quite far enough.

4.1.2.2 Pyramid of historical consciousness

Bodo von Borries can be seen as one of the key figures in *Geschichtsbewusstseinforschung*.³² He has published numerous arrays of theories and models and even expanded and improved on existing theories, advancing, strengthening and integrating them into his own research. Among the many significant and influential of von Borries' theories is his *Pyramidedes Geschichtsbewusstseins* concept.³³ This model is especially noteworthy because of its inclusion of the unconscious presence of history on the lowest level of his pyramid as well as four

³² 'Historical consciousness research'.

³³ 'Pyramid model of historical awareness'.

fundamental *Sinnbildungsmuster*³⁴ that make up the emotional, esthetic, moral, and attitudes. The four levels and corners represent the two dimensions of consciousness and unconsciousness that this model aims to combine as factors that shape historical consciousness.

Each corner of the pyramid shown in Figure 4.1 represents an area and therefore also the shape of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, while each step or level shows the four plateaus of its genesis. The shape dimension covers the aspects of the intellectual penetration of historical concern, the deep psychological acknowledgment of consternation, and the everyday life-practical relevance of dealing with history. The left side of the pyramid covers *Geschichtsbewusstseins*' genesis. On the lowest plateau, one finds the *unbewusste Präsenz*³⁵ that then flows up to *diffuse Beschäftigung*,³⁶ which builds up to *ausdrückliche Auseinandersetzung*³⁷ and *handlungsleitende Erkenntnis*.³⁸ Important to this model is the idea that the conscious and unconscious dimensions of von Borries' pyramid ultimately lead to historical insight that allows for critical historical reflection. The topmost plateau of the pyramid suggests conscious dealing with history through insight and reflections. While *historische Einsicht* refers to historical insight, *kritische geschichtsreflexionen*³⁹ and *aufarbeitende vergangenheitsbewältigung*⁴⁰ refer to mental operations of critical reflection and working on coming to terms with the past.

The key here is his notion of *verantwortliches Handeln*.⁴¹ This suggests that historical consciousness can lead to what von Borries labels responsible action, yet there is no concrete definition of what this implies. This can, however, be seen as an approach that recognizes that something can be done, for example, such as continuous study of the past to build up a strong historical consciousness. Unfortunately, von Borries backed away from this approach and was criticized for creating a model that was too complex and would lead to inconsistent ranges of historical consciousness. Such issues are not uncommon when one theory attempts to define the various avenues and directions of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*.

³⁴ 'Meaningful education patterns or samples'.

³⁵ 'Unconscious presence'.

³⁶ 'Diffuse employment'.

³⁷ 'Express confrontation'.

³⁸ 'Action-guiding knowledge'.

³⁹ 'Historico-critical reflection'.

⁴⁰ 'Working on coming to terms with the past'.

⁴¹ 'Responsible action or acting'.

PYRAMIDE DES GESCHICHTSBEWUSSTSEINS

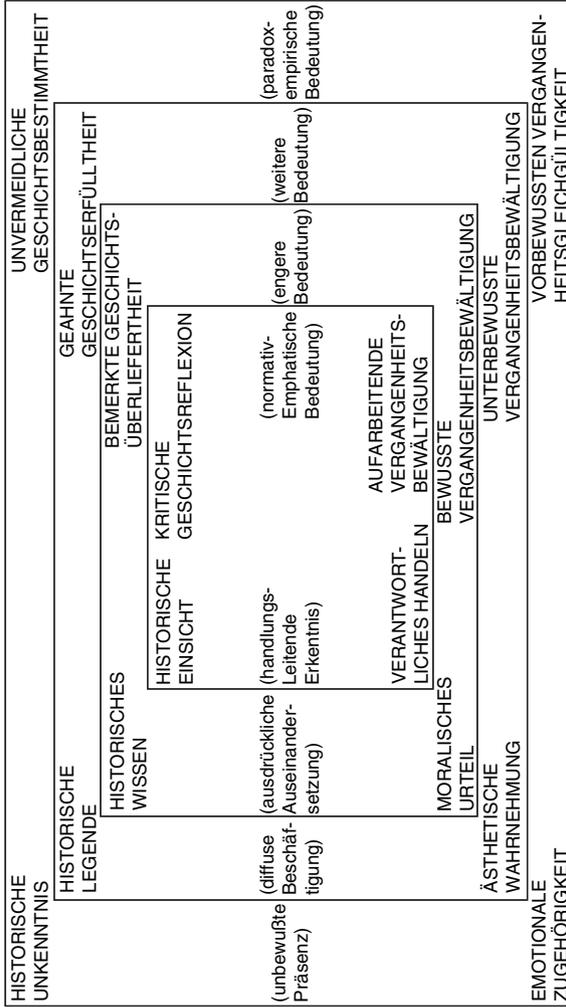


Figure 4.1 Pyramid of Historical Consciousness (based on von Borries, 1988 in Pandel and Rüsen, 1994, 129)

Both Rösen's work and Jeismann's theory of *Geschichtsverlangen* touched upon the unconscious and emotional elements that make up *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. However, they did not quite go far enough for von Borries. Because von Borries' theories and models are largely integrative-synthetic, he takes segments and ideas from other theories to create new ones. Often this leads to highly intricate and complex approaches that become difficult to validate empirically. This is a dilemma that also applies to the *Pyramidenmodell des Geschichtsbewusstseins*. Criticism over the complexities of von Borries' pyramid model was expressed at the 1982 conference 'Geschichte als Legitimation'⁴² and may have been responsible for von Borries' backing away from this theory and returning to his traditional approach of integrating and expanding on other models. His pyramid model is nonetheless a highly advanced one that, even if it attempted to combine too many elements, discusses significant factors that also include forms that can be described as early contemplation for some form of action. Despite the mention and inclusion of a responsible action element, it was only briefly acknowledged and von Borries finally retreated from his pyramid model. In conclusion, while the pyramid model is conceptually very broad, it does not comprehensively address the notion of action consciousness.

4.1.2.3 *Path model of the genesis of historical consciousness*

Unlike the previous model, von Borries developed another theory based on what he has determined to be the basic dimensions or the *Grunddimensionen des Geschichtsbewusstseins*⁴³ (von Borries, 1995, 209–44). This theory lists seven dimensions onto which the basic form of historical consciousness is built. These dimensions are comprised of cognitive, moral decision, motivation, *Unterhaltungsbedürfnis*,⁴⁴ historical affirmation, pride, and optimism, and each has its own subcategories (von Borries, 1995, 347). It is on this model that the *Pfadmodell zur Genese des Geschichtsbewusstseins*⁴⁵ is based.

This approach consists of nine steps that include: (1 and 2) fundamental social data; (3) fundamental attitudinal data; (4) the factor of teaching history; (5) prestige of teaching history; (6) student performances; (7) main learning effects; (8) main learning effects in terms of

⁴² 'History as Legitimation'.

⁴³ 'Basic dimensions of historical consciousness'.

⁴⁴ 'Entertainment needs or desires'.

⁴⁵ 'Path model of the genesis of historical consciousness'.

forgetting; and (9) the practical consequences of the learning effects. The aim behind this approach is twofold. On the one hand it shows the factors and the development of the effect and influence that *Geschichtsbewusstsein* has and on the other hand it is able to include custom thought profiles unique to the individual. This is ultimately what the nine steps incorporate, the ninth specifically dealing with the consequences of the prior (steps 1–3) instruction factors before a lesson; the factors of the lesson (steps 4–5); student performances (step 6); and the learning effects (steps 7–8). Individual factors exist within each step that reach over and influence the other steps and give them a degree of inter-connectivity. Each step is therefore a building block that leads to being able to see the factors and the influence that result in the creation and outcome of historical consciousness within individuals.

As intricate and multidimensional as this approach may appear, it is nonetheless a significant contribution because von Borries' work contained an empirical component – this model was applied in the field and the results were thus generated through representative research and experimentation.⁴⁶ In sum, the path model for the genesis of historical consciousness has been actively utilized and tested by von Borries. What this model then shows is the relevance of cultural and social factors that are responsible for and greatly influence the creation of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. The path model remains a significant contribution, although an action component was not integrated into this approach.

4.1.2.4 *Historical consciousness as a system of equilibriums and transformations*

Another significant theory that shows von Borries' return to his integrative work, which he based on the works of Rösen among others, is his notion of *Geschichtsbewusstsein als System von Gleichgewichten und Transformationen*.⁴⁷ Central factors in this theory are the emotional components as well. As the name suggests, the idea is that one should look at historical consciousness as a system of equilibriums and transformations. The system consists of four areas each with their own subfields that act in exchange relationships to each other (von Borries, 2001, 239–80). What makes this approach unique is that instead of following a hierarchy of steps, these areas exist on equal levels that mutually impact one another rather than having one step lead to another.

⁴⁶ See von Borries (1995).

⁴⁷ 'Historical consciousness as a system of equilibriums and transformations'.

As briefly described, the field *Schichten der Codierung*⁴⁸ consists of the biography of our experiences, social memory, the delivery of culture, and methodical science, or what can be broadly defined as falling under cultural memory research. It is noteworthy that personal experiences and the delivery of culture are listed as factors because of the influence they have on individual historical consciousness. The associated areas that complete the theory are *Figuren der Sinnbildung*⁴⁹ (traditional, exemplary, critical, and genetic structures, or historical operations); *Verknüpfungen der Zeitebenen und Geschichtsoperationen*,⁵⁰ in the sense of a complex mesh of historical significance, present perceptions, and future expectations by historical perceptions, meanings and orientations; and *Dimensionen der Verarbeitung*,⁵¹ cognitive insight, moral decisions, emotional movement, and esthetic views (von Borries, 2001, 240).

Ultimately, a change to or influence on one of these regions causes realignment and a rebalancing of the entire structure. This theory can be seen as an attempt at an all-encompassing theory of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* that is a highly intricate and abstract construct. Von Borries' aim was to create a model of historical consciousness that could be, 'möglichst gleichermaßen zur Erklärung historischer und biographischer Entwicklungen sowie kollektiver und individueller Fallbeispiele tauglich sein'⁵² (von Borries, 2001, 240). This approach is an example of von Borries' integrative style, which in the case of this project was influenced by the cultural memory research of Jörn Rüsen and Jeismann. Although this model is complex, difficult to put into operation, and does not address action consciousness, it is a further step towards a singular construct of historical consciousness.

The *Pfadmodell* and the *Pyramidenmodell* that von Borries put together outline the basis for Zülsdorf-Kersting's theory of *historische Konstruktion*. Since von Borries' aforementioned theories are based on the works of Jeismann and Rüsen, they also influence the notion of historical construction. More specifically, Rüsen's *historisches Denken* and Jeismann's *Geschichtsverlangen* are most significant because both are attempts at an all-encompassing theoretical interlocking image of how individuals deal

⁴⁸ 'Layers of coding'.

⁴⁹ 'Figures of formation of meaning'.

⁵⁰ 'Links of the layers of time and historical operations'.

⁵¹ 'Dimensions of processing'.

⁵² Own translation: 'should as equally as possible explain the historical and biographical developments and should be compatible in collective and individual case examples'.

with history. So far I have listed several studies that strove to define and lay the basis of what ought to be understood when investigating the notion of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. While these works have helped clarify and promote a better understanding of this subject, a further selection of core theories remains to be discussed.

4.1.2.5 Theory of historical construction

There are countless theories and models designed to create a better understanding of the multidimensional definition of historical consciousness. The *Theorie der historischen Konstruktion* is one such that provides a concrete foundation that addresses fundamental elements of the notion of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. The approach incorporates the three important aspects of history didactic concepts that Hasberg elaborated on: the theory itself, pragmatics (whether this concept can be operational in field research), and the empirical explorations that give real-world accurate results that make historical construction a powerful and relevant model (Hasberg, 2002, 61).

The approach combines both the conscious reflexive dealing with history and gives equal weight to the unconscious dimension of historical imagining. These two fields comprise the basis of historical construction, yet specific factors shape each region. I have translated Figure 4.2 into English and it gives a visual representation of how history is

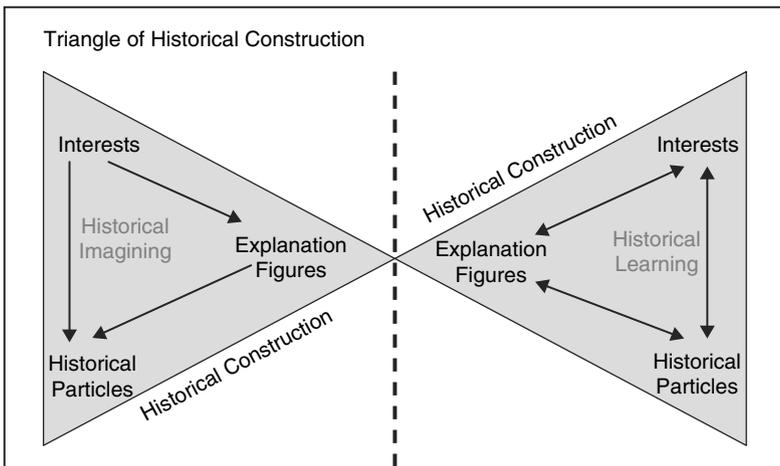


Figure 4.2 The Theory of Historical Construction (based on Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 461)

constructed within individuals. On the one hand, historical imagining takes place as a result of curiosity and interest that derive from historical particles.⁵³ These particles can consist of newspaper clippings from a particular moment in time, to films and other artifacts. These particles, combined with key figures from that era, or what he refers to as explanation figures, create a basis for an individual to imagine the era in question. The imagining process, however, does not necessarily always take place subconsciously. The triangle to the right in Figure 4.2 represents the conscious, reflexive approach to history, which Jeismann and Rösen have dealt with in their studies. This region comprises the active learning of historical events where each aspect mutually impacts the other. Explanation figures, for example Erich Mielke⁵⁴ or Heinrich Himmler,⁵⁵ are examples that can be used to facilitate an understanding of the events surrounding them. The same can be said for historical particles. Each of these elements impacts the other and has an effect on an individual's interest in the subject matter. When combined, the two fields of historical construction explain the conscious dealing with the past and the unconscious imagining elements that shape historical images within an individual.

This theory is a significant contribution to the study of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* because it addresses both the conscious and unconscious sides to acquiring an image of the past. Zülsdorf-Kersting's work included an empirical component in which he questioned and observed grade school students as a part of his effort to validate his concept. Even though his theory has been helpful to the integration of the unconscious and conscious elements that make up the construction of historical images, as the theory's name suggests, there are more elements that shape the debate that require further exploration. Additionally, it makes no mention of an action component or whether this development takes place on a conscious or unconscious level. This theory is also incomplete without his meta-theory to explain the larger phenomenon of historical consciousness. The following contribution is the theory that helps explain this concept in a wider context.

⁵³ Zülsdorf-Kersting speaks of historical particles to describe fragments of the past used to represent a specific era. Volkhard Knigge speaks of *Vergangenheitsmaterial*, or 'materials of the past'. See Knigge (1988), 37.

⁵⁴ Head of the Stasi secret police apparatus in East Germany, officially known as the Ministerium für Staatssicherheit.

⁵⁵ Reich leader of the SS.

4.1.2.6 Theory of historical cultural socialization

Zülsdorf-Kersting's theory can be viewed as a highly developed basis for the understanding of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* that makes for a great foundation and a good starting point for an overall understanding of the processes that shape historical consciousness in individuals and most notably school children. However, further intricate developments, approaches, and theories still need to be discussed and expanded on in order to grasp a greater understanding of why the study and practice of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* and in turn *Geschichtsdidaktik* is important. It is necessary, therefore, to include Zülsdorf-Kersting's notion of *geschichtskulturelle Sozialisation*, which I have translated, to better analyze his theory of historical construction. This model can be best described as a theory that helps explain how his notion of historical construction can change depending on the factors surrounding the formation of historical consciousness in an individual. Zülsdorf-Kersting states that

[G]eschichtskulturelle Sozialisation bezeichnet den prinzipiell unab-schliessbaren zeitlich und sozial-räumlich gerahmten Prozess histo-rischer Konstruktion als Ausbildung von Geschichtsbewusstsein im Modus des historischen Lernens und als Zeichnung von Geschichtsbildern im Modus des historischen Vorstellens.⁵⁶ (Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 31–2)

The model thus implies and suggests that historical construction can be influenced by the factors of time, both in terms of length and point in time as well as space. This means that the course of time, for example, from the beginning of a history course to its conclusion, and the space, which in this example would be the classroom setting, influences and changes the construction of historical images within individuals (see Figure 4.3). This also means that other forms or *Formen der geschichtskulturellen Sozialisation* each uniquely influence the process of historical construction and may also explain the diversity of historical images as impacted by the environment. Since each individual does not share the exact same image as that of another, the theory of historical cultural socialization helps explain how a variety of factors shape and stimulate historical construction in terms of time and space.

⁵⁶ Own translation: 'Historical cultural socialization describes the principle, "interminable temporally and social spatially-framed historical construction process", as training of historical consciousness in the mode of historical learning and as a drawing of historical images in the mode of the historical imagination.'

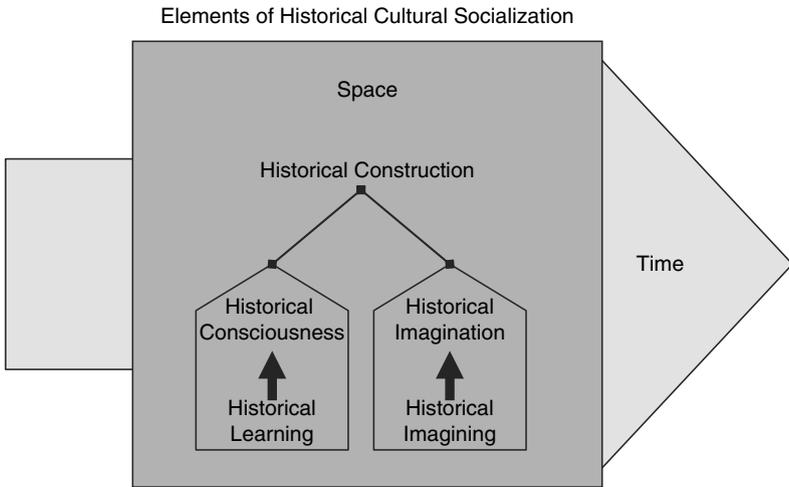


Figure 4.3 The Theory of Historical Cultural Socialization (based on Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 31)

The historical cultural socialization theory is one that is dependent on the theory of historical construction. Yet, without a model that defines *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, the historical cultural socialization theory can only be seen as an aspect that influences historical consciousness. Zülsdorf-Kersting had to develop two complementary theories so that a complete understanding could be gained. This approach thus needs to be combined with his theory of historical construction to describe how Hasberg and Körber's idea of remembrance communities help shape *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. While Zülsdorf-Kersting has developed two connected theories that advance the discourse on historical consciousness, neither historical construction nor historical cultural socialization deal with or describe the phenomenon of action consciousness.

4.1.2.7 Conceptual change research

The field of conceptual change research, while containing many of its own theories and perspectives and being applied in other disciplines, is one that has much relevance for *Geschichtsbewusstsein* research in specific, and history didactics in general. Researchers in this field have advanced notions that have competing theoretical concepts, ideas, approaches, and perspectives much like those which can be seen in *Geschichtsbewusstsein* research. Ola Halldén (1997) spoke of

'conceptions' that can be understood as representations or notions that are constructed within individuals. Going further, Limón defines conceptual change as a process where an individual's existing knowledge is modified to a greater or lesser extent by new information and that different outcomes can result from the introduction of this information (Limón, 2002, 260). This prior knowledge is the material that the conceptions Halldén wrote about consist of. While Limón's description of conceptual change provides an understanding of this process, it must be noted that there are two dominant views that shape the debate. These perspectives broadly fall into the realm of knowledge-as-theory or knowledge-as-elements angles (Özdemir and Clark, 2007, 351). Since these two viewpoints make up the most essential yet simplified features of conceptual change research, an approach pertaining to each perspective needs to be investigated.

The knowledge-as-theory perspective, while broad in terms of scope, was influenced largely by the Piagetian learning theory and his concept of assimilation and accommodation, as well as Kuhn's notion of normal science and scientific revolution⁵⁷ (Özdemir and Clark, 2007, 352). Limón's definition would fall under the knowledge-as-theory perspective since it suggests that prior knowledge is a reliable construct that stands alone and can be influenced by new information, for example, concepts acquired from a teacher in a classroom. Under this perspective, Posner et al.⁵⁸ promote the idea that a learner has a current conception and if this is functional in terms of solving problems within this existing conceptual framework, then it is sufficient enough for the learner to feel no need to change his or her current conception (Özdemir and Clark, 2007, 352). Limón also sees conceptual change as a means to promote modifications of a student's prior knowledge (Limón, 2002, 260).

What Limón, Posner, Hewson, Strike, and Gertzog thus imply is that a student may not feel it necessary to change his or her conception at all, or perhaps only slightly if that conception answers or solves the problem at hand. In that case, Piaget's notion of assimilation, or minor restructuring and alteration, plays a larger role because the new information, if any was utilized, was assimilated to solidify or expand the existing prior conception within the individual. Assimilation, therefore, does not play a significant role in changing an individual's conception. For conceptual exchange (Hewson, 1981, in Özdemir and Clark, 2007, 352) to occur, an individual must either be dissatisfied or conclude that

⁵⁷ For more on Kuhn's concept, see Kuhn (1962).

⁵⁸ Posner et al. (1982), 66, 211–27.

his or her idea does not work and ought to be abandoned.⁵⁹ Any new material must not only be understood by the individual but it must also seem plausible enough so that the student can recognize potential new directions this conception can provide. Accommodation takes place when new perspectives replace the existing ones because they no longer solve the problems they were meant to address.

The knowledge-as-theory viewpoint advances other similar notions that focus on different elements of the Piagetian model that Posner et al. among others have supported. These include research on mental models, framework theories, and gradual transformations of naïve theories, among several other notions.⁶⁰ Ultimately, the knowledge-as-theory approach pioneered under conceptual change research is a significant contribution to history didactics and historical consciousness. The practice identifies what has been discussed as conscious reflexive approaches to history, and the unconscious, which in the case of conceptual change research are the preconceived conceptions within individuals that exist in children as well as adults. These conceptions, where the study sees knowledge as theoretical constructs – be they true or false – can be compared to the notion of historical desire.

Where *Geschichtsbewusstsein* theories have dealt with the issue between historical imagining and historical learning, the knowledge-as-theory perspective backs this notion, saying that preconceived conceptions can be changed with the introduction of new information. This new information can be facilitated through schooling, which thus implies and supports that historical imagining takes place to deal with the past and that new information can transform this perspective into a more accurate method of dealing with history. The acquisition or introduction of new information can also be viewed as a conscious approach to history because it involves actively learning information about the past. This active engagement that strives for changing an individual's conception is only a portion of the overall field of conceptual change research. For these reasons, the knowledge-as-theory perspective of conceptual change contributes to the *Geschichtsbewusstsein* debate as well.

⁵⁹ Hewson specifically focused on conceptual change in regard to learning science. However, conceptual change is relevant for historical consciousness as well. See Hewson (1981), 383–96, in Özdemir and Clark (2007), 351–61.

⁶⁰ As a field of research, conceptual change offers a wide range of theories and concepts that are too numerous to elaborate on here. For more concepts and approaches, see McCloskey (1983) in Gentner and Stevens (eds), 299–324; Carey (1999) in Scholnick and Miller (eds), 293–326.

At the other end of the argument over conceptual change are the supporters of the knowledge-as-elements perspective. The name itself implies that an individual's understanding can be summed up as a collection of quasi-independent elements⁶¹ (Özdemir and Clark, 2007, 354). This is a key difference compared to knowledge-as-theory because they do not see the naïve knowledge as structured and well-organized in theory. Supporters of the elements perspective focus on conceptual change involving evolutionary revision, refinement, and organization as well as the notion that multiple conflicting ideas can coexist at any given point in time (Özdemir and Clark, 2007, 355).

A major proponent of the knowledge-as-elements view, diSessa (1993) contributed a significant understanding to this perspective by introducing what he has labeled phenomenological primitives or P-prims. These phenomenological primitives represent the novice unstructured knowledge elements that are constructed through experiences and observations. This is a fundamental aspect that has shaped the elements perspective because it is one of the core arguments and stands in contrast to the knowledge-as-theory viewpoint. The P-prims elements, while unstructured, can be activated and even loosely connected in larger conceptual networks if the individual recognizes them according to context (Özdemir and Clark, 2007, 355). In this respect prior naïve knowledge can be activated and influenced through instruction and other environmental factors in which different outcomes can result. The knowledge-as-elements perspective therefore focuses less on well-organized and structured thought and instead sees knowledge as organically developed aspects that can be influenced to a greater or lesser extent by learning.

The study of conceptual change may have a broad range of applications but it adds significant understanding to the field of history didactics and *Geschichtsbewusstsein* research. Both the knowledge-as-theory and the knowledge-as-elements perspectives provide valuable insight that impact how researchers approach historical consciousness, even though there is no focus on an action component. On the one hand, however, the knowledge-as-elements view can be directly applied to the notion of unconscious historical imagining because this consists of naïve knowledge that is not necessarily structured nor is it always

⁶¹ Several researchers who back this notion are mentioned. Some support a more mathematical or mechanical perspective, for example Thagard, while other researchers support a more organic viewpoint, such as Douglas Clark. See Thagard (1992); Clark (2006), 467–563.

accurate. On the other hand, the knowledge-as-theory supporters have also developed theories that can apply to historical consciousness. Ultimately, both sides of the debate over conceptual change address the multiple issues that affect a range of other disciplines as well. In terms of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, both perspectives can be used to expand on the complex nature of historical consciousness even if action consciousness remains unaddressed.

4.1.2.8 *Political didactics research*

As a discipline history didactics focuses on historical consciousness as one of its central pillars of study and research. To date, multiple theoretical concepts and models have been developed to explain and analyze the phenomenon of historical consciousness. Yet, although history didactics takes historical consciousness as a central research area aside from pedagogy, discovering how historical thinking leads to political action has also been examined in a separate but equally developed significant field of research known as political didactics, or didactics for political education.

History didactics has several similarities with didactics for political education that require further investigation and also complement the scope of this project. Indeed, it can be argued that the two fields overlap in areas pertaining to political learning, thinking, and pedagogy. Since history didactics, or more specifically historical consciousness studies, has developed a dimension for political consciousness, it is important to look into what has been expounded by researchers in the field of political didactics. In terms of focus, this covers a broad range of topics and issues that far exceed the goal of this research project. Therefore, a selection of works will be elaborated on that complement the debate and relevant research.

Much like history didactics, which among many categories has historical consciousness as a central pillar, didactics for political education has community consciousness as its central category, which will be the first major point for further discussion. *Bürgerbewusstsein*, or community consciousness, 'kann als Gesamtheit der unterschiedlichsten Vorstellungen und Einstellungen über die politisch-gesellschaftliche Wirklichkeit verstanden'⁶² (Lange et al., 2013, 13). Specifically, community consciousness is an ongoing and ever changing mental

⁶² 'can be understood as the totality of diverse ideas and attitude about the political and social reality'.

process that allows an individual to find his/her orientation in politics, economics, and the community in order to develop a meaning to interpret the socio-political reality and to influence this through action (Lange et al., 2013, 22).⁶³ While this defines what is to be understood as *Bürgerbewusstsein*, the discipline strives to create models that can be applied on both an individual and a communal level that is empirically validated through fieldwork. Among the questions *Bürgerbewusstsein* research examines and attempts to answer include what kind of influence social processes have on political thinking, or more directly, what kind of meaning gender, socio-economic situations, or cultural context have on community consciousness (Lange et al., 2013, 23).

To elaborate on the central topic of community consciousness further, a 2013 research study published by Dirk Lange, Holger Onken, and Andreas Slopinski addressed the theories of and empirically examined the notion of *Bürgerbewusstsein* among young adults in the German state of Nether Saxony. More specifically, they surveyed over 1,200 students from eleven schools in the area of Weser-Ems including the city of Oldenburg (Lange et al., 2013, 15), with a focus on three aspects in the context of community consciousness: political interest, political orientation, and subjective future expectations, and which factors influence these variables (Lange et al., 2013, 14). The empirical results for this study were derived from an evaluation conducted in October 2009 shortly after the Bundestag⁶⁴ vote and the respondents were between 18 and 23 years of age (Lange et al., 2013, 15). Ultimately, the central aim of this study 'liegt darin zu untersuchen, inwieweit sich bei Jugendlichen der Altersgruppe, die mit der Umfrage errieht wurde politische Vorstellungen verfestigt haben und welche Einflüsse noch veränderungen bewirken können'⁶⁵ (Lange et al., 2013, 15). This was then followed up with a more in-depth analysis of aspects that influence and make up community consciousness.

The second part of the project evaluated the findings of the fieldwork that tied back into the theoretical foundation of community consciousness as elaborated on in the theoretical part. The results revealed the level of political interest among the over 1,200 respondents, and

⁶³ Also see Lange (2008), 432–3.

⁶⁴ The German parliament. The study was conducted shortly after the parliamentary votes of 2009.

⁶⁵ 'is to examine the extent to which young people in the age group that the survey reached have solidified political ideas and whose influences can still cause changes'.

showed that 20.6 percent had little interest, 60.1 percent had moderate interest, and approximately 18.5 percent displayed a high level of political interest (Lange et al., 2013, 58). This was evaluated further by splitting the categories of low to high interest between the genders, as well as interest based on education through the various forms and types of schools (Lange et al., 2013, 58–61). Other factors that impact political interest including the significance of family, income, media, opinions, and attitudes towards political topics were derived from survey statements. Chapter 7 addresses the last major point of future prospects and professional goals of the individuals. This was also divided up between gender, the type of school, and the social and family background of the respondents. Statements that covered a range of political issues such as abandoning atomic energy or initiating tax reductions to boost the economy⁶⁶ revealed that the former was more positive at 20.4 percent and this more so amongst those who received a higher degree upon graduation (Lange et al., 2013, 87).

Ultimately, the study revealed that political interest is shaped and supported through conversations with parents and that their occupational status played no significant role in how frequently such discussions took place. Another factor, ‘neben der Familie, der das politische Interesse und Zukunftserwartungen beeinflusst, ist der Bildungsabschluss der angestrebt wird. Politisch wenig Interessierte sind überproportional häufig unter Schülern zu finden, die einen mittleren Abschluss anstreben, also in der unteren Gruppe der Stichprobe’⁶⁷ (Lange et al., 2013, 113). The most frequently cited sources by those who show higher levels of political interest make up the media including television and newspapers, school, as well as the Internet (Lange et al., 2013, 113). This recent community consciousness-focused publication explored the level of political interest among young adults, what factors shaped and influenced their opinions, thoughts, and views on political issues, and how these issues are received by young people. In sum, this project, while more politically oriented, is an example of the direction that didactics of political education takes.

⁶⁶ In regard to the results of the tax reductions to boost the economy statement, 34 percent had a negative outlook and more so among individuals with a lower degree upon graduation. See Lange et al. (2013), 87.

⁶⁷ ‘in addition to the family, which influences the political interest and future expectations of the level of education that is sought [was revealed]. Politically less interested [individuals] are disproportionately found among students who are seeking an average degree [or level of education], i.e. in the lower group of the sample.’

The 2013 study on *Bürgerbewusstsein* is but one example of the type of analysis that is carried out in didactics for political education, and provides an idea of the research areas of this discipline, but one particular concept needs to be discussed in order to tie didactics for political education closer to the underlying themes and topic of this research project. To accomplish this, a further development by Professor Lange will be examined so that the relevance this field of study has towards history didactics, or historical consciousness in particular, can be made clear.

Published in 2007, Professor Lange described a phenomenon that historical consciousness research has also examined. As briefly discussed and yet to be fully elaborated on, Pandel's model of historical consciousness includes a dimension for political consciousness, which as a concept also fits into the discipline of political didactics. The following paragraphs consider political consciousness as examined by political didactics researcher Dirk Lange – what political consciousness means and how this ties in with historical consciousness and political didactics.

Political consciousness is a mental operation of an individual that goes beyond the realm of consciousness. Lange states that '[Im] Politikbewusstsein reduziert der Mensch die Komplexität der erlebten Gesellschaftlichkeit. Er konstruiert Modelle, die für ihn sowohl eine erkenntnisbezogene als auch eine handlungsbezogene Funktion haben. Einerseits stellen sie mentale Schemata zur Verfügung, welche die politische Wirklichkeit filtern und strukturieren'⁶⁸ (Lange, 2007, 205). On the one side, an individual creates models in order to gain a cognitive understanding of the complexity of sociality, and on the other an action-related function is formed. This is important because it deals with cognitive learning and understanding as well as an undefined action function. The discussion over political consciousness by political didactics researchers sparked a debate over what exactly is meant by political consciousness, which some researchers have argued is divided between a democratically-oriented consciousness and false consciousness (Lange, 2007, 206). Lange, however, stated that during political instruction the unprocessed raw forms of consciousness can also be meant and that, in short, political consciousness builds subjective notions about politics that transform through the political learning process (Lange, 2007, 206–7). This suggests that political consciousness is a

⁶⁸ '[Im] political consciousness a person reduces the complexity of lived sociality. He constructs models which have related to him both a cognitive and an action-related function. On one hand, they make available mental schemes, which filter the political reality and structure.'

continuously transforming concept and is influenced by various factors. Important here, too, is the idea that political consciousness also has a function if it is viewed through the dominance relationships of politics.

In political consciousness, an individual forms conceptions of the process that in politics transforms plural interests into general obligations (Lange, 2007, 207). Crucial, however, is that 'Herrschaft kann sowohl vertical, als Verhältnis zwischen Oben und Unten, als auch horizontal, als Identität zwischen Herrschern und Beherrschten, verstanden werden'⁶⁹ (Leggewie, 1995, 252, in Lange, 2007, 207). These dominance relationships must then be understood in the structures of political power in which social groups foster their collective liability (Lange, 2007, 207). The relationships between the various groups and individuals working and negotiating with one another in this structure institutionalize these dominance relationships in politics. In this sense, political consciousness can also find its function.

Ultimately however, political consciousness is on the one hand a mental operation that is influenced through the learning process and which finds its voice through the political power structures of a society. On the other hand, it is also a concept based on four planning tasks. These include: (1) the diagnostic planning task that lies in the actual analysis of political consciousness; (2) the normative planning task that lies in the substantiation of the desired political consciousness; (3) the reflexive planning task that lies in the exploration of possible political consciousness; and (4) the pragmatic planning task that lies in the restructuring of intended political consciousness education (Lange, 2007, 211). Political consciousness is thus more than a mental operation that is formed within individuals and goes beyond a notion that can be analyzed and measured. It is therefore a significant part of not only political didactics research but historical consciousness research as well.

The nature of political consciousness shows that it is much more than a process and is a science in its own right. It can therefore be analyzed through various methods and even be studied through different disciplines. The study of political consciousness may appear to be a subject limited to political didactics research, yet as an integral dimension of historical consciousness, which ties political matters to the understanding of past events, makes political consciousness a significant aspect of historical consciousness research as well. As will be elaborated on in the next chapter, a dimension for political consciousness is part of

⁶⁹ 'Rule can be understood as both vertical, as the ratio between top and bottom, and horizontally, as identity between rulers and the ruled.'

the structure of historical consciousness. Political didactics is thus an important contributor next to history didactics research in expanding knowledge and the scope of their disciplines, especially the study of historical consciousness. Although the study of political didactics has community consciousness as a central category, whereas history didactics has historical consciousness, it is nonetheless an important contributor to the interdisciplinary subject of political consciousness. Now that a basic comprehension of what political didactics researches are has been explained, the political consciousness dimension within the structure of historical consciousness can be better understood.

4.1.2.9 Pandel's multidimensional model of historical consciousness

Among the most influential researchers of historical consciousness is Hans-Jürgen Pandel. As previously touched upon, Pandel developed a model of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* covering seven dimensions that make up aspects of historical consciousness. For Pandel, it is important that history didactics, and more specifically historical consciousness research and theories, do not become too complex to the point where they can no longer be operational in practice. He suggests, as many other researchers have pointed out as well, that approaches must contain a theoretical base that can be empirically validated. Pandel saw historical consciousness analytically and drew up seven dimensions that each influence one another and can be combined in multiple ways (Pandel, 2005, 8–9). These seven dimensions comprise the two sides that shape historical consciousness, which Pandel labels *Geschichtlichkeit* (historicity) and *Gesellschaftlichkeit* (the societal elements that help form *Geschichtsbewusstsein*).

Figure 4.4 (translated by this author) is a representation of Pandel's model of the *Strukturierung des Geschichtsbewusstseins*. It is a visual rendition of the seven dimensions that make up historical consciousness. Unlike von Borries' pyramid model, these dimensions are not on a hierarchy of developmental plateaus. Rather, this approach implies that there are multiple possibilities and outcomes since each dimension can be referenced to another in any number of combinations. For example, historicity consciousness may help promote the capacity to think about issues according to their variability and ability for modification, but combine this dimension with political consciousness and an individual can see what political trends have changed over time and which traits have remained the same.

This, however, is only one example of the multiple connections that can be made. Pandel therefore alludes to his model being similar to

The Structure of Historical Consciousness

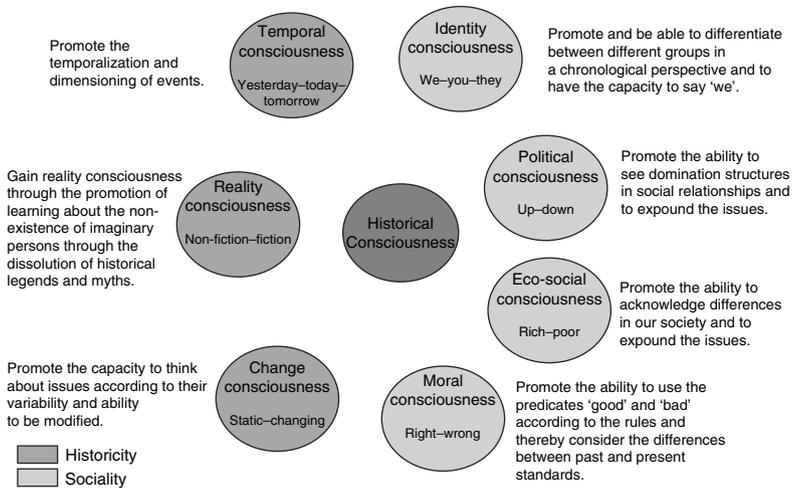


Figure 4.4 Pandel's Model of Historical Consciousness (based on Pandel, 2005, 8)

the Rubik's Cube due to the fact that so many different combinations can be drawn from this approach (Pandel, 2005, 9). In Figure 4.4, each sphere represents an aspect that plays a role in shaping or forming and transforming an individual's understanding of the past. The historicity side deals with active historical learning and conscious dealing with the past. Sociality is the side that represents the influences and factors society brings about. To strengthen the understanding of the dimensions that comprise Pandel's model, a deeper investigation into these elements and the interrelation between them must be undertaken.

Historicity is comprised of three key dimensions that help shape *Geschichtsbewusstsein* within an individual. The first, *Temporalbewusstsein*, concerns the ability to use time as a system for orientation, where the concepts of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, or more precisely the past, present, and future, provide a vital function and allow for the formation of a narrative chronology (Pandel, 2005, 10–11). Pandel speaks of historical consciousness as a cultural construct and that the narration of time or the *Narrativierung von Zeit* through learned events and incidents plays a fundamental role in forming this narrative chronology (Pandel, 2005, 10). He differentiates between the narrative and the chronology of time and suggests that students must also differentiate between the two because the narrative approach may use information

prior to an event or after it in order to better explain this occurrence. The cultural influences also add a meaning to time, and temporal consciousness seeks in part to find the beginning to the chronology of time. To use Pandel's example, the various religions of the world each have their own estimates that determine when the creation and genesis of the world took place (Pandel, 2005, 10–11). Temporal consciousness therefore sees the notion of *Zeitbewusstsein*⁷⁰ as one of the core elements for *Geschichtsbewusstsein* that is not necessarily formed in a classroom but could or ought to have been included (Pandel, 2005, 11).

Reality consciousness or *Wirklichkeitsbewusstsein*, as the name implies, is a consciousness of what is real and authentic and what is fictitious. Pandel states that the differentiation between what is real and what is not takes place on the basis of speech, where the words *es gibt*⁷¹ and *es gibt nicht*⁷² declare what can be proven to be true or untrue (Pandel, 2005, 11). Reality consciousness refers to three cultural text genres that include: (1) stories with a claim to authenticity also known as historiography; (2) imaginative stories with fictional elements as found in novels and teenage literature; and (3) counterfactual stories as in myths and legends or outright lies (Pandel, 2005, 12). Ultimately, what this dimension establishes is that there is a line between what is real and what is fictional. Where this line is drawn is not necessarily certain and where it is set can be influenced differently depending on several variables including culture. This also brings forth the issue over what stories are perceived as factual, especially amongst young students. On this front, Pandel says that past events and notables ought to go through the process of differentiation, since he believes that true and fictitious stories are developed and advanced through cognition in parallel (Pandel, 2005, 12).

Historicity consciousness, which Pandel also refers to as *Wandelbewusstsein*⁷³ is the third and final dimension for *Geschichtlichkeit*. Broadly speaking, this dimension contemplates what stays the same and what can transform through the historical process. The focus is on the recognition or knowledge that people, attitudes, and places transform over time and that other aspects may remain unchanged, especially within the time frame of an individual's lifespan. Pandel uses the term *Wandelbewusstsein* because of the impact this had on historical

⁷⁰ 'Time awareness'.

⁷¹ 'There is' or 'there exists'.

⁷² 'There is not' or 'there does not exist'.

⁷³ 'Change or transformation awareness'.

consciousness back in the 18th and 19th centuries. He states that during this time, it was realized that the separation of land and water, and the mountains and valleys in their formation at the time were not a result of the six days of the biblical creation of the world. Instead they were formed as a result of a long historical transformation process (Pandel, 2005, 13). It must also be taken into account that some elements may appear static as a result of the speed of the transformation. Thus, speed plays a significant role in the historicity process along with those elements that transform and those that remain or appear to remain the same.

The three dimensions of temporal, reality, and historicity consciousness can be combined in any number of ways to present the knowledge of *Geschichtlichkeit*. Therefore, a broad spectrum of elements can be attributed to historicity that other *Geschichtsbewusstsein* theories have discussed. These include an everyday theory of history, which discusses naïve and un-reflected dealing with the past, as well as theories of history and of the science of history (Pandel, 2005, 15). These dimensions, however, only cover a part of Pandel's structure of historical consciousness.

The second category of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* in Pandel's model covers the dimensions that he has labeled *historische Gesellschaftlichkeit*.⁷⁴ The dimensions on this side of the model all reflect aspects that are societal in character. The first major dimension for *Gesellschaftlichkeit* is labeled *Identitätsbewusstsein*.⁷⁵ Important for this category is the idea that an individual as well as a collective have the capability to not only see themselves through the change of time as a permanent unit, but also to have made the connection that, while individuals and groups of people do transform with time, they continue to remain the same (Pandel, 2005, 15). Since all groups are made up of unique individuals, identity consciousness applies to the collective as well because the changeability of one member of the group influences the entire unit, which then changes that group. Yet, it simultaneously implies that the group has remained the same as a collective. Thus, the term *Ich-Identität*⁷⁶ suggests that a degree of sameness exists within the group (Pandel, 2005, 15). In that case, a group changes as a collective, which makes the collective the same.

The term also conveys that a uniqueness of the individual continues to exist and present itself while at the same time emphasizing

⁷⁴ 'Historical sociality'.

⁷⁵ 'Identity awareness'.

⁷⁶ 'Self-identity' or 'personal identity'. It literally translates into 'I-identity'.

the commonality of the *Wir-Gruppe* or we-group (Pandel, 2005, 15). Individuals, therefore, describe themselves as being a part of a group by saying *we* and becoming a member of a cultural identity. Pandel describes identity as being a cultural construct, which will always be a cultural identity (Pandel, 2005, 16). He expands on this idea further by saying that anyone who identifies him or herself as a Christian, or even as a man or woman, takes this position over the cultural traditions in which they stand (Pandel, 2005, 16). This also means that anyone who identifies him or herself with a *we-group* automatically differentiates between an *us* and *them* group. This identity consciousness can then easily be connected with moral consciousness among others, because examples throughout history have shown what kind of results this differentiation can lead to. At this point, it can be noted that each dimension can and does play a role in the other dimensions and influences them.

For example, I have translated Figure 4.5 to show how identity can be influenced by time or temporal consciousness as well as by reality and historicity consciousness. This leads back to the Rubik's Cube analogy because of the many different combinations that can be created in Pandel's model.

Political consciousness or *Politisches Bewusstsein* is the fifth dimension in Pandel's model. It is important because it brings to expression the asymmetrical distribution of power and it discusses dominance

Linking of the *Identity* dimension with the dimensions of *Gesellschaftlichkeit*

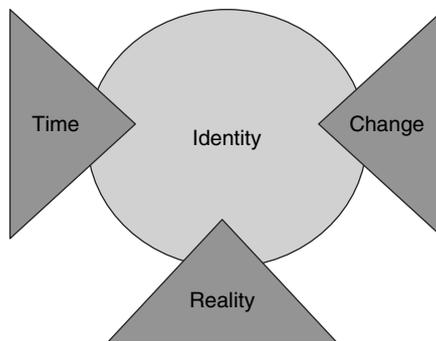


Figure 4.5 Consciousness and Sociality in Pandel's Model (based on Pandel, 2005, 16)

relationships (Pandel, 2005, 17). Different types of power, for example financial or economic, can also be considered forms of political authority because they answer the two major dilemmas within this framework. First, power must be distributed legitimately through voting, blood, or divinity and second, the borders of what kind of power can be politicized must also be addressed (Pandel, 2005, 17). Both the economic and financial forms of control, which do not necessarily have anything to do with the power structure of a nation or state directly, can be legitimized and politicized and thus made relevant in the political field. Ultimately, this dimension also plays into the other seven and moral consciousness becomes instantly significant because political consciousness can tie into whether certain dominance relationships are legitimate, moral, or justifiable.

Economic-social consciousness is the dimension that brings knowledge over the stratification of wealth in a social structure of a community that is expressed through the social orientation of rich and poor (Pandel, 2005, 18). Central to this awareness is the dimension of inequality that appears in society and is explained with the terms caste, class, and status. These terms themselves are further described through the inequality dimension of ownership, income, birth, and education (Pandel, 2005, 18). For Pandel, the causes of what makes the wealthy rich and the impoverished poor are not the focus of what is to be understood as economic consciousness. Instead, this dimension promotes the ability to realize the changes and transformations behind what was considered wealth and/or poverty in the past and what it is today. He also wants students and learners to see that the wealthy can also become impoverished, the poor can become rich and the affluent can become even wealthier. Even in this dimension it is important to Pandel that the interrelation between any given dimension with that of any other is noteworthy for *Geschichtsbewusstsein*.

The seventh and final dimension of Pandel's model is known as *Moralisches Bewusstsein*.⁷⁷ This dimension represents the self-obligation to decide over social norms of a civilized society. These norms deal with the predicates of *good* or *bad* and *right* or *wrong* based on societal regulations (Pandel, 2005, 20). Specifically, this field examines how flexible or rigid the predicates of *good* and *bad* are spread within the historical process and on what argumentation level these decisions are made (Pandel, 2005, 20). The ability to recognize that some of these

⁷⁷ 'Moral awareness'.

norms change over time is a central factor in determining a judgment over the predicates – they can mean different things at different times. Pandel cites the Middle Ages and even Stalinism and National Socialism as examples of whether it is appropriate to judge those eras with the norms of the time or with those of today (Pandel, 2005, 20). He therefore suggests that it is not wise to argue between the norms and instead have history lessons focus on both.

So far, several significant *Geschichtsbewusstsein* theories have been discussed that shape the debate and advance the study of history didactics. While the debate continues, it must be said that there are several definitions that can be seen as all-encompassing approaches to historical consciousness, most notably the works of Hans-Jürgen Pandel, Bodo von Borries, and Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting, including several others. While it can be argued that these approaches come close to Schönemann's desire for a singular definition, all-encompassing theories and definitions are exposed to becoming an umbrella term that lacks depth. This can lead to them becoming difficult to put into practice and may even cause them to oversimplify the complex social and mental operations that make up the phenomenon of historical consciousness. The selected approaches I have listed here represent some of the core theories and models that provide an in-depth understanding of not only the concept of historical consciousness but also of the ongoing discussion and debate around the idea. They have made significant strides into furthering the study and attempted to address the questions and concerns of other top researchers in the field.

Ultimately, while these and other theories describe and define *Geschichtsbewusstsein* or specific aspects of it, they neglect the key action component that would help support the reasons for why communities and societies value and continue to study and teach history. I have named this component Action Consciousness because it is the link that allows individuals to move beyond learning history to actively learning *from* history. The select theories mentioned here make up some of the core research areas and provide remarkable insight into the workings and processes that shape how individuals acquire a sense of the past, the state of knowledge, the effectiveness of teaching approaches, and numerous other aspects as well.

The foundation of knowledge and ideas promoted by prior research and their researchers provide a platform for the integration of a further theory that will allow this knowledge and information to be observed and applied in the real world. When taking into account von Reeken's concept of history as being a process of reconstruction and construction

of the past from a perspective in the present with the objective of deepening a person's understanding for the present and future of social and individual processes to achieve *Handlungskompetenz* (Reeken, 2004, 5), historical consciousness must therefore address an action consciousness dimension that has either been only briefly touched upon or neglected altogether. Since past research has largely left the notion of *Handlungskompetenz* untouched, it is necessary to have a concept that addresses how historical thinking in the realm of consciousness can lead to potential conscious and/or physical action in the present and future. The following subchapters cover a range of previous empirical research conducted to date that uses topics such as National Socialism, the Holocaust, or the German Democratic Republic as their underlying focus. Here too, it will become evident that there is a need for action consciousness to be covered by the respective research.

4.2 Empirical research to date

Previous empirical research has allowed for some significant advancement in the pursuit of better understanding how history is learned, taught, and preserved in memory. While a multitude of empirical studies exists that can be traced back to the 1920s and even earlier, many of these projects can be placed into one of two major categories: (1) historical awareness and consciousness studies, and (2) knowledge, attitudes, and effectiveness studies. While these two categories are significant and can stand on their own foundations, it is not uncommon or unusual to have research projects that are a blend of both categories. Some may place the empirical research as a central focus while others center on the theoretical side of the discussion that uses the empirical portion to prove and support the concept. In either case, elements from both categories can be found in either one.

I will concentrate on outlining several examples of research on National Socialist Germany, the Holocaust in particular, and on the German Democratic Republic because these are most relevant for and complement this study. Many of these projects, however, contain a conceptual aspect that is then verified through empirical field work. While this type of theoretical and empirical research makes up a substantial portion of history didactics research, the amount and the various approaches, models, concepts, and categories of *Geschichtsdidaktik* research by far exceeds the scope of this research project.⁷⁸ The following subchapters cover a range

⁷⁸ For a comprehensive look at the research, methods, and areas of study under history didactics, see Hasberg (2001).

of selected previous research that specifically deals with the regimes of twentieth-century Germany and various contributions that pertain to the concepts and ideas discussed earlier.

4.2.1 Holocaust research

Awareness and consciousness studies are most closely related to the theoretical discourse on history didactics, notably the concept of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. Among the earlier research projects in the field of history didactics were those of Kurt Sonntag,⁷⁹ who analyzed the general knowledge of history of a hundred students over a seven-month period in 1928. The empirical work was carried out with student and teacher interviews, classroom observations, and surveys in order to discover the level of knowledge and the origins of their historical consciousness. Ultimately, Sonntag pioneered some of the earliest 20th-century frameworks that included five age-based awareness development stages for how historical consciousness materializes in individual students. Sonntag's work may not have been the first to theoretically or empirically expound and validate his theory of the development of historical consciousness in schoolchildren, but his work is valuable because it was the basis for the first post-World War II study conducted by Heinrich Roth that included National Socialism as one of its topics.⁸⁰

Roth based his research on Sonntag's framework but with several noteworthy differences. Since his study was the first to be conducted following World War II, it focused among other topics on the Third Reich, which he simplified and labeled the Hitler era, starting specifically in 1932, deliberately tying the personality of Hitler to the time period. His work ultimately brought awareness of the Holocaust and the need for personalization elements as well. While his model narrowed down Sonntag's five-stage framework to a more operational three-stage model, Roth's 1955 research project, aptly titled *Kind und Geschichte* came to similar conclusions that inspired further studies which followed along Sonntag's original idea. These early works, including later historical awareness and consciousness studies, primarily focused on classes or groups of students from grade school to universities. While these students provide an excellent platform for advancing and testing historical consciousness theories, it leaves out those individuals who are in control of events and societies in their respective time periods.

⁷⁹ See his 1928 study for an in-depth look at his concept in Sonntag (1932).

⁸⁰ While this work mentioned National Socialism it was not its main focus. Roth (1955).

The 1964 research review study that was carried out by Ludwig von Friedeburg and Peter Hübner called *Geschichtsbild der Jugend*⁸¹ was one of the earlier post-World War II historical consciousness projects that focused primarily on National Socialist Germany and the extermination of the Jews. Friedeburg and Hübner's analysis discovered that National Socialism and the crimes and atrocities committed by the regime were indeed central elements in the historical conception of the youth in postwar Germany. Even though Friedeburg and Hübner did not produce any empirical work themselves, their study covered a compendium of relevant empirical research projects that had been produced up to the year they published their findings.

The analysis of all of their compiled data ultimately led them to the conclusion that the era of the Weimar Republic proved to be insufficiently understood by the German youth (Friedeburg and Hübner, 1964, in Voss, 2010, 18). As for the phenomenon of personalization of historical events that Sonntag originally observed in his work, this was also confirmed by Friedeburg and Hübner and referred to as *Hitlerisierung*. Personalization therefore played a major role in the comprehension of historical information among the youth. The process of *Hitlerisierung* led many young Germans to believe that Hitler's ascension to power was a personal endeavor he achieved with the help of propaganda, violence, and intimidation. As surmised by Friedeburg and Hübner, 'Die Ereignisse werden zusammengefasst und direkt auf das übermächtige Subjekt Hitler bezogen' (Friedeburg and Hübner, 1964, 39, in Voss, 2010, 18).⁸²

A secondary follow-up project conducted in 2004–5 reached conclusions that further supported the findings of their original study. It reinforced their original results suggesting that personalization is indeed a key determining factor for the understanding of historical facts. The personalization methods in particular are of interest because individual historical figures gain more significance than they may have actually had. This led the researchers to suggest that the entire era of National Socialism was often seen by the German students as an attribute of the Nazi leader. While both Friedeburg and Hübner accepted that the phenomenon of personalization was a potentially viable method of simplifying historical events, they believed that this approach had significant weaknesses to accurately understanding a past event or era.

⁸¹ Friedeburg and Hübner (1964).

⁸² 'The events are summed up and directly related to the overwhelming subject (or personality) of Hitler.'

They stated for example, that for the youth, the mass extermination of the Jews was a personal act or achievement of Adolf Hitler (Friedeburg and Hübner, 1964, 13, in Voss, 2010, 18).

This phenomenon affected collective memory in the sense that personalization tended to spread a significant amount of collective responsibility that allowed for a degree of reprieve for the collective conscience of the community. Friedeburg and Hübner ultimately rejected personalization because to them it seemed not only detrimental and counterproductive but also seriously prone to stereotyping. This is due largely because of the various adverse effects this notion has on the accuracy of history. In sum, however, while personalization may provide a method for simplifying a past event, in Friedeburg and Hübner's view, the representations can only be effective if they transmit the truth within the larger context of history.

*Geschichtswissenschaftler*⁸³ like Renata Barlog-Scholz⁸⁴ tried to measure the effectiveness of select Holocaust representations to see what the youth knew about concentration camps. She gained her results by having high school students from North Rhine–Westphalia and Baden–Württemberg fill out her questionnaire in their conventional history or advanced placement history courses. She discovered the correlation between knowledge and political engagement to be weak, despite the fact that knowledge levels were relatively high among all of the students after their memorial site visit.⁸⁵ While these findings shed new light onto the debate over the effectiveness of Holocaust representations and specifically concentration camp memorial sites, her findings regarding the relationship between political engagement and knowledge could not be validated because no information was given on the sample size. In any event, her work brought attention to the effectiveness of memorial sites within Germany that other projects have also picked up on since.

Other empirical studies, like Gabriele Rosenthal's *Der Holocaust im Leben von drei Generationen*,⁸⁶ investigated attitudes about the Holocaust through a psychological perspective on younger generations whose parents or grandparents were either victims or perpetrators during the Holocaust (Rosenthal, 1999). This study included an overall sum of 38 families, of which victim families from Israel and perpetrator families from East and West Germany were chosen. The focus here was on the victims

⁸³ 'Historical researchers'.

⁸⁴ See Barlog-Scholz (1994).

⁸⁵ In addition to her work, she assessed the knowledge of students after they went on a memorial site visit.

⁸⁶ Rosenthal (1999).

and perpetrators themselves, their children, and their grandchildren, so that trans-generational differences between the first, second, and third generations within the families could be analyzed. Rosenthal conducted her research through interviews with each family and asked them not only about their family and individual backgrounds but also attempted to examine the kind of dialogue that was common between each family member regarding their own history during the period of the Third Reich.

Her aim was to determine what type of dialogue existed when the families discussed this time period and whether there was a difference in communication between the victim and perpetrator families. She noted that the dialogue was indeed quite similar in both family groups in the sense that fear of death was common in both victim and perpetrator families. The younger generations also had a tendency to suppress certain information as feelings of guilt and fear of being killed developed within them (Rosenthal, 1999, 18). While both groups had noticeably tight-knit family structures and even went as far as to keep quiet, falsify, or create myths about their own family history regarding this time period, the differences lay only in the fear of being separated from family members among the victims, and the fear of being killed by their parents or grandparents among the perpetrator families. In the end, Rosenthal's unique approach to the subject matter made a deep impression and paved the way for future studies that supported and expanded on what she revealed in greater detail.

Published in 2002, *Die Umbequeme Vergangenheit: NS-Vergangenheit, Holocaust und die Schwierigkeiten des Erinnerns* by Klaus Ahlheim and Bardo Heger concentrated on gauging knowledge and attitudes about National Socialism and more specifically the Holocaust. This research project was initiated shortly after (and was perhaps even a response to) the controversial *Walser–Bubis* Debate which, to sum up briefly, considered the positive and negative arguments of putting the topic of the Holocaust to rest.⁸⁷ The research itself consisted of a survey divided into three primary segments with interlinked and equally significant subsections. These included several questions that addressed anti-Semitic stereotypes, the students' associations with the Third Reich, and lastly, their historical knowledge as well as the sources of that knowledge itself. About ten percent, or specifically 2,167 students of the Essen University population from various academic fields (not only history)

⁸⁷ This was also referred to as the *Schlussstrich Debatte*, which Martin Walser discussed upon receiving the Peace Prize of the German book trade in October 1998. See Walser (1998), 10.

took part in this study and ultimately came up with some very insightful conclusions.

For the most part, the majority of the participating students did not show any substantial desires to put the Holocaust to rest and certainly not to deny that the event ever happened. Their aspirations to be knowledgeable and informed about the Holocaust seemed to be linked to a need to be able to defend themselves from guilt (Ahlheim and Heger, 2002, 75, in Voss, 2010, 22). This indicated that on a broad spectrum, the denial of the Holocaust was almost non-existent, although the students were critical about the continuous study of the Holocaust. Despite this phenomenon, no demands for ending such schooling and continued study or research were made (Ahlheim and Heger, 2002, 27, 30, in Voss, 2010, 22).

On the one hand, Holocaust remembrance was indeed considered a very significant practice for the students. On the other hand, however, substantial knowledge gaps were apparent among the survey participants and many found the continuous studying, museum, and memorial visiting very uncomfortable and unpleasant. The authors revealed that 'Fast alle (92 Prozent) halten die Erinnerung an den Holocaust prinzipiell für wichtig und finden es beschämend, "dass Deutsche so viele Verbrechen an den Juden begangen haben" (95 Prozent). [...] 74 Prozent sind daran interessiert, eine Gedenkstätte für die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus zu besuchen' (Ahlheim and Heger, 2002, 34, in Voss, 2010, 22).⁸⁸ In all, while Holocaust remembrance was important for the majority of the participants, the study also concluded that there were limits in regard to the students' willingness to actively engage in dealing with the topics of the Third Reich and the mass extermination of the Jews and others.

In 2007 a study by Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting⁸⁹ on cultural historical socialization also supported the notion that personalization plays a significant role in influencing historical consciousness among students. His qualitative project that covered a class of 28 students went into great detail on their opinions, knowledge, and feelings about the texts used in the classroom that discussed the Third Reich and the Holocaust. The eighth and ninth grade students involved in the study were shadowed,

⁸⁸ 'Almost all (92 percent) hold the memory of the Holocaust fundamentally important and find it shameful, "that the Germans have committed so many crimes against the Jews" (95 percent). [...] 74 percent are interested in visiting a memorial to the victims of National Socialism'.

⁸⁹ Zülsdorf-Kersting (2007).

interviewed, and observed within the classroom over the course of a year and the project covered several points that included interest and knowledge in the subject as well as students' emotions and attitudes towards it (Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007).

The scope of this study also comprised equally significant elements that expounded upon a new theory of historical consciousness and can be seen as both an empirical and a theoretical contribution in that field. That said, the empirical work was carried out in three phases with the first consisting of personal interviews with each student as well as surveys before their history class began, discussing and dealing with the topic of the Holocaust and the Third Reich. The second phase, which took place during class deliberations and discussions on the topic, included questions on class discussions and texts as well as other representations of the Holocaust such as memorial days, films, television documentaries, and literature. The final phase was conducted after the conclusion of the history course and focused on discussions of the students' reception of their past.

While the sample size of the original 28 students narrowed down to a core of ten students, this qualitative research approach ultimately explored to a significantly deeper degree multiple issues that have been left largely unanswered or neglected by larger studies that may have been unable to probe on such an intimate level. At the end of the experiment all students, with the exception of one individual, had a more knowledgeable and differentiated view and understanding of the Holocaust than at the beginning of the study (Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 272, in Voss, 2010, 20). In the end, his work concluded that while all students gained a more comprehensive understanding of the Third Reich, personalization and a sense of *Übersättigung*⁹⁰ was prominent, which limited how much the students were able or willing to engage in the topic.

A 2010 study conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights⁹¹ examined how effective memorial sites and museums as well as classroom lectures were in teaching the Holocaust and human rights. It consisted of actual on-site investigations at memorial locations and museums, the type of literature available in classrooms, and discussions with teachers as to how well they were prepared to deal with human rights and Holocaust studies. The report detailed much

⁹⁰ 'To have had enough of something'.

⁹¹ FRA (2010), *Discover the past for the future. A study on the role of historical sites and museums in Holocaust education and human rights education in the EU* (Vienna: FRA-European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights).

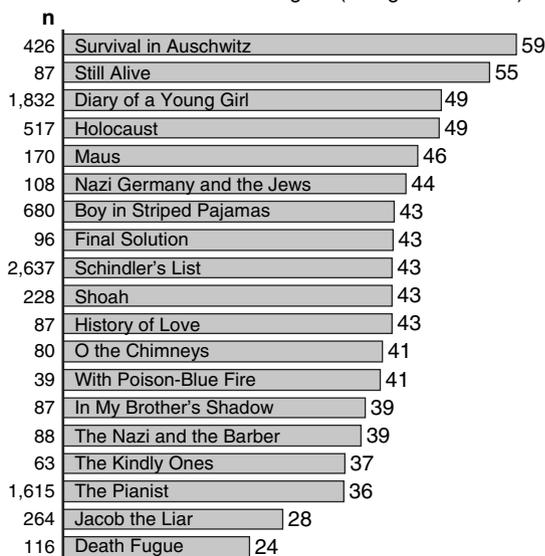
more than visits to memorial sites and classrooms by also implementing a survey of the ministries of every European Union member nation. Twenty-two Holocaust museums and memorial sites were also examined and evaluated. The study also included focus group discussions with students and teachers in nine European Union member nations and actual on-location research at 14 out of the 22 locations, with special interviews with curators and pedagogical experts that operate and work at these sites (FRA, 2010, 3).

While the lack of funding, time, and inadequately trained staff or the lack of learning activities or space for such functions were cited as the most common issues for human rights education, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights tackled these conclusions proactively by providing material to students, staff, and teachers on how to educate others on current human rights issues. Because this study examined museum and memorial sites as representations of the crimes of the Nazi dictatorship, a weak connection with Holocaust remembrance and current human rights issues was also discovered. Despite some of the shortcomings revealed by their report, it is a very valuable contribution towards bringing historical consciousness to the forefront and making it relevant to the present. Ultimately, the FRA study serves to raise awareness of the issues surrounding the current state of memorial sites and museums, which on the one hand contribute to preserving and raising awareness of the human tragedy of the Holocaust and on the other hand tie this history to current human rights issues. Although the report revealed that these sites need improvement on an EU-wide level, it also provided recommendations and material to launch these initiatives on a Europe-wide basis.

This author's international empirical study, *Preventing Auschwitz from Happening Again: A Multinational Empirical Study on the Contribution of Literature, Poetry, and Film in Representing the Holocaust*, was completed in 2010. Overall, 4,555 participants from nine countries (Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Russia, Spain, Poland, and Japan) participated in the survey. While this research did address aspects of the need to prevent the repetition of detrimental historical events, the primary focus was on assessing the effectiveness of various Holocaust representations on a multi-country basis. More specifically, I investigated to what extent literary works, poetry, and films influenced people's knowledge of and attitudes about this darkest chapter in German history. Figure 4.6 shows an example of the effectiveness of individual works in regard to shaping attitudes (Voss, 2010, 94). It reveals what percentage of participants strongly felt they were impacted

The film / text changed the way I think and how I feel about the Holocaust and the Nazis

Percent of viewers / readers that agree (rating of '5' or '6' *)



* Only respondents that have already watched / read work (1= I strongly disagree; 6= I strongly agree)

Figure 4.6 Impact of Works on Perceptions and Feelings about the Holocaust

by a specific work they have read or watched.⁹² While Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz* heads the list in impact (a survivor account), most of the other works fall between the 40 and 50 percent level. This shows that these works have been quite successful in influencing the way how people think and feel about the Holocaust.

⁹² The following list of sources makes up the books, films, and poetry used in the survey: Aly (1999) *Final Solution*; Ausländer (1944) *With Poison Blue Fire [Mit giftblauem Feuer]*; Becker (1969) *Jacob the Liar*; Celan (1945) *Death Fugue*; Chomsky (1978) *Holocaust*; Frank (1952) *The Diary of a Young Girl*; Friedlander (2007) *Nazi Germany and the Jews*; Herman (2008) *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*; Hilsenrath (1971) *The Nazi and the Barber*; Klüger (2001) *Still Alive*; Krauss (2005) *The History of Love*; Lanzmann (1985) *Shoah*; Levi (1996) *Survival in Auschwitz*; Littell (2006) *The Kindly Ones*; Polanski (2002) *The Pianist*; Sachs (1947): *O the Chimneys*; Spielberg (1993) *Schindler's List*; Spiegelman (1972) *Maus*; Timm (2003) *In My Brother's Shadow*.

On a more aggregated level, the research has also addressed categories of information sources such as television documentaries, movies, memorials, museums, schools, the Internet, radio, universities, poems, magazines, discussions with peers and parents, public events, and textbooks (Voss, 2010, 58–64). While there are considerable differences between the individual countries, the survey results suggest that targeted initiatives are required on an international basis to build and preserve collective knowledge, passion and attitudes about the Holocaust. The study simultaneously reveals that poetry, film, and literature can have a substantial positive impact on knowledge and attitudes. It concludes, therefore, that these representations play an important role in reviving and strengthening Holocaust remembrance (Voss, 2010, 113–15). While this international project identifies valuable trends and factors including recommendations for future initiatives, preserving and strengthening collective and individual *Geschichtsbewusstsein* remains an important task. Therefore, this work concludes with a suggestion for further research and deliberation on the subject matter that ought to be expanded and researched in greater detail.

In the field of history didactics, the theoretical research contributions usually also contain a significant empirical component to test their ideas. The studies mentioned here have expounded various hypotheses and observations and also solidified concepts through empirical field research to provide evidence and credibility for their claims. This simultaneously proves that their theoretical model or idea is valid by being implementable and operational in practice. Although the research mentioned in this chapter dealt with National Socialism and the Holocaust, two interrelated subjects that represent some of the most horrific episodes in modern history, they do not mention or discuss historical consciousness with the necessity for an action component to help prevent these terrible events from happening again. In the following section, the results of a range of contemporary research studies based on empirical findings regarding young adults, Germany in general, and the German Democratic Republic in particular are covered.

4.2.2 GDR research

Before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany there existed two separately governed and controlled states on German soil that were each backed by either the Western Allies or supported by the USSR. This division of Germany was more than a physical and spiritual barrier between the two sides because both systems functioned more or less without the influence or control of one over the other. This meant, for example, that the political, social, and education systems were autonomous and

diverged considerably. This signifies that the *Geschichtsdidaktik Forschung*⁹³ differed between the two states as well. Therefore, a brief discussion on the state of research conducted by East German *Geschichtswissenschaftler*⁹⁴ is necessary for strengthening the understanding of and expanding the debate in history didactics in general, and the scope of the research produced in particular. Before the discussion moves into more recently published research on the GDR, I will review some of the basic concepts and ideas pioneered by researchers that worked on behalf of the East German state and what discussions have been held in regard to the significance of East German history didactics research in more recent times.

The debate over history didactics research in the GDR has increased substantially in the West since its collapse and absorption by the BRD in the early 1990s. Schönemann raised the awareness that it neither appears reasonable in a pragmatic–utilitarian perspective to go after the inherited GDR history didactics contributions and ask for those elements that are worth keeping, nor that the West German history didactics program should make elements of it fruitful (Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 14). Yet, he did see the opportunity to undertake comprehensive comparative studies between East and West German *Geschichtsdidaktik* research. Schönemann,⁹⁵ in light of the overwhelming availability of living eyewitnesses, archival material, documents, and published and unpublished research, went further, calling for the reconstruction of teaching and learning methods of the GDR through the use of a wide array of available sources (Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 14).

Indeed, much of the historical methodology within the GDR focused primarily on curriculum, learning, and history-teaching research. This factor, combined with all of the former East Germans alive today, provided a platform for many empirical studies and continues to do so. As with most aspects of life in the GDR, even didactics research went according to plan from a government ministry like the APW,⁹⁶ which executed plans in each pedagogical research field with methods that resembled the five-year plans⁹⁷ (Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 17). This also

⁹³ 'History didactics research'.

⁹⁴ 'Historical scientists'.

⁹⁵ For further research and a comprehensive perspective, see Schönemann (1997), 193–7, in Höder and Tenorth, 183–202.

⁹⁶ Akademie der Pädagogischen Wissenschaften/Academy of Educational Sciences.

⁹⁷ The five-year plans were developed by the central planning committee of the Soviet Union (other communist countries implemented them as well) and set production goals and guidelines for economic development.

implies that what would be improved and expanded on were the instruments that guide the teaching and learning processes. Despite the nature of the structured research called for by the state, deviations from the plan were a possibility, and if and when they occurred they were usually officially punished.⁹⁸ As this shows, didactics and especially the science of history in the GDR were closely observed and controlled by the state. Historian Wolfgang Küttler described the situation in the GDR best shortly after the *Wende* when he said,

[Die] DDR-Historiographie war von Anfang an und trotz aller schließlich erreichten, international akzeptierten Professionalität vieler ihrer Teilgebiete zugleich Staats- und Parteihistorie, gewissermaßen Haus-Hof- und Staatsaktion zum Ruhme des Regimes und seiner Repräsentanten wie auch methodisch geregelte, rational betriebene Geschichtswissenschaft.⁹⁹ (Küttler, as cited in Thoß, 2009, 20–1)

On the one hand, according to Küttler, historiography in the GDR was professional, rational, methodical, and internationally recognized and respected. Yet, despite these facts, the purpose and function of *Geschichtswissenschaft* was one that served the interest of the party and state apparatus. While the majority of didactics research in the GDR stayed under the control and guidance of the various ministries and remained largely within the closed society, several research projects are of particular interest. Because the state of research to date on East German history didactics remains deficient, an in-depth analysis of the work now available is still in the early stages of being reviewed and examined.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the amount of work available is still in

⁹⁸ For further references and examples, see Szalai (1994), 71, in Uffelman.

⁹⁹ Own translation: '[The] East German historiography was from the beginning, despite the eventually reached internationally accepted professionalism, in many of its components simultaneously a part of the state and party history. They were so to speak home-court and state action for the glory of the regime and its representatives as well as being a methodically controlled, rationally driven historical science' (Küttler, 2009, 6, in Thoß) ['Haus-Hof' translates literally as 'home-court'; what Küttler is saying here is that the history research expounded by the discipline also acted as a mouthpiece for government action. It was a socialist country so socialist realism influenced the study of history as well – party and national history was, so to speak, there to glorify the regime].

¹⁰⁰ Schönemann expands on this matter in more detail. He goes on to say that most published works were in fact made public around jubilee celebrations as a reflection in the form of an essay. See Schönemann (1997), 186–93.

the process of being investigated and remains incomplete. Beyond this factor is also the degree to which the party and state controlled and directed the research.

The year 1975 saw a major project ordered by the APW – one of the first drives by a group of historical methodologists to work on historical teaching theories. The research initiative known as *Methode Geschichtsunterricht*¹⁰¹ was a response and reaction to the private works of Bernhard Stohr, whose cybernetic approach received criticism and whose research marked the curriculum on the commenting function of the compendium (Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 24). It took and used historical methodology as a whole, yet was limited to the “ideologisch-theoretische und die didaktisch-methodische Grundkonzeption (der) Lehrpläne” [die] zu analysieren und zu erläutern, um den Lehrern Hilfsstellung zu geben, die “Potenz des Faches für die sozialistische Persönlichkeitsentwicklung voll auszuschöpfen”¹⁰² (Gentner and Kruppa, 1978, in Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 24).

Ultimately, what the reader is to gain from the research is a theoretical understanding with practically-tested experiential knowledge that can be used while supporting the historical methods of Soviet research as well (Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 24–5). Noteworthy about the *Methode Geschichtsunterricht* project is that it was mandated by a state ministry responsible for the educational sciences. Considering that this was a response to the contested and criticized work of Stohr, it happens to reveal one of the methods of response used against researchers who the functionaries were at odds with. It is also of worth to mention that the research project’s existence can be justified because it was ordered by the APW. With the tone set towards being ideological–theoretical as well as didactically methodical, the results of the study ultimately served the state because it was designed to help teachers develop socialist personalities within their pupils. The factor of being able to justify the need for this and other theories and projects played a significant role in how research was conducted in the GDR.

This raises another issue that switches the function from strictly scientific means to one of propaganda, or what Szalai refers to as the *Methodik der historischen Propaganda*¹⁰³ or *geschichtsideologische Arbeit*¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ ‘Methodology of history teaching’.

¹⁰² Own translation: “ideological–theoretical and the didactic–methodical basic concepts of the teaching plans” so as to analyze and then help the teachers fully exploit the “potency of the subject [of history] for the development of the socialist personality”. See also Gentner and Kruppa (1978), in Hasberg (2001), vol. 2.

¹⁰³ ‘Methodology of historical propaganda’. See Szalai (1983), 31.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Historical ideological work’.

(Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 26). Since there was a lack of private research institutions in regard to opinions research in the German Democratic Republic, an elaborate body of ministries and institutions were set up and overseen by the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party (Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 74–5).¹⁰⁵ This institute and the ZfJ proved to have produced a multitude of explorative projects that were generally kept unpublished and more or less a secret. In the case of the *Methode Geschichtsunterricht* project, it was useful to the state to support and dispense the ideology of the party and nation.

Interestingly several opinion studies of the mid-1980s and up to the *Wende* revealed that a significant amount of erosion of political ideological identification with the party and state have manifested within many of the empirically-evaluated East German youth (Schneider, 1992). This trend of erosion was also covered in projects that included adults as well. While a deep connection between propaganda and the science of historical methodology and didactics cannot be drawn, it remains a prevalent factor in part because of the desire to shape socialist historical consciousness within the working class of the GDR and to animate and reflect on the task the research field has been given (Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 27).¹⁰⁶

Indeed, research in this field was driven from a sociological perspective, which made the implications of the research immediately relevant and potentially affective if or when it was implemented. Rolf Döhring¹⁰⁷ highlighted some of the fundamental questions pertaining to the *Geschichtsbild*¹⁰⁸ desired of the socialist working class, which include how historical insights are ideologically effective, through what this process is influenced, and in which scale the findings suggest the shaping and strengthening of regular/working-class convictions are required (Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 27). While state and party interference, meddling, and guidance are definite components of history didactics and

¹⁰⁵ These included such institutions as the *Institut für Meinungsforschung* (Institute for Opinion Research) within the Central Committee of the SED, or the ZfJ known as the *Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung* (Central Institute for Youth Research).

¹⁰⁶ The notion of shaping and reflecting on socialist historical awareness in the GDR has been picked up on and investigated before and since the *Wende*. Apart from Hasberg (2001), also see Meier (2001) in Hasberg, 27; and Schmidt (1970).

¹⁰⁷ See Döhring (1975), 79, in Hasberg (2001), 27.

¹⁰⁸ 'Historical image'.

methodology research in East Germany, the discipline was nonetheless operational and quite productive. Ultimately, the field as it was practiced and implemented resembled a system that functioned as a uniform pedagogical science that was socialist in nature and had the tendency to be influenced by methods of their Soviet counterparts.

Leipzig University was the site of another ambitious research project in the German Democratic Republic. Led by the researcher Hans Wermes, an investigation was launched to address and analyze students in the classroom and examine their skills and abilities including their historical opinions and statements on a particular event. Among his discoveries, Wermes noted several phenomena that significantly influenced the outcome of the research. He learned that

1. Empirische Untersuchungen in der Methodik lassen sich manipulieren, wenn man alle unklaren Schülerantworten positiv wertet.
2. Entscheidend für die Aussagekraft methodischer Arbeiten sind letztlich qualitative Ergebnisse, deren es genügend gab.
3. Gründliche Vor- und Nacharbeit ist erforderlich, wenn empirische Untersuchungen im Geschichtsunterricht eine wesentliche Forschungsmethode sein sollen.¹⁰⁹ (Wermes, 1991, 29)

Wermes went on to suggest that the instructions of the teachers that are utilized within the course are most effective especially when the mandated syllabus is taught alongside simultaneous additional experimental work.

While this paradigm appears to have a productive and enlightening outcome, Wermes was aware of a fundamental issue that could determine whether the research conducted was in any shape valid. His research raised awareness of the risks of empirical research being manipulated either by accident or, despite taking place within a nearly hermetically sealed country, by design. Manipulation of research was an issue and remained a prevalent concern throughout the life of the GDR. These findings were indeed very interesting and even controversial because it called into question whether empirical work was even possible

¹⁰⁹ Own translation: '1. Empirical studies in the methodology can be manipulated if one rated any unclear student responses positively. 2. Crucial for the validity of methodological work are ultimately qualitative results, of which there were plenty. 3. Thorough preparation and reviewing is required if empirical studies will be a major method in history education research.' Wermes (1991) in Hasberg (2001), vol. 2, 31.

in a nation as isolated and controlled as the GDR.¹¹⁰ Considering the power held by the party and state over society as a whole, the ability to withhold any research from the public if the findings were disagreed with or disapproved of, was quite possible. This was therefore a serious form of manipulation that impacted the study of historical methodology as well as history didactics and historical consciousness inside the former socialist regime.

Both the *Methode Geschichtsunterricht* and the project led by Hans Wormes reveal some insightful trends and realities regarding historical methodology, didactics, and historical consciousness research performed in the former East Germany. The role of socialist and specifically Marxist–Leninist ideology, as well as the tight grip of the government over every aspect of life and scientific research in the GDR, definitely become apparent and are elaborated on in both studies. They reflect the situation as it was in a society where even scientific explorations were demanded, directed, and controlled by the apparatchiks and ministers from the party and state.

While the debate and research into East German history didactics and *Geschichtsbewusstsein* are still very much in the process of being evaluated on a much deeper level, the trends of ideology and state control over experiments in the GDR have already been brought to attention and dealt with to various degrees. More remains to be said about the state of research in the former East Germany, however, and concepts regarding the topic of the German Democratic Republic, its society, thought, and crimes continue on an empirical and theoretical basis in the now unified Germany.

So far, no studies have been identified that deal specifically with the history of National Socialism that stem from and during the existence of the first socialist state on German soil. Indeed, some of the unpublished studies that were kept secret from the public revealed a major deficit in knowledge regarding contemporary German history and specifically the founding of the GDR and the worker's movement (Hasberg, 2001, vol. 2, 78). Instead, greater attention has been paid to older German history and its development. Whether the APW, the Socialist Unity Party or Central Committee affiliated groups and organizations have allowed for the exploration of historical consciousness or awareness regarding

¹¹⁰ Hasberg questions this (Hasberg, 2001, 31) as well as Lothar Mertens, who argues that closed-off societies cannot be measured accurately empirically. See Mertens (1995) in Hasberg (2001), 31.

the Nazi regime specifically is not entirely clear. Many documents from the Stasi archives alone have yet to be uncovered and fully analyzed. The extent of information now available in East Germany's secret police files is so massive it has been calculated that if one 'takes roughly two minutes to read one typewritten page, it would take one historian close to seven thousand years to read all of the material – assuming that she read every minute of every day' (Bruce, 2010, 11).

Speculation over the reasons for the inability or difficulty to discover research dealing with the Third Reich in and during the lifespan of the GDR can lead down numerous avenues that steer to many, yet uncertain conclusions. It could be argued, for example, that such research was never conducted under the former East German state because it was unnecessary based on ideological grounds that eastern Germany was liberated and cleansed of Nazism, or that such research could threaten the credibility of the socialist regime. In either case, and as valid as these conclusions may appear to be, in-depth investigations into the GDR-era-produced research must continue until concrete answers can be developed, and this effort is currently still under way. Since written records of the scientific findings for historical methodology and didactics do not change in the same manner as the historical consciousness of an individual, the records must simply be found to gauge what the conditions and situations were like under the SED regime.

Much headway has been made since the collapse of the USSR in general and research has had the opportunity to follow two distinct directions that, once thoroughly advanced, can and will shed light on the transformation of historical consciousness over time on the one hand, and allow an examination of the findings of empirical studies as well. A start has been made on the evaluation of empirical and theoretical approaches, which show the levels and opinions of a specific moment in time and, when compared to other results, can also show any changes that may have occurred before or after a given project was conducted.

The following projects are more recent post-*Wende* published works that are most relevant for the scope and direction of the *Regimes of Twentieth-Century Germany* study and are no less conceptual than the historical awareness and consciousness studies of the previous subchapter. The direction of some of the more recent research is broader and also focuses on assessing general knowledge and/or attitudes about the GDR, or on investigating the effectiveness of a specific form of representation such as certain literature, films, or museum visits. Several empirical historical consciousness studies have also been conducted in

regard to general attitudes related to history and specifically concerning the former GDR and SED regimes.

They include von Borries' (1995) representative survey on the *Geschichtsbewusstsein* of East and West German students in regard to the German past;¹¹¹ a comparative European survey on historical consciousness and political attitudes among adolescents conducted by Angvik and von Borries (1997);¹¹² the comprehensive Shell youth study (2006);¹¹³ Arnswald's (2006) survey on the GDR history in school;¹¹⁴ and Deutz-Schroeder's/Schroeder's (2008–10) East–West comparison of the GDR image of students in four German states.¹¹⁵ While the theoretical and empirical categories amount to the broad spectrum of research produced, individual projects can be placed into further subcategories depending on their focus or orientation. A large part of the research stems from a more student-oriented approach while others are specifically pedagogical or scientific in direction. The selection of research mentioned above, dealing with the GDR and more broadly German history and youth is presented here in greater detail.

A study from Bodo von Borries, which was conducted in 1992 and published in 1995 called *Das Geschichtsbewusstsein Jugendlicher: Eine representative Untersuchung über Vergangenheitsdeutungen, Gegenwartswahrnehmungen und Zukunftserwartungen von Schülerinnen und Schülern in Ost- und Westdeutschland* was one of the earliest post-Wende studies that covered societal and political dimensions of knowledge and attitudes regarding the German youth in both the former GDR and the old BRD. A representative sample of around 6,300 students participated in the study and were evaluated according to five societal and political dimensions that broadly covered topics like women's equality; human affection in dealing with friends, acquaintances, and loved ones; the prevention of unemployment; a consequential break with nationalism and/or fascism; and the degree of participation of citizens in the state (von Borries, 1995, 475). With the collapse of the Soviet Union and its sponsored regimes in Eastern Europe still transitioning in 1992, it is interesting to see that von Borries' results show that East German students had stated a preference for the German Democratic Republic following its ultimate collapse. To add to this overall positive image of

¹¹¹ Von Borries (1995).

¹¹² Angvik and Von Borries (1997).

¹¹³ Shell Deutschland Holding (ed.) (2006).

¹¹⁴ Arnswald (2006).

¹¹⁵ Deutz-Schroeder and Schroeder (2008).

the GDR, the students suggested that the old Federal Republic was by no means superior to that of East Germany. This stood in stark contrast to the opinions of students living in the old BRD, who thought it was indeed better than its eastern counterpart (von Borries, 1995, 404).

Also noteworthy is that the students of the newly assimilated states did not think of promoting the history of the BRD over that of the GDR and instead desired greater focus on the history of their former country (von Borries, 1995, 88). While a significant increase in preference of the German Democratic Republic over the Federal Republic of Germany coincided with higher status of origin, education, and even age (von Borries, 1995, 85), the effectiveness or influence of teachers, or their learning and teaching methods, were only mildly detectable in his results (von Borries, 1995, 9). The 1995 published study by von Borries was one of the first major research studies conducted involving both East and West German students since the *Wende*. Even though it is by no means the only research project that immediately followed unification, its large sample size made it both representative and insightful.

Another study by von Borries but in collaboration with Magne Angvik was released in 1997 shortly after the 1995 publication of his *Das Geschichtsbewußtsein Jugendlicher* project. Under the title *YOUTH and HISTORY: A Comparative European Survey on Historical Consciousness and Political Attitudes among Adolescents*, Angvik and von Borries led a major survey of European youth and teachers to provide a comparative analysis between similarities and differences in the cultures of history and the teaching methods utilized to convey history. The project was carried out with 30 sample groups of ninth graders in 27 nations in the year 1995.¹¹⁶ In all, over 31,500 students around the age of fifteen and over 1,250 of their history teachers participated, each answering a standardized set of 200 questions that were translated into 25 different languages with English being the set language for the study (Angvik and von Borries, 1997).

They utilized the Likert-scale, which ranges from (1) *totally disagree* to (5) *totally agree* with any scores below 3.0 being counted as disagreement or rejection tendencies, while any means above 3.25 indicated a positive response. Both the students and the teachers responded to the same items and questions in order to evaluate the perceptions of the varying groups that could then be measured independently. This large-scale research project came up with some interesting and country-specific

¹¹⁶ For an in-depth look into several studies of the late 1990s and 2000s, see Perikleous and Shemilt (2011).

findings. Considering the independent nature of the teaching and learning cultures, or specifically the perceptions of teachers on the one hand and students on the other, the authors noted that the observations on day-to-day teaching were articulated in significantly different ways when compared to one another directly.

The study makes clear that the reality of history class or lessons in school is experienced differently between teachers and students. Another finding revealed significant regional differences as well. The western and south-western parts of the continent reported a higher reliability and usage on 'source work' when compared to the northern Scandinavian, eastern, and south-eastern countries (Angvik and von Borries, 1997). This research project is unique not only due its overall scope and multinational reach but also because it was designed to include student as well as teacher perceptions and opinions. This element has shed new light on these areas regarding teaching material, how sources are handled in the classroom, and also how students and teachers in multiple countries interpret teaching history and what their ideas about the subject are.

Ulrich Arnswald, author of the 2006 study *DDR-Geschichte im Unterricht. Schulbuchanalyse- Schülerbefragung-Modellcurriculum*, which he produced on behalf of the foundation *Aufarbeitung SED-Diktatur*, was designed to survey the state of GDR history as taught and dealt with in schools. His empirical study included a total of 5,616 student survey participants at 68 *Gymnasien*, or upper secondary schools in every state in Germany (Arnswald, 2006, 112). The majority of the student participants were between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, and around 150 teachers also participated in the surveys.

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the opinions, preferences, and attitudes of students regarding the German Democratic Republic (Arnswald, 2006, 144). The survey itself is comprised of questions that gauge the level and extent of knowledge an individual has regarding GDR history and were followed up with more in-depth and specific knowledge-based questions that were filled out on a write-in basis. The results revealed that approximately 31 percent of the surveyed students had not discussed GDR history at all or had not addressed the topic at that point, even though the mandated curriculum required this subject. This factor, on top of the discovery that about 30 percent of the questions remained unanswered by the participants, showed quite clearly that a lack of knowledge on this time period was evident (Arnswald, 2006, 174). Despite the significant knowledge gap and the differences in knowledge levels between East and West German students, many of the surveyed individuals showed great interest in the subject.

Ultimately, Arnswald's empirical study is a significant contribution on several levels. First, his work identified the degree of knowledge gaps in students in general and the differences in knowledge and opinions between former East and West Germans as a whole. Second, he showed that even though there was a mandated inclusion of GDR history in the school curriculum of the entire nation, most of the German youth were not exposed to the material until the eleventh grade. This is valuable information because it appears that a nationwide initiative to strengthen knowledge, attitudes, and awareness to the subject is still necessary.

In 2006, Shell Deutschland Holding released a youth study called *Jugend 2006. Eine pragmatische Generation unter Druck*, which was the fifteenth study of this sort since these efforts began in 1953. The study consisted of three parts, the first of which focused mainly on the results of the questionnaires in general; the second specifically concentrated on a more in-depth analysis of twenty of the participants; and lastly, a concluding chapter summed up the findings. Part one focused primarily on the relationship and demographic shifts between the generations. In all, over 2,500 students between the ages of 12 and 25 participated and answered questions that were largely similar to those used in Shell's earlier 2002 project. The aim behind the recycling of the 2002 survey was to evaluate the youth's statements to identify trends in living and social conditions, the development of problem situations, and the issues that most importantly affected their lives (Shell, 2006).

The study also focused in greater detail on the assessment of the youth's 'lifestyles', in particular their families, what they did for leisure, in school, and/or work. These results were then re-assessed and recorded as further renewed information on the life, health, behavior, and well-being of each of the young individuals. Globalization and politics in general made up further aspects of the survey in order to gauge the opinions and attitudes towards national and international issues. The spread of social involvement and the various backgrounds and walks of life of the participating youth helped paint a broad spectrum of the relationships between the generations. The authors suggested – hence the name of the study – that the results revealed a pragmatic generation that was under pressure due to the development of several negative elements within the lives of the participants (Shell, 2006).

Ultimately, the first two parts of the Shell study provide both a qualitative and representative approach simultaneously. While only 20 life portraits were elaborated on for the project, it paints a more personal picture of issues surrounding the relationships, views, and

attitudes of the generations regarding a whole array of issues beyond historical consciousness. The overall nature of the several Shell Deutschland Holding research projects on young people may exceed the scope of what is discussed in this work but it nonetheless provides valuable insights into the thoughts, hopes, wishes, and fears of the younger generations. In that sense, while Shell's study does not focus on the regimes of twentieth-century Germany, it must be mentioned because it contains information, themes, and approaches that make this a relevant source for building and expanding the notion of *Aktionsbewusstsein* in part because it focused on the present conditions the youth lived in. These conditions, along with the relationships between the generations, have a significant impact on the type of action consciousness that can be shaped within these individuals.

Klaus Schroeder and Monika Deutz-Schroeder published their study, *Soziales Paradies oder Stasi-Staat? Das DDR-Bild von Schülern – Ein Ost-West-Vergleich* in 2008, in which they empirically evaluated around 5,000 students from four different German states starting in the spring of 2005 until early 2007. Students from North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, Berlin, and Brandenburg were questioned on the one hand about their factual knowledge of the former East Germany and their political assessment of the German Democratic Republic on the other. Since the fieldwork included states and students from both the old Western federal states as well as the newly integrated East German states of Brandenburg and Berlin, any differences between the two former sides became an integral component of their thesis.

A central point of their study was that the students of the new federal states (the newly integrated states that made up the former GDR) did not have high levels of historical depth and insight and tended to glorify the image of the GDR compared to the students from the old Western German states (Deutz-Schroeder and Schroeder, 2008). Indeed their study revealed that East German students were more likely to view the SED regime in a more positive light than those students from the West (Deutz-Schroeder and Schroeder, 2008, 593). Approximately every second East German youth believed that the SED dictatorship had more positive aspects than it had negative ones (Deutz-Schroeder and Schroeder, 2008, 597). This research project is less noteworthy for the amount of media attention it received during and leading up to the final publication, yet what is unique about their work is the impact it had on pedagogical practices in both parts of Germany. In fact, instructional and curriculum related reforms were demanded from the cultural and educational ministers specifically in the new federal states. This

was especially visible in the schools of eastern Germany because of the expansion and intensification of reconciliation with the SED regime by strengthening the training of teachers on this topic and making memorial visits a mandatory part of the curriculum.

While this study generated an impressive amount of interest in the late 2000s, several issues became apparent with the research and sparked discussions. Even though the work has been criticized for not being representative, a factor the authors discuss in their work,¹¹⁷ they maintain that such an issue is relatively common with such a large number of participants. Despite the criticism and other issues surrounding the study, the valuable insight and resulting discussions over the historical image of East and West German youth from four federal states ignited further research and continued debate over the differences and similarities in historical consciousness between the youth of the former GDR and the now unified BRD.

A more recent research project, *Kenntnisse, Bilder, Deutungen: das zeitgeschichtliche Bewusstsein Jugendlicher in Deutschland* was a four-part study conducted by Klaus Schroeder et al¹¹⁸ through the years 2009 to 2010 and released in 2011. The authors analyzed the *Geschichtsbewusstsein* of students in regard to the Nazi era, the old BRD (German Federal Republic), the GDR, and the reunified Germany. Through multiple interviews and surveys the students were questioned to see from a comparative perspective how they assessed the NS regime, the BRD, GDR, and the unified Germany first in the state of Sachsen-Anhalt and then in North Rhine-Westphalia. While the focus remained on students from several German states, it shed light on the development of historical consciousness in students on both sides of the former divide and on the effectiveness of the multiple mediums of representation on German history including German media, memorial sites, schools, and family milieu.

Empirical research on the Holocaust and/or the SED dictatorship has also primarily focused on measuring isolated aspects of the discourse. The aforementioned studies in this and the previous chapter have ranged from the effectiveness of Third Reich and Holocaust representations to opinions polls answered by students and young adults on topics dealing with the regimes that existed on German soil. With the exception of the Shell study that focused on trends beyond that of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, these projects in one form or another dealt

¹¹⁷ For a more in-depth discussion on the sample, see Deutz-Schroeder and Schroeder (2008), 20.

¹¹⁸ For further information, see Schroeder et al. (2011).

with issues pertaining to the dictatorships of 20th-century Germany. Everything from psychological approaches to actively studying the relationship between historical knowledge and the effectiveness of a particular source in providing that knowledge has been produced, and has aided in gaining a greater understanding of the issues surrounding the teaching and learning of history. Although all of this research has shed light onto various aspects of this discourse, action consciousness remains unaddressed. Despite this factor, the works listed here present highly developed examples of what has been pioneered over the last few decades and have made steps towards understanding the factors that shape historical consciousness. It is clear, however, that action consciousness requires further research and discussion.

4.3 Conclusions and implications

The field and practice of *Geschichtsdidaktik* in its many forms have given the study of history a remarkable direction and profound meaning. This discipline gives the science of history immediate relevance to the world of today and tomorrow through analysis and empirical field research. While traditional historical research focuses mainly on understanding the past by gathering evidence and through archival research, history didactics breaks the mold of strictly studying the past without addressing the implications a particular event has on the minds of those learning and exploring the past. This makes *Geschichtsdidaktik* an integral part of the study of history because of how this discipline ties the past to the present. Not only are learning and teaching methods analyzed empirically, but ongoing debate and practice is also influenced by how history is internalized, understood, and formed through the various types of historical cultural socialization.

One of the central categories of history didactics is *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. Under this concept there exists a plethora of correlating and/or competing approaches to how historical consciousness is to be understood and defined. As is the case with history didactics, the theories and theorists for *Geschichtsbewusstsein* continue to argue over conceptual frameworks, definitions, and implications. Some researchers, most notably Bernd Schönemann, have even called for the creation of a singular definition and concept for the notion while others have attempted to address this desire with their own ideas.

While some models describe aspects of historical consciousness like collective memory, others borrow concepts from other disciplines such as conceptual change theories or political didactics, which are taken

from the natural and political sciences and molded to explain the processes of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. The informative works of Rüsen, Jeismann, Assmann, von Borries, Zülsdorf-Kersting, and Pandel have all contributed substantially to history didactics and historical consciousness research. Their efforts have helped shape the debate and have even addressed Schönemann's desire for an all-encompassing definition of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. While it is problematic to limit the discussion to a single monolithic theory, Schönemann's call for a singular definition actually furthered the ongoing research because *Geschichtsdidaktiker/innen* developed approaches and models that answered his call and addressed the issue from different perspectives and through various methods. Therefore, several 'all-encompassing' definitions and theories have been created that each advance this field.

While research into the foundations, formations, and transformations of historical consciousness have made significant strides over the decades, continued study and further development is required because action consciousness is an integral aspect of this study that has thus far been left unaddressed. History didactics and in turn *Geschichtsbewusstsein* may make the science of history ever more relevant to our understanding of the present, yet the picture is not complete and continued development in this field and most notably in regard to action consciousness still needs to be undertaken. If we study history for the purpose of learning from the past and not repeating similar mistakes and tragedies, then a concerted effort must be made to address the dilemma of preventing these events from happening again.

Since the focus of this project is on the regimes of twentieth-century Germany, how can Germany, Europe, and the global community learn from these events so that totalitarian governments, genocide, and dictatorships in general can be prevented from rising up again? In order to answer this question and to develop a framework that deals with this issue, the function and role of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* must be expanded on, to specifically address how learning from history shapes to varying degrees an awareness within an individual to actively resist the repetition of a similar undesirable and detrimental historical event. This theory must be broad and understood as a separate dimension with its own unique elements that interconnect and correlate with other dimensions of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*.

While previous concepts and approaches have touched upon the notion of connecting the past with the present, like von Borries, Jeismann, Rüsen, and Zülsdorf-Kersting, they do not go far enough in addressing the implications history has on the present in terms of preventing perceived dangers of the past from reoccurring. Taking from

von Reeken's thoughts of gaining action competence through learning history, and fusing this idea with Pandel's ideas of the multidimensional scope of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, an action component must be added that I have labeled *Aktionsbewusstsein*.¹¹⁹ Ultimately, *Aktionsbewusstsein* should be seen as an integral theoretical way for history didactics to further gauge teaching and learning methods, impacts, results, and other aspects that shape historical knowledge and awareness. Such a theory would in turn also have to be an integral category for *Geschichtsbewusstsein*.

The empirical and theoretical research of the past decades has built considerable knowledge and striven towards answering some of the questions dealing with the role of history, how it is internalized, and a range of other forces that influence thoughts and attitudes. The scope of the research to date is multifaceted and covers a wide field of study beyond genocide, dictatorships, and even *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. The selected works discussed in the previous subchapters cover the topics most relevant for this project and mainly concern themselves with the regimes of 20th-century Germany and the atrocities associated with them. While each work uniquely defines and expounds through various approaches issues pertaining to historical consciousness, awareness, as well as knowledge, and attitudes, the fundamentally important action component that defines how historical thinking moves into political action has not yet been comprehensively addressed. In order to give meaning to the events of yesterday that shape and influence the world of today and tomorrow, the role of history must be understood not as distant and disconnected moments of a bygone era. Instead, it needs to be seen more as a dynamic guide of past successes and failures, morals, societies, and social structures that have significance in modern times as well. To various limited degrees this objective has in one form or another been addressed and also brought to attention through the study of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*.

The research and models described in prior chapters have given a glimpse at the amount of headway that has already been made by this discipline. It is especially significant to note that all of this prior research deals with a history that, while it is uniquely German, has attributes that are truly international in scale and scope. Thus, the use of the National Socialist and even the SED regime provide example dictatorships that the Western world can and ought to learn from as a whole. The crimes and the reach of their atrocities, especially those of

¹¹⁹ See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of *Aktionsbewusstsein*.

the Nazi government, affected so many people and nations that they provide a powerful learning platform that can reach the largest possible audience for at least the Western world if not globally.

The issue remains, however, that a significant dimension that specifically addresses how cold historicized facts move into the realm of political action is missing. While the creation, foundation, and the genesis of historical consciousness have been extensively expanded, defined, and interpreted, research has fallen short of covering or even creating an action component that learning history can foster. Therefore, the aim of a theory of *Aktionsbewusstsein* must be to lay the foundation of a new dimension that deals explicitly with action consciousness. So far, many studies have measured and gauged historical consciousness within individuals and groups or nations, seen how potent a given source of knowledge is in providing factual information or influencing attitudes, and even measured opinions of the role of teaching and learning history in general. Historians have by and large stayed on the traditional route of historical research through investigating documents of the era they originated from. This is indeed a crucial role and function for any historian who wishes to decipher undiscovered or under-researched areas in history. Many historians therefore tend to shy away from the idea of applying the implications of the past directly to the present.

Despite this trend, history didactics and historical consciousness researchers have unlocked the door to bringing relevance to the cold, seemingly disconnected historical facts brought forth by historians to modern everyday life. In this regard, the idea of preserving and studying history so that the younger generations of today and tomorrow may learn from it has been given new life and more meaning. Ultimately though, to close the gap between the disconnected modern day life of today from the seemingly irrelevant and distant past, historical consciousness theories must be expanded upon to include *Aktionsbewusstsein* so that the past can be actively used as a tool to influence the world of the present and the future.

5

A Concise Theory of Action Consciousness

Based on the discussion of the need for history didactics to play an active role in helping society resist tyranny and based on the review of previous theoretical and empirical *Geschichtsbewusstsein* research in regard to modern German dictatorships, my two main conclusions so far are that (1) the notion of action consciousness is an important construct that should be incorporated into the research of historical consciousness; and (2) that, to my knowledge, no targeted research attempt has been made as of yet to include such action component in the conceptual discourse and to comprehensively assess the importance of *Aktionsbewusstsein* as part of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. The objectives of this chapter are to propose a framework of action consciousness as an integral dimension of historical consciousness, discuss the main factors that impact *Aktionsbewusstsein*, and attempt to link the concept of action consciousness in the context of historical thinking with political action.

5.1 Action consciousness as an integral dimension of historical consciousness

While the research discussed in Chapter 4 demonstrates that there is a multitude of theoretical works and empirical studies that have significantly contributed to an analysis of historical consciousness, the advancement of understanding, and the discovery of ways to come to terms with the past, I will argue that Pandels' multidimensional model of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* represents an adequate conceptual platform for the purpose of complementing historical consciousness research with an action component. In the following subsections, I will first propose a definition of *Aktionsbewusstsein* and subsequently discuss how Pandel's model can be expanded to reflect the idea of action consciousness.

5.1.1 Definition and characteristics of action consciousness

The supposition that history is not only about knowing and understanding the past but, as von Reeken puts it, also about deepening a person's understanding to gain competence to act in the present and the future (von Reeken, 2004, 5), suggests that action consciousness should be viewed as a construct that links the past with the present and the future. In this sense, action consciousness is the notion that from reflections on past events awareness is formed that concludes that action must be taken in order to prevent a similar event from reoccurring in the present or future, or to promote certain actions to reignite events that prevent detrimental occurrences from resurfacing.

In principle, this concept can have two manifestations: it can promote positive trends such as having the awareness to continue doing something noble or good (for example, teaching kindness, tolerance, and respect for others), and/or *Aktionsbewusstsein* can be reflected in a person's or society's desire to prevent detrimental developments (such as an emerging dictatorship or crimes against humanity committed by a government). With these considerations in mind I will base the theory of action consciousness on the following general definition:

Action consciousness is a predisposition to act. It is the expressed desire of an individual, group, or society, to act if past conditions re-emerge in the present.

The expression 'general definition' implies that additional, more specific characteristics associated with action consciousness exist that need to be defined and taken into consideration. These aspects include (1) the level of aggregation; (2) the degree of consciousness; (3) the context of time; and (4) the assessment of good versus bad:

- (1) In regard to the level of aggregation, action consciousness can develop on both an individual and a societal level, whereby the latter can be simply defined as the aggregate of the former. This does not necessarily mean that by aggregating action consciousness of individuals one should expect one uniform manifestation of *Aktionsbewusstsein* within a society. On the contrary, because in most cases individuals will have unique perceptions and attitudes, different manifestations will form between segments or communities of a society.
- (2) With respect to the degree of action consciousness, I argue that there cannot be any action consciousness on an unconscious level;

or in other words, the notion that there might be people who unconsciously feel that some action should be taken would represent an oxymoron. My definition of action consciousness reflects this argument by using the words 'expressed desire'. That said, the extent of *Aktionsbewusstsein* may very well differ between individuals or communities within a society and in the most generic terms can fall into the categories of high, medium, and low (or none, in which case there would be no action consciousness). In a more specific sense the degree of action consciousness could range from the realization of 'something needs to happen' to 'I have to and will personally do something about it'.

- (3) The time aspect of action consciousness concerns the question of whether research should focus on *Aktionsbewusstsein* that existed in the past (at the time when an event such as the collapse of the SED regime took place), or if the focus should be on what society's action consciousness is today (when reflecting on events with hindsight). While from a historical research perspective it would be desirable to understand both past and current perceptions, measuring what people thought and, for example, felt back in 1989, would be difficult at best, if not impossible. Unless there are well-documented historical sources or surveys conducted in the past that were not 'manipulated' by the regime, one can expect that perceptions of what transpired or what the action consciousness was then will have changed with the passing of time were those eyewitnesses questioned today. Nevertheless, if one accepts the notion that learning *from* history is an overall higher aspirational goal than just learning history, assessing today's *Aktionsbewusstsein* in regard to past events would then also be at least as important as if not more important than understanding yesterday's action consciousness.
- (4) Action consciousness can only develop if an individual, a group, or a society realizes that an event, a situation, or a development was or is bad enough that some kind of action is required. It could be argued that there is no simple answer to the question of what is to be regarded as a good or bad development because the answer depends on the fundamental values of society at a given point in time. For example, a society that lives under a dictatorial regime would likely consider any attempt to build action consciousness that something must be done to peacefully remove the regime from power as 'bad' citizenship and a threat, while open democratic societies would likely salute such an attempt.

In other words, communities and societies each have their own moral values and axioms that profoundly influence action consciousness.

These axioms are what a given society considers inalienable rights, such as freedom of speech, or unquestionable truths, such as murder or stealing being criminal behaviors that are detrimental to the society. The fundamental values are determined by who or what institution controls or sets them and are subject to change and evolution. Therefore, action consciousness also depends on temporal factors like present realities and the existing social and moral standards.

In short, the answer to the question ‘what is to be considered as good or bad’ is dependent on the societal values and on who sets and controls these values. For the purpose of this and the subsequent discussion I will therefore use an axiomatic approach by postulating that (1) freedom, peace, and the pursuit of happiness are fundamental inalienable human rights; (2) anything that jeopardizes these rights is to be considered ‘bad’; and (3) building action consciousness to resist bad past developments from reoccurring represents one of the foremost noble goals of humanity in general and history didactics specifically.

Based on these considerations and translated to the specific focus of this study, action consciousness can therefore be defined as the expressed desire of an individual, a group, or a society to act and resist any potential reawakening of dictatorships in general and crimes against humanity in particular should conditions reemerge in the present that are or have the potential to become similar to those conditions present during the era of the NS or SED dictatorships.

5.1.2 The eighth dimension: complementing Pandel’s model

In section 4.1.2.9, I discussed Hans-Jürgen Pandel’s multidimensional model of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* as it currently stands. At its core this model represents a structure of the underlying dimensions that explain how individuals make sense of the past and how they form mental images of a historical event. Pandel’s dimensions reflect areas of origination of perspectives and whether these are temporal–historical or societal in nature.¹ Since Pandel’s model is based on the assumption that the seven dimensions are interrelated, introducing *Aktionsbewusstsein* in Pandel’s model as an eighth dimension will require a discussion of how each of the seven dimensions might interact with action consciousness.²

¹ For a visual reference of Pandel’s multidimensional model, see Pandel (2005), 8 and Figure 4.4 on p. 68 in this volume.

² More information on the phases of *Aktionsbewusstsein* is given in section 5.3.

Figure 5.1 is a visual representation of my thesis that *Aktionsbewusstsein* is mutually interrelated with each of Pandel's dimensions, and it also suggests that action consciousness is assumed to be one of the core elements of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* overall. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss the interconnectedness of action consciousness with the other dimensions of Pandel's model in more detail.

Temporal consciousness

Temporal consciousness, or *Temporalbewusstsein*, is the dimension that deals with the construction of a narrative chronology of events that is shaped by learned events and culture. While this narrative can make use of information prior to and following the event in question to help explain it, the notion of temporal consciousness is characterized by knowledge of what happened when. This dimension is directly interrelated with *Aktionsbewusstsein* because without knowing the timeline and sequence of events context is lost, and causes and effects of historical developments are harder, if not impossible, to comprehend. Without temporal context and comprehension of what transpired, a predisposition to act cannot form. Likewise, it can be argued that students of history will be more interested in gaining an even better understanding of a past event as their level of action consciousness exceeds certain thresholds.

Incorporating an Action dimension into Pandel's model

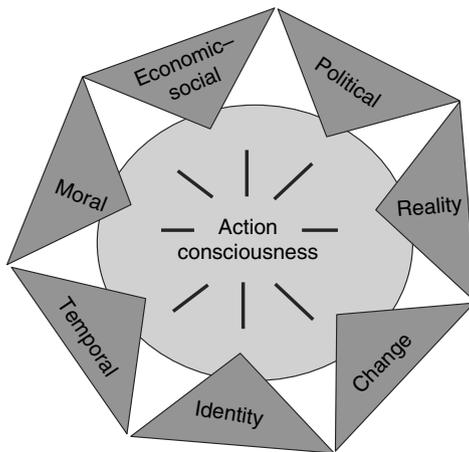


Figure 5.1 Linking Action Consciousness with Pandel's Seven Dimensions

In other words, *Temporalbewusstsein* and *Aktionsbewusstsein* reinforce each other to a certain extent in what one can call a positive feedback loop. For example, fully understanding the rise of National Socialism in Germany is only possible if one understands and utilizes knowledge of events prior to the formation of the NS regime. If an individual just learned about Nazi Germany and the Holocaust and, as a result, is determined that a similar disaster must be prevented by all means, placing National Socialist Germany into a narrative chronology to help explain how it came to be would likely not only strengthen action consciousness but also the interest in knowing even more about the rise of the NS dictatorship and its horrific crimes against humanity.

Reality consciousness

Reality consciousness, in essence understood as the ability to differentiate between fact and fiction (Pandel, 2005, 11), is not only an important dimension of historical consciousness but a critical prerequisite for preventing the formation of misguided action consciousness. The ability to discern between what is true and what is false, what is fact and what is a myth, and which historical sources are reliable and which are not, has a direct impact on if and how the learning of history manifests itself in action consciousness. If an individual determines, for example, that a story dispensed by a Nazi-sponsored propaganda agency is based on lies, or that a historical document on the false nature of Nazi propaganda is true, such insight will shape a person's *Aktionsbewusstsein* and predisposition to respond.

Conversely, for example, if an individual is led to believe that the Holocaust never happened, action consciousness to prevent a similar catastrophe from happening again will not form, since in this person's mind such an incomprehensible event that never happened to begin with, will also never happen in the future. In conclusion, fact-based reality consciousness represents the foundation for the building of fact-based action consciousness, which in turn will cause learners to strive for gaining an even more fact-based historical knowledge.

Change consciousness

Change consciousness, or *Wandelbewusstsein*, concerns the historicity and changeability of structures, institutions, norms, and predispositions or, in other words, it contemplates which aspects of the past remain the same and which ones transform through the historical process. Specifically, this dimension deals with the ability of learners to interpret the present as a result of historical changes, and the associated ability to

understand and differentiate between static and changeable aspects of history. Change consciousness interacts directly with action consciousness in that *Aktionsbewusstsein* can only form if people understand that certain events, status quos, or developments are changeable.

For example, the collapse and disappearance of the German Democratic Republic from the political map did not just happen suddenly or overnight. Historical, social and political factors explain how the GDR was founded and also account for the modification of specific elements over the decades of the country's lifespan, which finally led ordinary people to force a regime change, ultimately resulting in East Germany's disappearance as a sovereign entity. But this was a gradual process, not one without explanation: many people would have been aware of the slow erosion and transformation of cultural, economic and political forces within the country that eventually caused its collapse and absorption into a united Germany. *Aktionsbewusstsein* in this case would be the realization that changing an undesirable status quo for a better future can and has been successfully accomplished.

Identity consciousness

Identity consciousness, or *Identitätsbewusstsein*, the first of four sociality dimensions, is also directly interrelated with *Aktionsbewusstsein*. According to Pandel, identity consciousness contemplates the ability of individuals or collectives to recognize, critically reflect on, and identify themselves with certain groups or entities that, over the course of changing times, by and large remain the same (Pandel, 2005, 15). This means that individuals, as well as collectives like a community or a state, have the ability to see themselves as a permanent entity, in a fundamental sense retaining an identity that is not destroyed with the passage of time and evolving external forces. In this sense, *Identitätsbewusstsein* is a cultural construct, and identity is always cultural identity (Pandel, 2005, 15).

In regard to its relationship with *Aktionsbewusstsein*, identity consciousness provides individuals and groups with a frame of reference or orientation, a cultural identity, and an associated set of values upon which to evaluate change and assess if undesirable events or developments might command some kind of action. It can be argued, for example, that action consciousness would form if certain developments or exogenous changes undermine or threaten the cultural identity of an individual, group, or community. The forming of *Aktionsbewusstsein* would then be the result of the desire to protect cultural identity – an awareness of the elements at play in shaping that identity could lead to appropriate action to preserve it, or perhaps stave off undesirable

changes. Likewise, it can be assumed that once the degree of action consciousness has reached a certain threshold, it would strengthen identity consciousness because defending shared values acts as a bonding and unifying force.

Political consciousness

Political consciousness, or *politisches Bewusstsein*, contemplates the ability to recognize and critically reflect on the power structure of a society. More specifically, this dimension addresses the typically asymmetrical distribution of power and the dominance relationships between groups or interests (Pandel, 2005, 17). Political consciousness is directly interconnected with *Aktionsbewusstsein* because most issues in world history can be traced back to political events – how governments have exercised power and influence, and how individuals and groups have acted upon or responded to such governments' use of power.

Action consciousness as a predisposition to act is the dimension that expounds the idea of historical thinking leading to political action. In the GDR, for example, growing political awareness of and dissatisfaction with both the economic situation and the injustices committed at the hands of the Socialist Unity Party and its Stasi have ultimately resulted in dissent, protests, and the removal of the government. The conclusion is that political consciousness profoundly impacts action consciousness, whereas, one could argue, a pronounced *Aktionsbewusstsein* will likely result in a stronger interest in world history, politics and, as a result, strengthen political consciousness.

Economic–social consciousness

Pandel's sixth dimension, economic–social consciousness, concerns the ability of learners to understand and reflect on the economic–social structure of a society in general and the mostly asymmetric distribution of wealth in particular (Pandel, 2005, 18). *Ökonomisch-soziales Bewusstsein* directly influences action consciousness because knowledge about the presence of social inequality has the potential to be translated into action against the injustice. This dimension does not focus on what makes an individual or group wealthy or poor. Instead, economic–social consciousness explores an individual's ability to become aware of how wealth and poverty were defined at a given point in time and how these conditions have changed and can be re-designated at a later date.

An example of the interconnectedness of economic–social consciousness and action is the Junker class, whose influence in Germany was so great that they were partially responsible for bringing Hitler into

power. The Junkers were well aware of their precarious situation as large, inefficient and outdated agrarian elites, a class that had been removed through revolutions in France and modernization processes in England. They therefore saw their position in Germany as threatened by modernization, industrialization, and other factors that began eroding their livelihood and influence.

Supporting Hitler (who promised to guarantee their position despite agricultural inefficiencies) and helping his rise to power was the action these elites deemed necessary in order to maintain their status as significant landholding elites that should have been removed, or at the very least restructured and modernized. The destruction of the Junker class and their estates only took place after the defeat of the Third Reich under the collectivization policies of the communist regime in what eventually became the GDR. This historical example is also one that provides a context for the possible interactions between economic-social consciousness and *Aktionsbewusstsein*.

Moral consciousness

Moral consciousness deals with the categories of *good* versus *bad*, the competence to differentiate between and reflect on the societal norms of the past and the present, and based on such moral reflection, to arrive at a conclusion on whether an event or development is to be considered good or bad, or right or wrong (Pandel, 2005, 20). Important in this context is also an understanding of the transformations and changes of societal norms over time since these can be interpreted in various ways by societies at different times.

Moral consciousness directly interacts with *Aktionsbewusstsein* in that it provides the basis for evaluating events and, as a result, a potential justification to act. Whether it is appropriate to judge past eras with the norms of the time or with those of today is debatable. Pandel suggests that history lessons ought to focus on both (Pandel, 2005, 20). Yet, as I have argued in section 5.1.1, while it is certainly important to understand past norms and associated judgments, the assessment of good versus bad should ultimately be based on universal inalienable human rights that by definition will remain constant over time.³

The above discussion has shown that *Aktionsbewusstsein* interacts with each of Pandel's seven dimensions in various ways. While there are no

³ Schreiber argues similarly by demanding that any judgment must also be based on universal and essential human values (Schreiber, 1999, 32).

clear-cut boundaries between the dimensions and all should be seen as somewhat fluid, they can combine in multiple manifestations to form an image or perception that learners can interpret and understand, and that form a predisposition or readiness for assessing whether or not an event or development commands, or would have commanded, action. *Aktionsbewusstsein* can and should therefore be integrated into Pandel's structure of historical consciousness. Figure 5.2 is based on Hartmann Wunderer's visual representation of Pandel's model and illustrates my attempt to complement the framework with the action consciousness dimension.

The definition of action consciousness as predisposition or expressed desire to act suggests that the notion of *Aktionsbewusstsein* is part of the group comprising the sociality dimensions. Moreover, while temporal consciousness describes the phenomenon of yesterday–today–tomorrow; moral consciousness of right–wrong; identity consciousness of we–you–they; change consciousness of static–changing; reality consciousness of fiction–non-fiction; economic–social consciousness of rich–poor; and political consciousness of the upwards–downwards relationships of dominance structures and classes, the categories of action consciousness can be described by the opposites perceived *need to act – yes versus no*.

Expanded Structure of Historical Consciousness

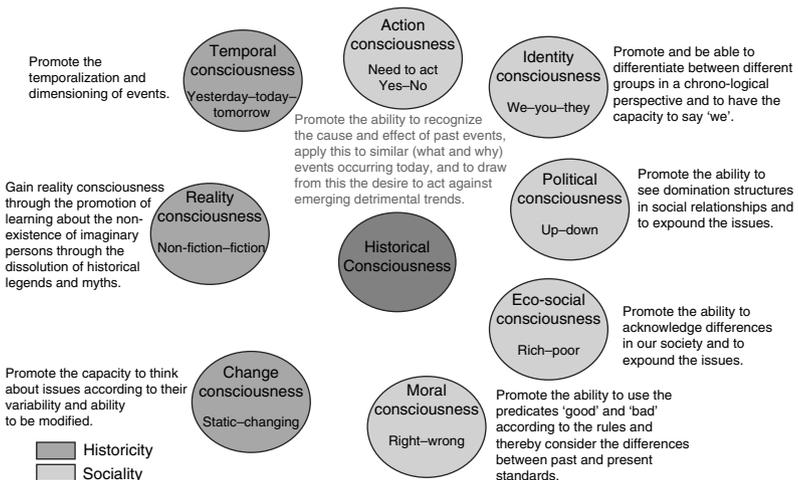


Figure 5.2 Action Consciousness as the Eighth Dimension (based on Pandel, 2005, 8, expanded by M. Voss)

The predisposition to act or not is based on what a learner of history has discovered about a given historical event or time period and on a thorough understanding of the what–why and cause–effect elements that stimulate the mental preparedness to question and potentially do something in response to a certain event. More specifically, *Aktionsbewusstsein* is a result of mental processes that ask and ultimately seek to answer *what* (as in what is the issue and what is positive and/or negative about it?) and *why* (as in why is it this way and/or why should it be or remain this way?). In answering the *what–why* questions an individual will become familiar with and exposed to the causes of human disasters and the effects they have had on the past leading up to today. This can be applied to situations that appear positive as well. Familiarizing oneself with the processes, transformations, relations, and interactions of and within history establishes the foundation for understanding the factors that caused change and that might still even have an impact on the world today.

The consequences of World War I, for example, have been profound particularly for Germany, who after more than ninety years has finally paid off all the reparations and interest she owed to the Western powers as a result of the armistice (Sturdee, 2010, 1). Thus, the objective of building *Aktionsbewusstsein* as part of *Geschichtsbewusstsein* is to promote the ability of an individual or group to recognize the causes, effects, and transformations of past events, to understand what caused a particular event or historical transformation, and, as a result, to develop an opinion and predisposition to act in order to prevent a detrimental event or development from happening again. Understanding causes and effects is at the same time an important prerequisite for the ability to recognize similarities between past and current events and for the subsequent assessment of whether such a current event is a positive trend that ought to be continued or a negative development that should be prevented.

Since historical images, according to Zülsdorf-Kersting, are not only formed through actual learning of history but also through imagining (Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 30), the eight-dimensional model of historical consciousness can be adapted as shown in Figure 5.3 to reflect his main theses on historical construction.

As discussed in section 4.1.2.5, Zülsdorf-Kersting suggests that first, a concerted conscious effort takes place in the shaping of historical consciousness that Rüsen has thoroughly investigated (Rüsen, 2008). This includes actively engaging in learning about the past. Second, historical construction focuses on what is by and large an unconscious

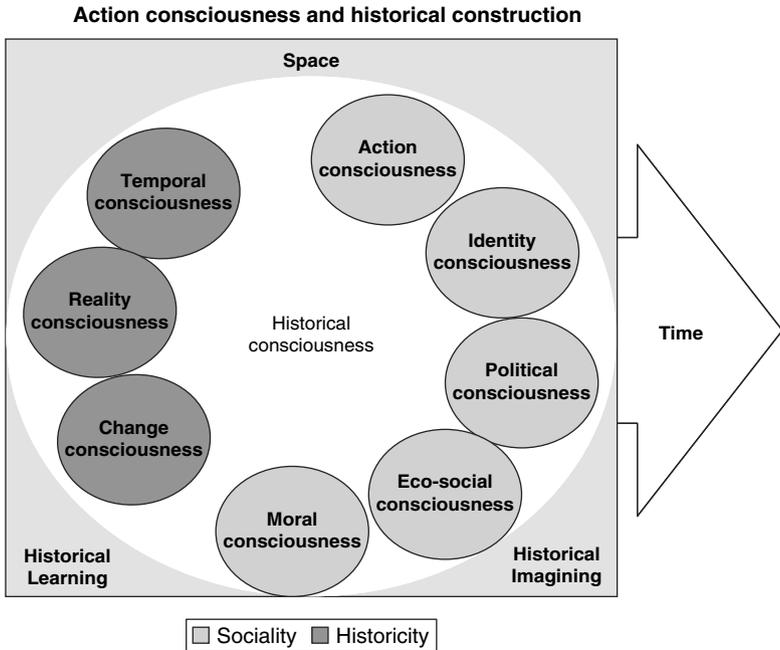


Figure 5.3 Action Consciousness in the Context of Historical Construction (based on Pandel, 2005, 8, and Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 31, expanded by M. Voss)

effort, which Zülsdorf-Kersting has labeled *Historisches Vorstellen* or historical imagining (Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007, 30). He argues that historical imagining is a defining component of historical consciousness because personal imagination helps an individual fill in potential knowledge gaps to understand the event without additional external influences. He characterizes such historical imagining as *nicht bewusst*⁴ since students and children typically don't realize when they are engaging in the imagination aspect. This practice, while not based on historical facts and while subject to change over time and space⁵ as new material and data become available, cannot be disregarded because it does contribute to the construction of potentially distorted historical images. In conclusion, it can be argued that the eight dimensions of historical

⁴ 'Not aware' or 'unaware'. See Zülsdorf-Kersting (2007), 30.

⁵ The remembrance community a person belongs to or lives in.

consciousness are not only interrelated but also influenced by what Zülsdorf-Kersting has defined as historical learning and imagining.

5.2 Factors that shape action consciousness

In the previous sections I have argued that (1) action consciousness is an integral dimension of historical consciousness; (2) it interacts in various ways with each of Pandel's seven dimensions; and (3) that the concept is consistent with Zülsdorf-Kersting's theses on historical construction. This discussion, however, has not addressed the question on how action consciousness is built or, in other words, which factors impact or shape *Aktionsbewusstsein*. The notion that out of reflections on past events a mental predisposition to act can be formed if detrimental past events or developments resurface in the present, underscores the role that history didactics can play to actively influence or shape action consciousness. The forms of historical cultural socialization represent such key factors that link historical consciousness research as one of the main pillars of history didactics with the theory of action consciousness. The result of my attempt to conceptualize the structure of and relationships between these factors in more detail is illustrated in Figure 5.4.

The conceptual framework depicted suggests that action consciousness is not directly interconnected with the forms of historical cultural socialization. Instead, there are three reasons to argue that these *Formen der geschichtskulturellen Sozialisation* will impact *Aktionsbewusstsein* indirectly by first cultivating historicity and sociality, most notably knowledge and attitudes, which then in turn shape the formation of action consciousness, assuming that an individual or society realizes that a detrimental historical event or era such as the SED surveillance-state violates societal values and basic human rights:

- (1) Action consciousness cannot form without knowledge. As a matter of fact, knowledge of what happened and what the underlying causes and effects were for events to materialize can be regarded as the core prerequisite for any learning from the past. More specifically, without profound knowledge of horrific events such as the Holocaust and without passing this knowledge on from generation to generation, society cannot learn from history and, as a result, chances to prevent developments that might lead to similar detrimental events are greatly diminished. Conceptually, knowledge must therefore be regarded as an enabling construct that first needs to be built by utilizing the various information sources or forms

Conceptual Framework

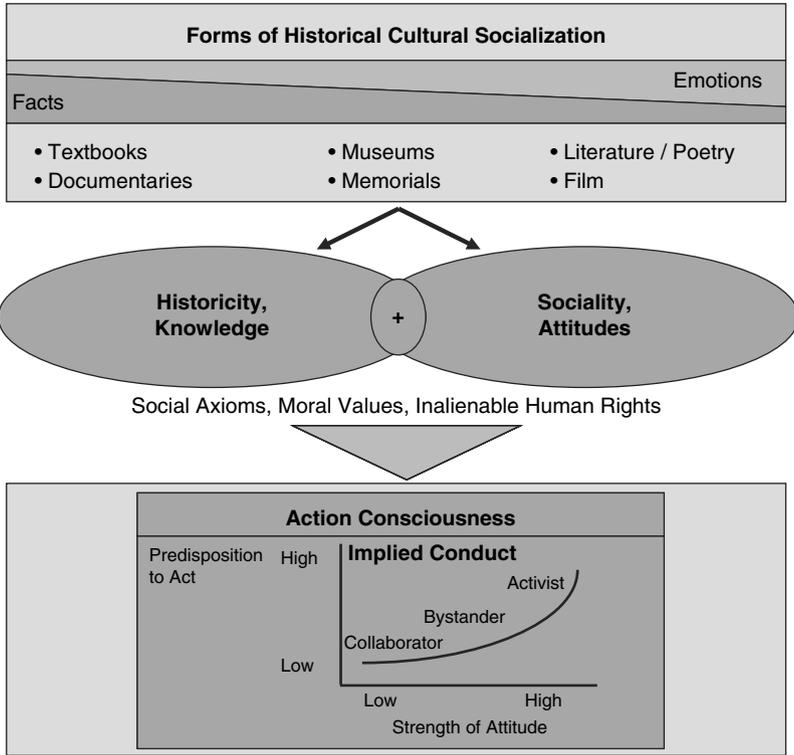


Figure 5.4 Factors Shaping Action Consciousness

of historical cultural socialization before it can have an impact on action consciousness.

- (2) Knowledge alone, however, is not sufficient to create *Aktionsbewusstsein*. People may know about a horrific event, but it might not materially affect them, or they might think that such an event cannot possibly happen again. Creating the societal attitude that detrimental past events must be prevented by all means from occurring again represents an additional critical prerequisite for building action consciousness. Without such attitude or, as Jung puts it, an inner 'readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way' (Jung, 1971, 687), that is, to condemn horrific past events, people will

lack the predisposition to act should history repeat itself in a similar form. Like knowledge, attitudes can therefore be regarded as an enabling construct that is influenced by forms of historical cultural socialization and which in turn shapes *Aktionsbewusstsein*.

- (3) Knowledge and attitudes need a reference point against which to assess whether a development is good or bad and whether it might command some kind of action. More specifically, action consciousness cannot form if there are no criteria for judging what is right or wrong. Societal norms, values, and human rights represent such evaluation criteria as they complement knowledge and attitudes with context, guidance, and as a result, with a basic direction in terms of whether or not there may be a need to act. As I have argued in section 5.1.1, social norms and values do evolve over time, but fundamental, inalienable human rights must remain unchanged and should therefore be selected as the ultimate benchmark for assessing whether a historical event is to be considered as good or bad. The implication is that individual forms of historical cultural socialization must also be judged by their relative effectiveness in regard to how they contribute to strengthening these rights in the minds of both individuals and societies.

Figure 5.4 also suggests that all *Formen geschichtskultureller Sozialisation* should in one way or another shape both knowledge and attitudes while likely differing in terms of magnitude and scope of impact. The rationale behind this hypothesis is that some socialization sources rely on a predominantly fact-based approach while others have an inherently higher potential to shape people's emotions. Since the primary focus of school and higher education textbooks and other educational resources is centered on disseminating historical facts and context, one would expect that these information sources will contribute considerably to building collective knowledge. Yet, because of their strong focus on facts, these socialization forms might be relatively less effective in shaping emotions and associated attitudes. Conversely, movies and poetry have an inherently more sensitive and artistic character and are more likely to impact emotional involvement and attitudes, but might be relatively less effective in building fact-based knowledge. Since literary contributions vary significantly in terms of emotional depth and orientation on facts, they are likely also to differ in their relative impact on knowledge and attitudes. Museums and memorials, while frequently focused on a narrow topic, have the potential to display historical facts in emotionally appealing ways. They are therefore assumed to take an

in between position with balanced but possibly (yet not necessarily) less pronounced contributions to knowledge and attitudes.

Individually and in combination, the forms of historical cultural socialization represent the key factors determining knowledge and attitudes, which in turn impact action consciousness. The lower portion of Figure 5.4 visualizes my hypotheses in regard to how action consciousness might translate into implied conduct. Findings from prior empirical attitude research suggest that (1) only very strong attitudes impact behavior, and (2) that the relationship between strength of attitude and behavior is non-linear.

For example, in their study ‘The importance of non-linear relationships between attitude and behaviour in policy research’, van Doorn, Verhoef, and Bijmolt conclude that many empirical studies find only low effects of attitudes on behavior, in part due to the fact that possible non-linearities that are not detected by standard linear models could occur in the relationship between attitudes and behavior and that, therefore, the strength of attitudes must exceed a certain threshold to impact behavior (Doorn, Verhoef, and Bijmolt, 2007, 75–90).⁶ Based on these findings, it can be assumed that action consciousness and attitudes must be very strong for people to actively engage in preventing horrific past events from happening again. Conversely, lower strengths of action consciousness and attitude will likely result in no action at all or even in counterproductive action.

While the extent of conduct is based on a continuous scale, I have segmented the range of implied behavior into three broad categories. Potential activists are comprised of individuals whose strong action consciousness and attitudes will most likely cause them to engage in peace and freedom-preserving action if detrimental past developments resurface in a similar form in the present. In contrast, as the strength of *Aktionsbewusstsein* and attitudes decline, people are more likely to become potential bystanders who look the other way, or even collaborators that might actively contribute to a detrimental development such as supporting a dictatorship’s rise to power. In regard to the implications for history didactics, the assumed non-linearity of the relationship between action consciousness and attitudes also suggests that it would be easier helping a bystander to become an activist rather than converting a collaborator into a bystander.

⁶ Cited in Voss (2010), 34.

5.3 Historical thinking and political action

In the discussion above, I have proposed a framework that links action consciousness with the forms of historical cultural socialization and that describes how the strength of *Aktionsbewusstsein* and attitudes are assumed to impact implied conduct. In combination with Pandel's model, the framework integrates with and complements the core historical consciousness research. That said, it is important to note that the range and categories of actions represent *implied* conduct, not necessarily *actual* political action. While this approach is consistent with the notion of historical thinking in general and historical consciousness in particular, it does not address the question of if and how action consciousness will manifest itself in real political action. For example, even if action consciousness – the predisposition to act – is high, it does not necessarily mean that people will indeed take action should conditions of comparable negative past events resurface in the present. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to briefly discuss the possible linkages between action consciousness and political action in the context of historical thinking. Figure 5.5 visualizes my hypotheses in regard to how historical thinking and political action are linked and sequenced.

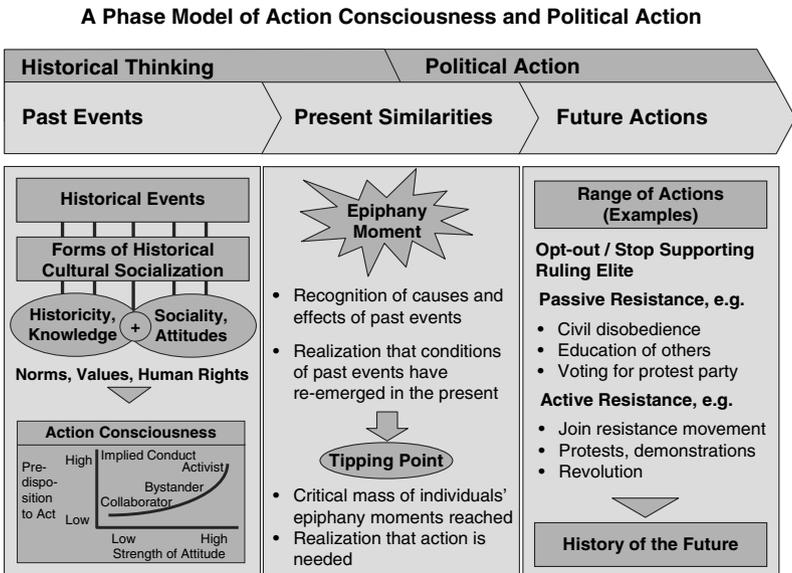


Figure 5.5 Historical Thinking and Political Action

The left section of Figure 5.5 basically repeats the framework of the structure of and relationships between the forms of historical cultural socialization and action consciousness that I have discussed in section 5.2.1. It reflects the core notion of historical thinking and culminates in an assessment of if and to what extent people would engage to prevent detrimental history from resurfacing in a similar form. Consistent with my proposed definition of action consciousness as an expressed desire to act, it reflects the general readiness to act and what people say they would do.

The center section of Figure 5.5 links historical thinking with political action and shows the generic conditions that must be met for action consciousness to manifest itself in concrete political action. At its core, Figure 5.5 suggests that for action to materialize an epiphany moment is required. According to the Oxford online dictionary (2013),⁷ epiphany is the *ah ha* effect or the moment of sudden and great revelation or realization that enlightens and motivates a person into action. Thus, the epiphany moment is in essence the point where an individual realizes that action must be taken. It is the necessary step to move from the consciousness and readiness level of *Aktionsbewusstsein* to the subsequent active phase.

There are two prerequisites that must be in place for an epiphany moment to occur: (1) the individual must have fully understood and recognized the causes and effects of past events; and (2) the person must have realized that some or all conditions causing such past events have re-emerged in the present. The tipping point is determined by the aggregate of individual epiphany moments. Only if the above two conditions have been met by a sufficient number of individuals or, in other words, if a critical mass of individuals' epiphany moments has been reached, and if a large enough number of people realize that action is needed, will action consciousness materialize in concrete political action. The implication for history didactics is that in order to prevent similar detrimental developments from repeating themselves, it would be important to not only foster the understanding of causes and effects of past events, but also to help students of history in a critical analysis of present conditions in regard to their similarity with the past.

The right section of Figure 5.5 summarizes the possible range of actions on an illustrative basis. While the number of potential moves is theoretically infinite, concrete actions can be segmented into three broad categories. On the least determined level, people can choose to

⁷ See <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/epiphany>.

opt out and refrain from supporting ruling elites. Passive resistance can involve civil disobedience, the education of others on current issues and what can be done to resolve them, and/or voting the ruling party or parties out of office in the case of an election. Active resistance such as joining or organizing a resistance movement or participation in protests like the East German Monday demonstrations that took place before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and outright revolution represent the most determined levels of action.

The magnitude and scope of actions in which individuals might engage will obviously depend on other elements such as fear, risk factors, and a perceived threat of losing certain privileges an individual might have. In principle it can be argued that the more people have to lose the more likely they will not take action at all, or they might even collaborate with potential perpetrators. Conversely, the more individuals are negatively impacted by certain developments the more they will be inclined to engage. In doing so one would conclude that they are at the same time writing the history of the future, apparently as a result of historical changes in action consciousness.

5.4 Synthesis and implications

In this chapter I have proposed a concise theory of *Aktionsbewusstsein* as an integral dimension of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*. Based on my definition of action consciousness as a predisposition or an expressed desire of an individual, group, or society to act if past conditions re-emerge in a comparable form in the present, I have argued that action consciousness can and should complement Pandel's model as it interacts in various ways with each of his seven dimensions, and that it is consistent with Zülsdorf-Kersting's theses on historical construction.

I have also proposed a framework for the structure of and relationships between action consciousness and the forms of historical cultural socialization, and I have discussed the linkages between historical thinking and political action. In essence, historical thinking moves into action only if the individual (1) is going to remember what was learned; (2) makes the connection that the past reflects and is relevant to the present; and (3) acknowledges the importance of history and develops thoughts and actions on how to prevent detrimental aspects of the past from reoccurring in a similar form in the present and future. While the concept proposed is intended to provide a theoretical foundation for the discourse of *Aktionsbewusstsein* as part of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, it can be broadly applied to the research of and learning from historical

events. It also appears particularly relevant when it comes to preventing detrimental developments such as the destruction of personal freedoms, the rise to power of authoritarian regimes, and crimes against humanity from happening again.

Germany's two dictatorships of the 20th century provide examples of the kind of extremes that can exist under a totalitarian government. In particular, the mass extermination of the Jews and other racial minorities murdered during the Holocaust shows what can happen under the conditions of overwhelming control over the lives of ordinary people by a repressive regime or dictator. Since the loss of individual liberty and freedom and a general sense of terror, fear, repression, or even mass murder are all expressions of dictatorial will and might, any such future developments must be prevented by all means. While it is problematic to compare the two German regimes,⁸ both provide unique forms of the same phenomenon – dictatorship.

Most people would consider human suffering in all its forms as a bad and unacceptable development that should be prevented from happening. Yet, Rummel's findings suggest that even after World War II death by government, or democide as Rummel calls it, is as potent as ever and continues to take place. As shocking as these findings may be, dealing with the issue requires a shift in focus, a move from predominantly historicizing events to also building action consciousness against any erosion of freedom, liberty, and other human rights caused by actions of authoritarian and often corrupt governments. Renowned psychologist Sigmund Freud has pointed out a root cause for why history is allowed to happen again in a different form in the present and future. In his view '[the masses] have never thirsted after truth. They demand illusions, and cannot do without them. They constantly give what is unreal precedence over what is real; they are almost as strongly influenced by what is untrue as by what is true. They have an evident tendency not to distinguish between the two' (Freud, 1976, cited in Greene, 2001, 99).

This observation is striking for two reasons. First, Freud suggests that the truth is less desirable than an illusion and that the masses do not necessarily make strong efforts to distinguish between fact and fiction, and second, it shows a high degree of complacency on the part of the masses and an unwillingness to accept facts that may be crucial to their

⁸ Much debate exists on the matter of comparative regimes, specifically between Nazi Germany and the GDR. See Heydemann and Oberreuter (2003).

well-being. This reinforces the importance of adopting a comprehensive model and view of historical consciousness as such an approach strengthens both fact-based understanding of history and the consciousness to act should detrimental history reoccur in a comparable form. It also underscores that history didactics needs to play an important role in helping people internalize that there is an *obligation to dissent* and that obedience is not necessarily a virtue. As a matter of fact, disobedience is a force that is as much promoted as it is looked down upon:

Prometheus, in stealing the fire from the gods, lays the foundation for the evolution of man. There would be no history were it not for Prometheus' 'crime'. He, like Adam and Eve, is punished for his disobedience. But he does not repent and ask for forgiveness. On the contrary, he proudly says: 'I would rather be chained to this rock than be the obedient servant of the gods.' (Fromm, 2010, 3)

Disobedience, as much as fear and conformity, factor into whether and to what extent action consciousness can become a force in real life. Both the Prometheus example and the biblical Adam and Eve story show that disobedience to a higher power or order has fundamentally transformed humanity. The notion of 'original sin' can therefore be interpreted in multiple ways, one of which supports the idea that the act of disobedience has set mankind free from the will of a higher power. Disobedience even in Western countries that consider themselves part of the free and democratically driven world is looked down upon, which thus teaches the younger generations that obedience is virtuous.

What must happen, then, is a phase-shift from this type of thinking that can only come from the cultivation of the individual. Disobedience has to transform into something so fashionable that it becomes epidemic and will reduce the level of fear of standing out and being punished and, ultimately, for breaking the monotonous conformity to a regime. The philosopher Erich Fromm also realized that an individual needs to overcome the deep-seated resistance of inertia, fear of being wrong, or of straying from the herd. He understood that it takes more than to be simply acquainted with ideas that are right, and his view is that ideas can have an effect on man if the idea is lived by the one who teaches it, if it is personified by the teacher, if the idea appears in the flesh (Fromm, 2010, 14). This notion can be expanded and combined with the various other forms and institutions of historical cultural socialization but the mental tipping point, the phase-shift from action

consciousness on the level of conscience to the real-life world level, must translate from a condition of inaction to literal action.

Fromm's perception of personifying an idea in the flesh suggests that figures of initiative, such as prophets, who live the ideas they expound, can have a lasting impression on others, especially a bystander group that may need guidance and direction with their mental and emotional intelligence to resist or protest against a totalitarian police state. Since dictatorships rely on obedience and conformity for the smooth implementation of their agenda, sufficiently strong *Aktionsbewusstsein* could be the trigger for the freedom of action based on the cultivation of an individual's thoughts and feelings that allow him or her to disobey and defy.

6

Research Methodology and Approach

While the discussion so far has focused on reviewing the status of relevant previous historical consciousness research and on expanding such research by proposing a concise theory of action consciousness, one of the core objectives of this research project is to also explore knowledge, attitudes, and factors determining their acquisition with specific focus on *Aktionsbewusstsein* in regard to modern Germany's dictatorships on an empirical basis. Before discussing the results of the empirical research in detail, the purpose of this chapter is to describe the chosen design, scope, methodology, and questionnaire of the survey and to summarize events that were covered by news outlets during the fieldwork as these might have had an impact on the survey participants' responses.

6.1 Research design and scope

Examining the basic concept and hypotheses of this project requires empirical research. This research was carried out between 5 and 16 August 2013 with the support of Harris Interactive, one of the world's leading online panel market research firms. A summary overview of the research design elements and attributes is shown in Table 6.1. In the following sections, I will briefly discuss each of these elements and attributes in the context of this study's objectives.¹

¹ Because Harris Interactive specifically and online market research in general was utilized in my previous study, the methodology, research, and survey design in this project are similar and in some cases the same. Therefore, parts of what is discussed in this chapter are excerpts from or similar to the approach used in my Holocaust study. See Voss (2010), 34–49.

Table 6.1 Design Elements and Attributes of Research

<i>ELEMENT</i>	<i>ATTRIBUTES</i>
Data Collection and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative primary research • Survey approach • Use of SPSS for data analysis • Online panel survey through Harris Interactive, one of the leading online panel market research firms • Actively managed panel in the recruiting process and in quality control to optimize data validity (participants are on a point scoring system)
Target Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults between 18 and 69 years of age, segmented by generations • Segmentation by West and East Germany (and by State) • Segmentation by East Germans that materially participated in the resistance movement against the SED state and those that did not • Segmentation by educational attainment levels
Survey Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stratified random selection weighted for representativeness in regard to age, region, gender, and educational attainment • Additional non-representative boost sample of East Germans who participated in the uprising against the GDR regime • Total useable sample size of 1,680 participants

6.1.1 Data collection and analysis

Assessing knowledge, attitudes, and *Aktionsbewusstsein* in regard to 20th-century German dictatorships requires quantitative primary research. While there are many empirical studies that deal with one or more aspects of the Holocaust, World War II, or GDR history,² the study must focus on primary research,³ because, to my knowledge, there are no secondary sources that comprehensively cover the concept and scope of hypotheses developed in Chapter 5. In particular, the notion of historical action consciousness has not been a subject of prior empirical research. The rationale for focusing on a quantitative research approach is that testing the conceptual model and the underlying hypotheses will require measuring and statistically analyzing the relationships

² See discussion in section 4.2.

³ Primary research (or fieldwork) is defined as research that collects information that does not already exist; whereas secondary (or desk) research is based on analyzing existing data. For more details see Hague (2003), 33.

between the various model variables.⁴ In contrast, qualitative research, while providing in-depth insights into a research topic, is limited to small sample sizes because it typically involves very detailed and time-consuming interviews, individual and/or group discussions, and explorations (Hague, 2003, 60, in Voss, 2010, 35).⁵

Small sample sizes, however, may limit the validity of conclusions derived from statistical analysis. As a further basic design element, this study relies on a survey approach, which basically means that the participating research subjects are asked to respond to certain survey questions. Observation as an alternative method of primary empirical research cannot be used, because knowledge, attitudes, and historical consciousness are non-observable constructs.⁶ Data analysis is based on the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS), a leading statistics software package that is specifically tailored to meet the requirements of quantitative research in the social sciences (SPSS, 2005).

This study utilizes the online panel of Harris Interactive as the chosen data collection method. While a broad range of companies, including large corporations such as Unilever, Bayer, Coca-Cola, and Microsoft use Harris Interactive's panel in addition to traditional market research (Miller, 2006, 111, in Voss, 2010, 36),⁷ the feasibility of conducting online market research has been a subject of debate among and between academics and practitioners. The rationale for utilizing Harris Interactive's online panel for this study is based on the conclusion that the advantages of online market research outweigh presumed limitations and that such limitations are effectively mitigated by Harris Interactive's data validity and quality control systems and procedures.

Proponents claim that online market research offers a range of advantages over other more traditional data collection methods such as personal interviews or telephone surveys.⁸ There is broad consensus that online market research is more cost and time *efficient* than traditional data collection methods. Cost savings result, for example, from the fact that there are no interviewers to be paid and that expenses associated with manual data entry are eliminated. Likewise, throughput time

⁴ See Creswell (2009), 4, in Voss (2010), 35.

⁵ For further information on qualitative and mixed methods market research, also see Creswell (2009).

⁶ See Creswell (2009), 15, for an overview of methods, in Voss (2010), 36.

⁷ According to BtoB Magazine, 43% of survey research in 2008 was conducted online (Fitzgerald, 2009).

⁸ See Wright (2005); Voss (2010), 36–7.

reductions are accomplished by avoiding the sometimes time-consuming setup of interview appointments as well as post interview manual data entry and associated quality control.⁹ Moreover, proponents argue that, depending on the specific research design, online market research can also be more *effective* than traditional methods for four reasons:

- (1) Computer-based interviewing provides superior flexibility in regard to interview process management, response filtering and control, and integration of multimedia applications. In contrast to personal interviews or telephone surveys, online questionnaires can be programmed to incorporate loops and filters and/or to allow or disallow respondents to return to and revise previously answered questions (Voss, 2010, 36).
- (2) Even more importantly, the survey programming can provide for random item and response category rotation by respondent to eliminate tiredness effects in long questionnaires. Such rotation ensures that on an aggregated basis each item and response category will receive the same relative attention.
- (3) Unlike personal interviewing methods, online research is not affected by any interviewer bias, a phenomenon that describes the impact an interviewer can have on an interviewee's responses as a result of the interviewer's conduct, the way the questions are presented, and/or the effects of non-verbal communication such as eye contact or even pitch of voice.¹⁰
- (4) Data validity and reliability also benefit from the fact that the interview situation is standardized and thus the same for each respondent (Miller, 2006, 111, in Voss, 2010, 36). In studies involving participants from diverse backgrounds this standardization contributes to minimizing potential bias resulting from cultural differences.

The primary concerns raised against the use of online market research include issues related to data representativeness, and data quality concerns associated with the unmonitored interviewing process, as follows:

- (1) Some researchers argue that in many cases online surveys cannot provide the same level of data representativeness¹¹ as traditional

⁹ This primarily applies to personal interviews and paper-based written surveys, and to a lesser extent to telephone surveys.

¹⁰ For more details see, for example, Roller (2012), 1.

¹¹ The term *representative* is used to describe a randomly drawn sample that is representative of a certain population. For further details, see Federer (1991), 5–6 in Voss (2010), 35.

approaches that focus on drawing random samples from a population (Baker, 2010, 3–6, in Voss, 2010, 37). This assertion is primarily based on two arguments: (1) the concern that Internet penetration and usage may be too low to ensure representativeness, and (2) that prospective respondents who do use the Internet on a regular basis could participate in online studies by opting in. Gaps in Internet penetration and opt-in, however, would violate the core requirement that, for a survey to be representative, the probability to be selected as a respondent must be the same for each member of the underlying population (Voss, 2010, 37).

- (2) Some critics are also concerned about potential data quality issues associated with the unmonitored and self-administered interviewing process. Because there is no interviewer managing the process and monitoring the integrity of the interview, it would be difficult to ensure that participants read, understand and honestly answer all questions. Moreover, some respondents might be inclined to participate in the study multiple times to maximize participation incentives if provided (Miller, 2006, 113, in Voss, 2010, 38).¹²

In rebuttal to the concerns raised against the use of online market research, I argue that these concerns are partly based on assumptions that are less valid today than even just a few years ago, apply to other scientifically accepted data collection methods as well, or can be mitigated through quality control, and proper survey planning and administration.

While Internet coverage and usage gaps may have represented a barrier to online market research in the past and may still be an issue in some countries, regions, or market segments today, the Internet is now almost ubiquitous in most developed countries, approaching adoption rates comparable to landline telephone usage. The Internet penetration rates for Germany shown in Figure 6.1 indicate that, except for those aged 65 years or more, the vast majority of all other age groups has embraced the Internet as their primary communication, information and entertainment method.

¹² A cross-industry initiative has been established under the stewardship of the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) to define and optimize online research metrics and quality standards. For further details, see Dedeker, Tomei, and Rubinson (2009) and ARF (2009) in Voss (2010), 38.

Internet usage by age

First Quarter of 2012, Germany in Percent

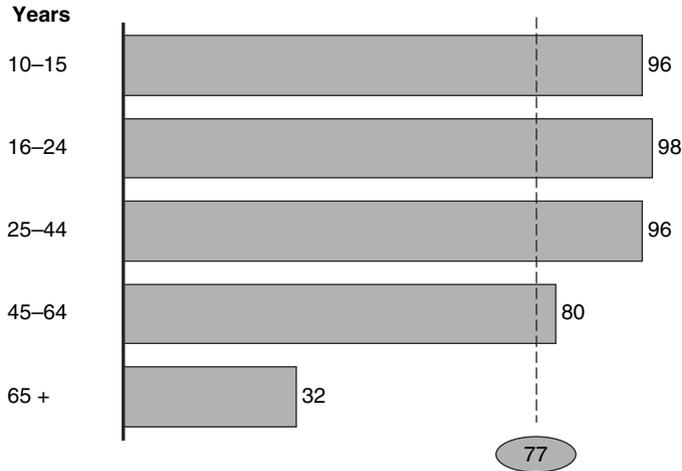


Figure 6.1 Internet Adoption in Germany (based on Statistisches Bundesamt, 2012)

Overall, more than three quarters of Germans use the Internet.¹³ Its usage is not only close to one hundred percent in younger age groups, but at 80 percent is also very high in the older 45 to 64-year-old age group. While one can argue that any usage gap below 100 percent will to a certain degree introduce a statistical sampling error, telephone surveys have, to some extent, similar limitations in regard to coverage. The penetration of landline telephone usage has declined to almost 80 percent of German households from more than 90 percent about a decade ago, which means that approximately 10 million people exclusively use cell phones for voice communication (Infas, 2011, 1).¹⁴ As a result, it has become more difficult to access some target groups for telephone interviews.¹⁵

¹³ These numbers are consistent with other studies, e.g. the 2013 survey conducted by TNS-Infratest revealed that 77 percent of the total German population and 64 percent of the 60 to 69-year-old population are using the Internet (Wieland, 2013, 7, 10).

¹⁴ According to a European Commission study, 86 percent of German households have a landline connection (TNS Opinion & Social, 2013, 12).

¹⁵ This accessibility issue is also driven by concerns associated with potentially incurring cell phone roaming charges, the increasing unwillingness to participate as a result of the growing number of telemarketer calls, as well as the increasing number of non-published phone numbers. In response to these issues, some market research firms have developed *Mobile Research* concepts to better reach cell and smartphone users (see Schöttelndreier and Helferich, 2012).

With respect to the online research specific opt-in and self-selection problem, this issue can by and large be mitigated by actively recruiting an online access panel that consists of members who agree to participate in multiple studies without knowing in which specific survey or surveys they will ultimately participate (Miller, 2006, 116, in Voss, 2010, 37). Once an access panel is established, each study can be randomly sampled from the access panel's membership database (Voss, 2010, 37).¹⁶ Such an approach will eliminate potential opt-in and self-selection opportunities at two stages – in conjunction with the initial panel membership recruitment, and when it comes to survey selection and participation.

In regard to quality concerns that are raised against the use of online market research – potential question comprehension issues, problems related to providing dishonest or no answers, and/or responding in a fast and thoughtless manner – these issues apply to all market research methods as well.

In conclusion, as for all market research, magnitude and scope of potential data validity and quality problems of online market research largely depend on the design of the chosen research method, supporting systems and processes, quality control, and proper survey planning and administration (Miller, 2006, 113, in Voss, 2010, 38). To meet these requirements, my empirical study relies on Harris Interactive's approach to data collection for three quality-related reasons:

- (1) The firm has established and operates one of the world's largest online panels, consisting of hundreds of thousands of active members from multiple countries (Loeb and Rodenhausen, 2009, 2–3, in Voss, 2010, 39). There are more than eighty thousand active members in Germany alone that are representatively distributed across the German states; more than five thousand of these members are 60 years of age or older (Harris Interactive, 2013, 11). From each member, the company collects more than one hundred data points such as all relevant demographic data, media usage, ownership of particular electronic items or devices, as well as certain behavioral patterns and lifestyle attributes (Harris Interactive, 2013, 11).¹⁷ The panel's size and extensive data pool allow for granular segmentation so that even difficult to reach target segments can be covered by

¹⁶ As in any other research, selected respondents' consent to participating in the individual survey is still required.

¹⁷ For example, Harris collects information on how each member spends his or her leisure time.

drawing random samples of single or stratified multiple populations (Voss, 2010, 39).

- (2) The company eliminates the opt-in and self-selection issue by actively managing both the front-end recruitment member selection and the individual survey participation processes. Active membership recruiting means that prospective panel members cannot join by simply signing up on the company's website or on third-party websites or portals that specialize in recruiting survey respondents (Loeb and Rodenhausen, 2009, 1).¹⁸ Instead, the firm focuses on an active selection approach by placing recruiting ads and selecting applicants based on pre-defined target attributes and requirements. Once admitted to the panel, each respondent is given the principal right to decline but not the right to self-select the surveys he or she would like to participate in.
- (3) Harris Interactive has adopted, maintains, and controls adherence to strict standards in its quality assurance process by focusing on three key design elements. First, to ensure the integrity of its membership, the company and the panel member enter into a formal legal relationship with clearly defined professional expectations and mutual rights and obligations, including but not limited to the firm's express obligation to protect each member's right to privacy (Voss, 2010, 38).¹⁹ Second, to avoid attracting professional survey takers and to prevent bias while sustaining a high level of motivation, the company limits the number of surveys each respondent can take. More specifically, members are not allowed to take more than three surveys per month, and they are excluded from taking a second survey within the same survey category for a minimum of three months (Loeb and Rodenhausen, 2009, 13). In part, due to such selectivity, the firm achieves high response rates of 40 to 80 percent (Harris Interactive, 2013, 11). Third, to optimize data validity and reliability, Harris Interactive is using a structured behavior tracking system that is updated on a regular basis (Voss, 2010, 38). The objective of this system is to identify and track potential cheating behavior such as quick through-clicking or answer faking as

¹⁸ e.g. *umfragenvergleich.de* or *getpaysurveys.com*.

¹⁹ Harris Interactive has adopted Esomar and BVM/ADM research industry standards and strictly adheres to privacy, data protection, and children protection laws, e.g. COPPA in the US (Voss, 2010, 38). For details on these standards, see Esomar (2010), <http://www.esomar.org/knowledge-and-standards/codes-and-guidelines.php>, and Loeb and Hartmann (2006).

well as to control the consistency of responses. The quality control approach is based on a multi-level scoring model that measures and weighs certain normative criteria of acceptable response behavior such as completion time, willingness to comprehensively answer open-ended questions, or the degree of response heterogeneity when heterogeneous statements are used (Harris Interactive, 2013, 24; Voss, 2010, 39). The scores are calculated both initially for each newly registered panel member by using a tailored test survey and continuously over time by reviewing the quality of completed surveys and by assessing participation levels (Loeb and Hartmann, 2006, 2–3). Members who don't meet expected quality score standards are excluded from further participation in the panel.

In conclusion, the above review of the chosen data collection methodology suggests that Harris Interactive's online panel provides a high quality data collection platform for conducting the empirical research of this theoretical and empirical study.

6.1.2 Target group

The target group of the study consists of adults between the ages of 18 and 69 years. Respondents younger than 18 years of age were excluded, since, as discussed in Chapter 2, this study exclusively focuses on adults. Limiting the target group to adults also ensures that each survey participant had at least the opportunity to finish or almost finish upper secondary education and to have experienced the NS and the SED dictatorships while in school. People over 69 years of age were also excluded because of the low Internet usage in this age group and associated problems with reaching this segment via an online survey. While the chosen age range allows for granular sub-segmentation, for example based on one-, three-, or five-year age intervals, this study aims at comparing age-related differences in knowledge, attitudes, and historical consciousness on an inter-generational basis. The target group is therefore further broken down into three generational segments: (1) the younger generation consisting of people between the ages of 18 and 34 years; (2) the 35 to 50-year-old middle-aged generation; and (3) the older generation comprised of people between 51 and 69 years of age.

In terms of regional scope, the research focuses on Germany. Apart from covering all German states (*Bundesländer*), most comparative analyses focus on differentiating between East Germany or the so-called *new states* on one hand and on West Germany or the old *Bundesländer* on the other hand. The State of Berlin, although historically belonging partly

to East and partly to West Germany has been counted as part of East Germany. That said, the questionnaire allows for estimating both the number and share of respondents that reside in East or West Berlin as well as the number and share of participants that, because of their place of birth and/or heritage, have their cultural roots in East or West Germany.²⁰ Moreover, to comprehensively assess the relationship between the factors determining action consciousness and political action, the target group is further segmented into those East Germans that materially participated in the resistance movement against the SED state and those that did not.

To validate the hypothesis that education represents an important factor determining knowledge, attitudes, and historical consciousness, the target group also needs to be broken down by the level of educational attainment. While Harris Interactive's membership database contains educational and professional qualification data, this information can be obtained, complemented, and validated as part of the survey questionnaire and then matched to the standard ISCED levels.²¹ A comparison between both the current and the former East and West German education systems suggests segmenting the various attainment levels into three basic categories – Low, Medium, and High – as shown in Figure 6.2.

The relevant criterion for allocating respondents into any of the three categories is the highest educational or professional degree achieved. For example, a participant who has completed both the *Abitur* and an apprenticeship program (*abgeschlossene Lehre*), would fall into the Medium attainment category. Likewise, a respondent who graduated from a *Polytechnische/Polytechnical High School*²² and subsequently earned a *Meister* certificate (*Meisterbrief*) would also be categorized as a person with Medium educational attainment.

6.1.3 Survey sample

As discussed previously, one of the main objectives of the study is to complement the theoretical model of action consciousness developed

²⁰ For more details, see the discussion of the survey questionnaire in section 6.2 below.

²¹ ISCED stands for International Standard Classification of Education. '[It] is used to describe different education levels and fields to allow international comparisons to be made' (Eurostat, 2010). Attainment levels are pre-primary, primary, lower and upper secondary, post-secondary, non-tertiary, and tertiary first and second stage education (Voss, 2010, 40).

²² The *Polytechnische/Polytechnical High School* (*Politechnische Oberschule*) was a mainstream school form in the former GDR comparable to the *Realschule* (*Junior High School*) in West Germany.

Categories Description/Examples

Low	<p><u>Lower secondary level or less</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior High School (Realschule, Polytechnische Oberschule), Middle School (Hauptschule) or less • Apprenticeship (Lehre) or vocational equivalent
Medium	<p><u>Upper secondary and post secondary levels</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12–13 year school degree and/or post secondary professional qualification • Baccalaureate (Abitur), advanced technical school, Meister, or other vocational equivalent
High	<p><u>Tertiary and advanced research levels</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA/College degree (Bachelor, Fachhochschule) • MA/University degree (Master, Diplom) • PhD, or Professor

Figure 6.2 Educational Attainment Categories

in Chapter 5 with an empirical investigation of the model variables and their fundamental relationships. Providing a basic proof of concept does not necessarily mean that the survey must be statistically representative like an opinion or general election poll. Comparing and analyzing target group attributes, relationships between variables, and variable performances, however, require sufficiently large sample sizes per individually analyzed stratum. While crucial sample sizes for representative surveys can be precisely calculated for the desired statistical confidence level, there are different opinions and approaches for determining appropriate sample sizes for non-representative group comparisons, exploratory studies, or experiments.²³

Most researchers suggest that a minimum of 100 to 150 cases per individually analyzed stratum such as a demographic variable, a regional segment, or a specific respondent cluster, is required to conduct meaningful statistical analysis and hypothesis testing (Voss, 2010, 35).²⁴ To comprehensively assess the current state of knowledge, attitudes, and *Aktionsbewusstsein*, and to analyze and compare variable relationships both overall and by larger and smaller target group, this study focuses

²³ Among others, approaches include target confidence interval-based sample size calculations, the Bayesian approach, and the power of a test of hypothesis approach (Voss, 2010, 35). For details and further references, see Lenth (2001), 1–11.

²⁴ For example, the rule of 100 is recommended for factor analysis by Gorsuch (1983). Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999) recommend at least 150 cases (Voss, 2010, 35).

on a dual sampling approach comprised of a primary representative sample and a secondary non-representative boost sample.

Representative sample

Based on the target group definition, stratified random samples were taken from Harris Interactive's membership database, yielding a net total of 1,335 useable cases as shown in Table 6.2. The sample sizes are representative of the German population in regard to region, state, gender, age, and ISCED educational attainment levels,²⁵ and they are based

Table 6.2 Sizes of Representative Sample by Segment

Region/state	Frequency	Valid Percent	Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
'New' State	279	20.9	Male	654	49.0
'Old' State	1056	79.1	Female	681	51.0
Total	1,335	100.0	Total	1,335	100.0
Thereof					
Baden-Württemberg	109	8.2	Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
Bayern	179	13.4			
Berlin	96	7.2	18-34	386	28.9
Brandenburg	29	2.2	35-50	452	33.8
Bremen	4	0.3	51-69	497	37.2
Hamburg	27	2.0	Total	1,335	100.0
Hessen	115	8.6			
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	22	1.7			
Niedersachsen	165	12.4			
Nordrhein-Westfalen	325	24.4			
Rheinland-Pfalz	64	4.8	Education	Frequency	Valid Percent
Saarland	19	1.4			
Sachsen	74	5.6	Low	717	53.8
Sachsen-Anhalt	27	2.0	Medium	381	28.5
Schleswig-Holstein	49	3.7	High	237	17.7
Thüringen	32	2.4	Total	1,335	100.0
Total	1,335	100.0	Total	1,335	100.0

²⁵ Accomplishing representativeness of the sample by other attributes would have required costly and time-consuming offline recruitment of respondents, which is not typically done by any online market research company, and which might only be justified for research with very granular target group requirements.

on post-stratification weighting adjustments.²⁶ Based on the sample size of 1,335 respondents, one can expect that the sample proportions are within a two-tailed confidence interval of plus or minus 0.025 around the true proportions of the underlying population.²⁷ Table 6.2 also suggests that the sample sizes, except for the smaller states, are adequate for conducting sub-segment specific statistical analysis.

Boost sample

Since this study also aims at investigating knowledge, attitudes, and action consciousness of those East Germans who in one way or another resisted the oppressive SED regime, and because it had to be assumed that the number of cases of this target group drawn as part of the representative survey would likely be subcritical, an additional non-representative boost sample was taken in conjunction with the main survey. The identification of East German resisters is based on pre-screening questions that were incorporated into the questionnaire.²⁸ The first requirement for qualifying as a member of the resistance group is that the respondent had to be born and raised in the GDR and be at least 18 years old before the fall of the Berlin Wall. This age limit intentionally excludes respondents that were still younger teenagers or children around the year 1990 and younger than 42 years of age at the time the survey was taken.

The rationale for applying this age limit is that political understanding and consciousness are more developed in adults than in teenagers or children.²⁹ The second requirement to count as a resister is that the participant in one way or another had to be actively involved in anti-GDR government activities. As more specifically shown in Table 6.3, the main criteria for categorizing the East German research subjects into dissenters on the one hand and uninvolved citizens on the other hand,

²⁶ Post-stratification weighting of cases is an essential statistical correction technique to adjust for potential over- or under-representation of groups in a sample. Case weighting was applied to the survey sample to compensate for over-representation of East Germans, which in turn was a result of the need for recruiting sufficiently large absolute sample sizes for certain non-representative sub-segment analyses. For more details on the methodology, see Bethlehem (2009), 249–71 or Chang and Butar (2012), 4768–82.

²⁷ As a rule of thumb, this margin applies to samples consisting of 1,000 participants.

²⁸ See survey questionnaire in Appendix A and the discussion in section 6.2.

²⁹ For more information on the development of a social and political consciousness amongst young people, see Lange et al. (2013), 13–14.

Table 6.3 Identification of Protest Movement Participants

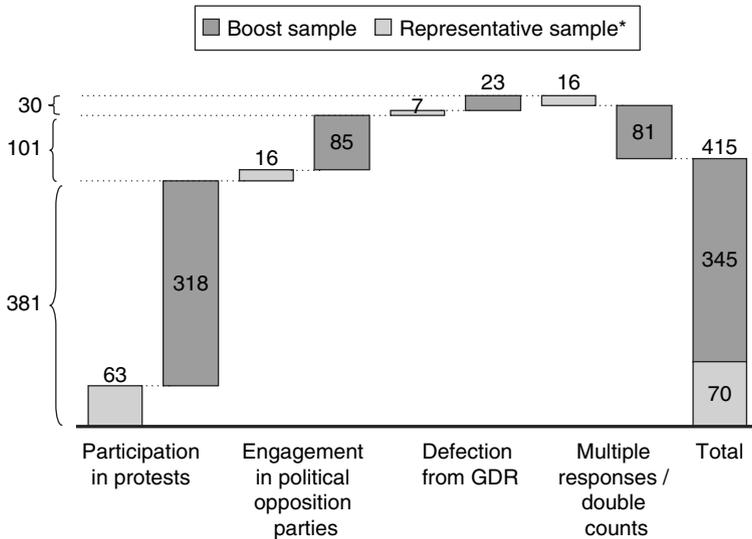
SCREENING QUESTION	RESPONSES					
<p>Please answer the following two questions each by clicking your answer on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means that the statement does not apply, and '6' means that it applies fully.</p>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Does not apply					Applies fully
(0.1.): Before the Fall of the Berlin Wall I was actively involved in protests such as the Monday demonstrations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(0.2.): Before the Fall of the Berlin Wall I engaged in a political SED opposition party such as New Forum, Democracy Now, Initiative for Peace and Human Rights to do something against the grievances in the GDR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please answer the following question by clicking your response:</p>						
(0.3.): I tried to flee the GDR before the Fall of the Wall.						
Does not apply	1	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I thought about it, but I did not act on it	2	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I fled the GDR with parents, relatives or friends when I was a child	3	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I actually tried to escape as an adult, but I was unsuccessful	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
I was able to escape from the GDR as an adult before the Fall of the Wall	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<hr/> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #cccccc; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Threshold(s) to be counted as a protest movement participant </div>						

is the extent of civil disobedience, which is reflected in the degree of participation in protests and demonstrations, engagement in political SED opposition parties, and/or attempts to defect.

Table 6.3 indicates that to be counted as a protest movement participant, respondents would have to state that, as a minimum, engaging in protests or in a political protest party by and large applies to them, or that they at least made an attempt as an adult to defect. Thus, a minimum score of '4' for one or more of the three screening questions was necessary to be counted as an active member of the protest movement. Based on this methodology, the result of the boost sampling is summarized in Figure 6.3.

While the representative sample yielded 70 East German respondents that participated in the protest movement, the boost sample added an additional 345 resisters for a combined total of 415 cases. Figure 6.3 also shows that with 381 cases by far the largest sub-segment is comprised of people who materially participated in protests such as the Monday demonstrations (*Montagsdemonstrationen*). An additional 101 respondents engaged in political opposition parties such as *Neues*

Protest group sample size
Number



* Based on un-weighted stratification data

Figure 6.3 Composition of Protest Group Sample

Forum or *Demokratie Jetzt*, and 30 respondents risked their lives when attempting to escape from the GDR.³⁰ Ninety-seven respondents engaged in more than one resistance category – mostly in protests and membership of opposition parties.

While the additional number of 345 boost sample cases exceeds the recommended minimum sample size of 100 to 150 for exploratory research by a large margin, one has to keep in mind that analyses based on the boost sample data are not representative and that the results of such analyses can only represent rough findings with directional validity. For transparency reasons, the results of individual analyses and statistics in Chapter 7 are therefore labeled with either R-sample for analyses based on the representative sample, or B-sample for findings based on the non-representative boost sample.

³⁰ Fourteen respondents actually succeeded in defecting from the GDR.

6.2 Survey questionnaire and measurement reliability

The approach chosen for collecting the necessary data and for measuring the model variables can be characterized by three basic design elements. First, the survey questionnaire that was developed and used for the empirical research is fully standardized. Survey standardization is a prerequisite for minimizing measurement errors and eliminating bias resulting from potential variances in the way questions are worded.³¹ To minimize such errors, the need for standardization applies to both the individual questions and the answers. Consequently, the survey for this study focuses on closed questions as a questioning technique,³² which means that the respondents were presented with a standardized set of predefined answers or rating scales to choose from.³³ More specifically, while multiple-choice questions were used to assess the respondents' knowledge of the NS and GDR dictatorships, most survey questions related to attitudes or historical consciousness utilize standard 'Likert scales' as answer categories with rating scales ranging from '1' (I strongly disagree) to '6' (I strongly agree).³⁴

Second, the interview process is managed by a customized software program that guides respondents through a sequence of screens that present the individual questions and answer choices. Depending on the answer to certain questions, the program can present the participant with an additional set of questions or skip an interview section. Moreover, to capture only the initial and spontaneous responses, the software prevents participants from returning to an already completed screen and from revising previously answered questions.³⁵

Third, random item and multiple-choice answer rotation has been applied through software programming, to eliminate effects associated with the order in which the statements are presented and to ensure that on an aggregate basis each item receives the same relative attention.³⁶

³¹ The standardization requirement does not mean that every respondent must be presented with the same number or order of questions.

³² The only open question before the survey begins asks for the age of the participant.

³³ For a more detailed discussion of open-ended and closed questions see Hague (2003), 107–8, in Voss (2010), 42.

³⁴ The Likert scale (after its originator) is a frequently used verbal rating scale that assumes the variable measurement level to be ratio scaled. For further details, see Hague (2003), 114, in Voss (2010), 44.

³⁵ See a similar approach in Voss (2010), 42–3.

³⁶ Also refer to the discussion of item rotation in section 6.1.1.

Before going into the field, the survey was tested, selectively revised, subsequently programmed by Harris Interactive's IT department, and tested again to ensure that data quality and reliability requirements were met and that the applied programming algorithms and data submission encryption technologies were fully functional.

Since the study focuses on Germany and since the research was conducted in German, the following discussion is based on a translation of the survey questionnaire into English.³⁷ The objective of the first few questions is to confirm some basic demographic information contained in Harris Interactive's database and to screen the participants for stratification and segmentation purposes. After reading some introductory explanations and after explicitly consenting to participate in the study, the survey participants are asked to provide information on age, gender, whether they were born in either East Germany, West Germany, or abroad and how long they lived in either the GDR or new states, the old states, and abroad. Moreover, the respondents are asked to indicate their current state of residence as well as their highest educational and professional degrees attained as of the date the survey is taken.

To identify respondents that participated in the protest movement against the former SED regime, all interviewees who stated that they were born in the GDR and that they are at least 42 years old are asked to indicate if and to what extent they were engaged in protests and/or political opposition parties, and if, under which circumstances, and with what result they attempted to defect before the collapse of East Germany. As discussed in section 6.1.3, only those research subjects who scored a '4' or higher in at least one of the three questions, have been counted as members of the resistance group. The remainder of the questionnaire is structured into ten main sections.

The objective of part one is to assess the knowledge dimension of historical consciousness in regard to National Socialist Germany and the Holocaust. It consists of eight multiple-choice questions about when World War II began and seven other important topics and events of the era; the *Reichskristallnacht*,³⁸ the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Hitler's use of *Einsatzgruppen*,³⁹ the Wannsee Conference, the Nuremberg Laws, and

³⁷ The questionnaires can be found in English (Appendix A) and German (Appendix B).

³⁸ 'Night of broken glass'.

³⁹ 'Special death squads'.

the concentration camps Auschwitz–Birkenau, and Theresienstadt.⁴⁰ Due to the fundamental historical importance of those events, one would hope that the answers to these questions will be known by an overwhelming majority of respondents.⁴¹

Part two consists of 14 attitude statements about the Nazi dictatorship and the Holocaust. Respondents are asked to indicate to what extent they agree with each of the statements using Likert scales that range from ‘1’ (I strongly disagree) to ‘6’ (I strongly agree). Some statements such as ‘condemnation of the Holocaust’, ‘responsibility to educate others’, ‘need to keep memory alive’, or ‘preparedness to join an activist group’,⁴² assess the respondent’s emotional involvement and underlying action consciousness. Conversely, other statements such as ‘need to put the topic to rest’, ‘public remembrance is a compulsory exercise’, or ‘the Nazi dictatorship is history I don’t want to be bothered with’, primarily address the magnitude of emotional disenfranchisement and unwillingness to engage in the topic. Lastly, two statements, ‘the Third Reich was not that bad’ and ‘reports about concentration camps and the prosecution of Jews are exaggerated’ explicitly deal with the degree of denial of the Holocaust and associated neo-Nazi attitudes.

In part three that concludes the NS and Holocaust-specific portion of the survey, the sources of knowledge, or, in other words, the forms of historical cultural socialization are assessed in three subsections. In subsections 3.1 and 3.2, fourteen sources are listed, including school, university, museums, television documentaries, films, poetry, Internet, and others. Again, Likert scales ranging from ‘1’ to ‘6’ are used for measuring to what extent each respondent has learned from the respective knowledge source and to what extent each source has influenced the respondent’s attitudes and feelings about the subject. In subsection 3.3, the final section of part three, film and literature as important forms of cultural socialization are further assessed on a disaggregated basis. Eight sources including *Schindler’s List* (Spielberg, 1993); *The Pianist* (Polanski, 2002); *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (Herman, 2008); *Jacob the Liar* (Becker, 1969); *Survival in Auschwitz* (Levi, 1996); *The Diary of a Young Girl* (Frank, 1952); *Death Fugue* (Celan, 1945); and *Das Leben ist schön*⁴³

⁴⁰ To selectively juxtapose the knowledge-related results of this study with those of my 2010 Holocaust study, the same eight knowledge questions were used (Voss, 2010, 43).

⁴¹ Moreover, the use of multiple-choice questions tends to overstate results since choosing from four possible answers (plus a ‘don’t know’ option) implies that the probability to guess the correct answer is 25 percent (Voss, 2010, 43).

⁴² See questionnaire in Appendix A for individual statements.

⁴³ ‘Life is Beautiful’.

(Benigni and Cerami, 1998) were chosen to identify which and how many of these works each respondent has read or watched.

The rationale for collecting this information is that it allows for a more detailed analysis of the potential impact of literacy on knowledge, attitudes, and historical consciousness. The works, while varying in historical accuracy and artistic expression, are partly fiction-based like *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and partly fact-based like Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*, and they were selected because of their wide availability and popular acceptance. To find out whether or not a participant had indeed read a text or watched a film, an indirect questioning technique has been used. Rather than asking respondents directly if they had read or watched a certain work, they were asked to indicate their degree of interest in watching or reading the respective work. Only those participants who state that they have already seen or read the respective work are then counted as actual viewers or readers.⁴⁴

Sections four through six focus on the German Democratic Republic and the SED regime and follow the same questionnaire structure as that used for assessing knowledge, attitudes, and sources of knowledge in regard to National Socialist Germany and the Holocaust. Part four begins with eight multiple-choice knowledge questions that, like the NS and Holocaust questions, are so fundamental that they ought to be known by everybody, or at least by the overwhelming majority of respondents. The objective is to assess current knowledge about the German Democratic Republic and the SED regime in Germany, specifically about when the Berlin Wall, the symbol of the German division, was built; about the number of people killed when attempting to flee over the Berlin Wall; and whether there was a death penalty in either or neither the old BRD and/or the DDR. Other knowledge questions cover the 1953 uprising, what the city of Leipzig was known for, and Stasi-related questions.

Part five focuses on the opinions and attitudes of respondents about the GDR in Germany today. The objective is to measure attitudes on a scale of '1' to '6' by asking the participants to what extent they agree with 16 statements about the GDR and the SED regime. Several statements such as, 'the GDR was not as bad as is often assumed'; 'the Stasi is being unjustifiably criticized as a mass surveillance organization'; and 'if I had the choice I would move into the former GDR today', aim at measuring the level of downplaying the negative aspects of the regime, or, in other words, of assessing the magnitude of nostalgia for the SED state. Eight of

⁴⁴ Indirect questioning such as asking for the level of interest makes it easier for a respondent to admit that he or she has not already watched the film or read the text.

the 16 statements deal with either keeping the memory and history of the GDR alive, or focus on the lack of freedom, negative aspects, or injustices. Examples include statements such as, 'should it come to a GDR-like regime again, I would expatriate'; 'not enough was done to prosecute former Stasi members after 1990'; or 'there was no real democracy in the GDR'. Finally, some statements deal with issues related to a unified Germany, for example, 'I wish it never came to a reunification'; 'I would have passed on the reunification if I had known that I need to pay the solidarity tax up to today'; and 'I believe that the old BRD was not much better than the GDR'.

As in the National Socialist and Holocaust portion of the survey, part six of the questionnaire focuses on the forms of historical cultural socialization or knowledge sources such as school, university, museums, memorials, films, peer discussions, Internet, and more. This part is also broken down into three subsections. Section 6.1 specifically examines for each source to what extent a participant learned about the GDR topic. Personal experiences are also included as a knowledge source, since many of the participating respondents lived through the GDR era. Section 6.2 covers the same 15 sources and assesses to what extent each source has influenced attitudes and feelings about the subject. Section 6.3 aims at assessing literacy in regard to the GDR topic by asking the respondents to indicate their level of interest in reading a specific text or watching a film. As in the NS and Holocaust section of the survey, only those participants who state that they have already seen or read the respective work are counted as actual viewers or readers. The questionnaire covers seven works that were chosen because they are widely available in Germany and have proven to be popular among German and, to some extent, even international audiences. The seven works include three films, *The Lives of Others* (von Donnersmarck, 2006), *Sonnenallee* (Haußmann, 1999), and *Goodbye Lenin* (Becker, 2003); three books, *Meine FDJ* (Rusch, 2005), *The New Sorrows of Young W* (Plenzdorf, 1972), and *Ein Tag im Jahr* (Wolf, 2003); and one television documentary series, *Damals in der DDR* (Laske, 2004).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ These works, while not all recent releases or publications, serve as a spectrum of GDR representations. The three films have been very well received, not only in Germany, but elsewhere – they have also been screened in the United States for example. *The New Sorrows of Young W* was written by a renowned former East German author whose work was not only popular in the GDR and the former BRD but is still read in the classroom today. *Ein Tag im Jahr* is a recently published book by famous East German author Christa Wolf, and Claudia Rusch's *Meine FDJ* has also been acclaimed as an accurate account of life in a Socialist state. Aired in late 2009, *Damals in der DDR* was a documentary mini-series on the history of East Germany that blended old GDR-era footage with personal accounts from former GDR citizens.

Part seven of the questionnaire contains ten statements that are only addressed to those respondents who, according to the criteria in the initial screening questions, were born and raised in the GDR, are at least 42 years old at the time the survey is taken, and who either materially participated in protests such as the Monday demonstrations, engaged in political opposition parties, or attempted to flee the country as an adult prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The objective of part seven is to establish the prerequisites for analyzing the main causes of civil disobedience and the motivation of participants to protest against the East German regime in more detail. The ten statements cover a range of political and socio-economic factors that may have influenced individuals to take action. Statements relating to the reasons why individuals stood up against the regime include oppressive actions, such as 'travel restrictions', 'political persecution', or 'Stasi surveillance'; general dissatisfaction with economic and political conditions, for example, 'I couldn't stand the disastrous economic conditions', or 'I have always hated the GDR government and only waited for the opportunity to protest against the regime'; perceived opportunities arising from political change, such as 'Gorbachov's reforms'; as well as the impact of the social sphere, as in 'I was at some church meetings and was convinced to join the protest movement', or 'friends and family convinced me to join the protest movements'.⁴⁶

Part eight of the questionnaire again applies to all participating respondents. Using the same Likert scale, the objective of this section is to assess what people think about democracy in general and certain civil rights typically associated with democracy. General statements about democracy include: 'democracy is a prerequisite for peace and freedom'; 'only in a democracy are human rights respected'; 'regular referenda on major policy decisions are an essential part of a democracy'; and 'a parliamentary democracy insufficiently implements the will of the people'. The perceived importance of certain civil rights, or the lack thereof, is reflected in three statements: 'personal freedoms are very important to me'; 'freedom of expression may not be restricted under any circumstances'; and 'I am willing to sacrifice privacy for more security'.

Part nine of the questionnaire specifically focuses on how much an individual would be willing to get involved should a dictatorship or dictatorship-similar circumstances take shape. In essence, part nine links the notion of action consciousness to intended political action should any of the listed developments materialize. Response categories

⁴⁶ See questionnaire in Appendix A for individual statements.

for each of the 13 statements in this section include: '1' – 'would welcome and possibly support the development'; '2' – 'would not support the development'; '3' – 'would educate friends and acquaintances about the threat'; '4' – 'would donate to opposition parties or activist groups'; '5' – 'would participate in protests and demonstrations'; and '6' – 'would actively help organize the resistance'. These response categories reflect the range of possible actions from collaboration, non-involvement, or passive resistance to an increasing level of active resistance. Of the thirteen statements, five deal specifically with restrictions of civil rights and liberty, such as freedom of speech, travel, the right of ownership, voting rights, and free trade or capital movements. Other statements include what one would do in a situation where major areas of national self-determination would be called into question, or if the right to privacy through broad surveillance would be violated. Lastly, broader statements such as, 'if it were to come to the rise of a police state, I would ...', or, 'should emergency laws⁴⁷ be put in force, I would ...', aim to find out to what extent respondents would tolerate large-scale moves like the introduction of martial law.

The objective of part ten is to examine how respondents think about the current situation in regard to freedom, liberty, government control, and repression and to what extent they believe that there are undemocratic tendencies in Germany and/or in the European Union. Again using Likert scales from '1' (I strongly disagree) to '6' (I strongly agree), four statements specifically deal with Germany: 'there are signs in Germany that attempts are being made to restrict the rights of citizens'; 'Germany should not under any circumstances transfer more national sovereignty to Brussels'; 'Germany is evolving into a police and surveillance state'; and 'one cannot trust most German politicians'. Some statements refer to undemocratic and authoritarian tendencies in the European Union, such as 'EU attempts to restrict civil rights', or 'the undemocratic practice of appointing rather than electing high-ranking officials such as the EU Commission and EU Council presidents'. The remaining two statements are related to media, specifically the perceived state of independence of the press and media, and to what extent people believe that the Internet still provides objective information on politically sensitive issues.

Since some of the analyses in Chapter 7 will selectively utilize aggregated attitude and historical consciousness-related data, it is important to ensure that the respective scale variables are reliably measured: 'Reliability

⁴⁷ Emergency laws refer to *Notstandsgesetze*.

Table 6.4 Multiple Item Scale Measurement Reliability

SCALE	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha*
Action consciousness – NS regime and Holocaust ¹	6	0.683
Action consciousness – SED regime ²	7	0.720
Action consciousness – Authoritarian trends in general ³	11	0.919
Perceived current authoritarianism ⁴	8	0.901

¹ Refers to questions 2.1, 2.3, 2.8, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13.

² Refers to questions 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.11, 5.13, 5.16.

³ Refers to questions 9.3–9.13.

⁴ Refers to questions 10.1–10.3, 10.5–10.9.

See appendix for questions referenced above.

*Based on standardized items.

is defined as consistency of measurement results' (Warner, 2008, 830), and scale reliability refers to the internal consistency of a multiple item scale (Warner, 2008, 851, in Voss, 2010, 48). 'Cronbach Alpha' is the most commonly used form of assessing multiple item scale reliability, in particular when the measurement is based on Likert scales (Warner, 2008, 854). The value of Alpha that can range between zero and one grows as internal consistency increases. While there is no cogent logic in regard to what constitutes a good or poor Alpha value, the definition of applicable thresholds by and large needs to be based on research-specific needs, notably the required analytic granularity and level of detail.

The commonly accepted rule of thumb for the social sciences is that scale reliability is considered high if the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is over 0.7, acceptable if it is between 0.6 and 0.7, and low if the value is below 0.3.⁴⁸ With these considerations in mind, the results of the reliability analyses that I have conducted for relevant scale variables are shown in Table 6.4. Since each scale variable is close to or exceeds the threshold of 0.7, it can be assumed that the achieved overall measurement reliability is adequate for the purposes of this study.

6.3 On headline news induced bias

Any material event covered by news outlets shortly before and during the fieldwork of a research study has the potential to introduce bias, or,

⁴⁸ For details on the computation of Cronbach Alpha, see Warner (2008), 854–5.

in other words, to influence the responses of survey participants in one direction or another. In the absence of an additional research project specifically geared towards identifying and measuring the potential impact of certain events on participants' responses, any attempt to quantify magnitude and scope of potential bias represents a speculative exercise. It is nevertheless appropriate and good practice to briefly describe those events that in terms of content or substance are closely related to certain survey sections and, as a result, might have had an impact on survey participants. Since the fieldwork took place between 5 and 16 August 2013, the time period in which relevant current events might have introduced bias spans approximately late July to the middle of August 2013.⁴⁹ The most important news topics during this time frame that pertain in one form or another to the focus of this research project can be divided into three categories: (1) events related to civil liberties;⁵⁰ (2) topics associated with war and dictatorship;⁵¹ and (3) news surrounding the subject of democracy.⁵²

One of the prevailing and widely reported civil liberty subjects was the trial of Private Bradley Manning, who was charged with espionage for providing secret military and diplomatic documents to WikiLeaks. Of even greater focus were the revelations from documents made public by whistleblower Edward Snowden. Significant attention was paid to the documents, most notably by the magazine *Der Spiegel*, which in one article, reported that Edward Snowden praised Lavabit for shutting down their private email service in order to protect their users from US government inquiries (Stoecker, 2013). The article continued, citing Snowden's call for large US Internet service companies to protest against the government's National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance programs. It was also revealed during this period that a German intelligence official helped the NSA in data-gathering and mass surveillance, and that Germany herself was both a target and a third-rate partner of

⁴⁹ Determining the length of the relevant news period to be covered before the fieldwork is somewhat arbitrary. Research by Hermann Ebbinghaus shows that only one fifth of studied textbook material was remembered after two weeks (see Ebbinghaus, 1885, in Green, 1913). More specific research on news events confirms that forgetting curves tend to follow an asymptotic trend (see Meeter, Murre, and Janssen, 2004). Therefore, a news coverage period of one to two weeks prior to the fieldwork appears to be an appropriate time span.

⁵⁰ Pertains to sections 7, 9, and 10 of the questionnaire.

⁵¹ Relates to the core focus of the study.

⁵² Primarily pertains to section 8 of the survey.

the United States in these operations. Ultimately, the NSA spying scandal made the headlines in one form or another on almost a daily basis.

Reported events related to wars and dictatorships include the crises in Egypt and in Syria. With the rising number of protests against Egypt's President Mursi, a *Die Welt* article by Jacque Schuster suggested that democracy had no chance in Egypt and that a civil war was likely and possibly even a prerequisite for bringing all sides to an understanding. The core of Schuster's argument was, however, that Egypt lacked the elements that make up a democratic state like those seen in England or France (Schuster, 2013). The focus on civil war was not limited to reports on Egypt. The evolving crisis in Syria also received significant attention well beyond the data collection period, and ultimately turned into a discussion of foreign involvement in a civil war between rebel forces and those of the Assad-led government.

For the subject of democracy, mainstream media largely focused on the German elections, notably the campaigning of German chancellor candidates. In the debates leading up to Germany's elections, for example, *Die Welt* reported that the party Die Linke (Left Party) attacked SPD (Social Democratic Party) candidate Peer Steinbrück over a statement where he argued 'dass [Merkel] jedenfalls bis 1989/90 eine ganz andere persönliche und politische Sozialisation erlebt hat als die, die diese europäische Integration seit Anfang der 50er-Jahre erlebt haben, beginnend mit den Montanverträgen, das spielt in meinen Augen schon eine Rolle'⁵³ (Hollstein, 2013). The attack on Steinbrück was largely based on the Left's interpretation of his statement suggesting that the Chancellor did not have enough passion for the European integration process because she grew up in the GDR. His statement was, therefore, seen as something offensive toward former East Germans.

Aside from the election-related news coverage, there were select mentions of the German government grappling with issues over necessary budget cuts, the threat of collapsing banks, and bailouts of European Union member countries. These topics, while to some extent part of the election campaign, notably of the AFD party,⁵⁴ also related to issues that were already a part of the mainstream media's attention – the

⁵³ Steinbrück argued that in his view it is significant 'that [Merkel] until at least 1989/90 had experienced quite a different personal and political socialization than those who, beginning with the Montan-Union treaties, experienced the European integration since the early fifties'.

⁵⁴ The campaign of the newly founded party AFD (Alternative für Deutschland) primarily focused on economic problems caused by the Euro.

implications of debt for the debtor nations' national sovereignty, and the development of the EU into an increasingly centralized government entity.

In summary, the news coverage prior to and during the fieldwork phase of this study dealt with three broader topics that are the subject of and represent a relevant focus on the research discussed in the previous chapters. While one can speculate about whether or not, or to what extent the above mentioned news events might have introduced bias, it is important to note that, in principle, the results of some analyses to be discussed in Chapter 7 could have been affected to some degree.

7

Research Results

In the discussion so far, I have concluded that the notion of *Aktionsbewusstsein*, while representing an important dimension of *Geschichtsbewusstsein*, has not been a subject of prior history didactics research, and I have, therefore, attempted to contribute to the discourse by proposing a concise theory of action consciousness as an integral part of historical consciousness. The purpose of this chapter is to complement the theoretical and conceptual discussion with an empirical proof of concept, specifically focused on the two regimes of twentieth-century Germany. It summarizes the key results of the survey and is structured in three main parts: in the first two sections I will review the results of the empirical study as they relate to the core model assumptions separately for National Socialist Germany (7.1) and for the SED dictatorship (7.2), and in the final section (7.3) I will discuss the results of the survey in regard to the expanded model assumptions, notably the linkages between action consciousness and political action, as well as the perceived current authoritarian trends and the present state of action consciousness.

7.1 National Socialist Germany

World War II and the Holocaust represent by far the darkest chapters in German history. The Holocaust in particular, a symbol for genocide and hatred, is such an unprecedented and incomprehensible event that a similar tragedy must be prevented from happening again by all means. While the overwhelming majority of the survey participants vehemently condemn the crimes against humanity committed by an inhuman and brutal dictatorship, analyses suggest that new efforts are required to strengthen collective remembrance, personal consternation,

and action consciousness. This section summarizes the results of the survey that are related to National Socialist Germany and the Holocaust. It is structured into four subsections and assesses the current state of collective knowledge (7.1.1), general attitudes towards the subject matter (7.1.2), magnitude and scope of action consciousness in regard to the NS regime and the Holocaust (7.1.3), and the estimated impact of the forms of historical cultural socialization on knowledge and action consciousness (7.1.4).

7.1.1 Knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust

As discussed in Chapter 5, knowledge represents an important dimension of historical consciousness in general and action consciousness in particular. In the case of National Socialist Germany, this means that preserving and passing profound knowledge of the horrific events from generation to generation is a critical prerequisite for preventing similar crimes from happening again. Individuals, groups, and society as a whole cannot learn *from* history without learning *about* what happened. The results of the survey, however, suggest that the collective knowledge of the NS regime and the Holocaust needs to be strengthened for three reasons: (1) overall, considerable knowledge gaps exist both among East and West Germans; (2) while education plays a major role in building and disseminating knowledge, a sizeable number of what may be considered as well-educated people don't know most of the facts on the subject; and (3) the level of knowledge is fading from generation to generation. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss these conclusions in more detail.

Overall knowledge gaps

The realization that collective knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust needs to be strengthened does not come as a surprise. Several prior empirical studies have arrived at the same conclusion. For example, Brusten and Winkelmann discovered that less than fifty percent of German college students had knowledge of the Nuremberg Laws or the Wannsee Conference (Brusten and Winkelmann, 1994, 468, in Voss, 2010, 51).¹ Likewise, the survey by Ahlheim and Heger that exclusively focused on German college students at the University of Essen showed that only 29 percent of the students had comprehensive knowledge

¹ Similarly, Silbermann and Stoffers reported that twenty percent of 14 to 17-year-old German students didn't know anything about Auschwitz (Silberman and Stoffers, 2000, 22, in Voss, 2010, 51).

of the subject as a whole and that more than seventy percent of the students failed to correctly answer questions about the Nuremberg Laws and the Wannsee Conference (Ahlheim and Heger, 2002, 63–5, in Voss, 2010, 51). Considerable knowledge gaps were also found in my international Holocaust study that involved respondents from nine countries and revealed that the share of correct responses per question averaged only about fifty percent (Voss, 2010, 52–6).

As discussed in section 6.2, this study covered eight questions about the beginning of World War II, the Wannsee Conference, Nuremberg Laws, Hitler’s *Einsatzgruppen*, the *Reichskristallnacht*, the Warsaw ghetto uprising, and the two concentration camps, Auschwitz–Birkenau and Theresienstadt. Figure 7.1 shows the aggregated results for Germany as percentages of correct answers by question. While these results suggest that on average each question was correctly answered by more than half of the participants, it must be taken into account that the eight questions not only assess very fundamental knowledge but that they were also presented in multiple-choice format, which tends to exaggerate results because each respondent had a 25 percent chance to guess the correct answer.²

Correct answers – all states (R-sample: n = 1,335)

Percent

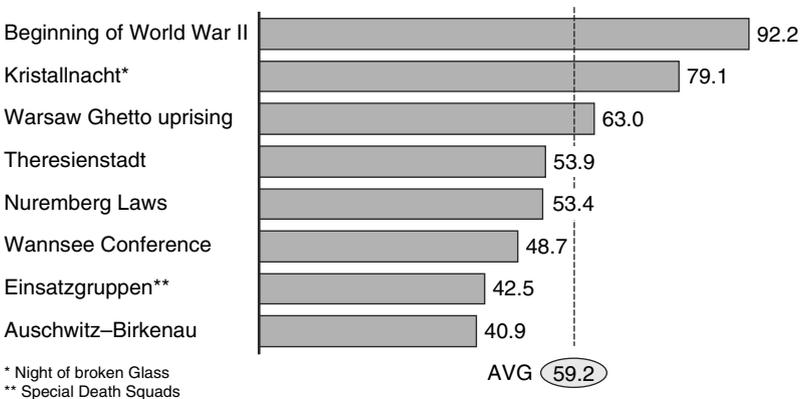


Figure 7.1 Knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust

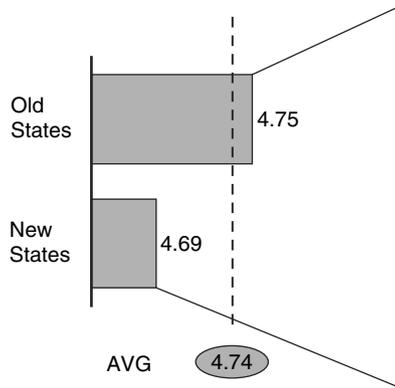
² Each question had four answer choices (excluding the ‘Don’t know’ option). Apart from the different study scope and target group, this also explains why some responses such as knowledge of the Wannsee Conference or the Nuremberg Laws resulted in lower scores in the Ahlheim and Heger study, since their survey used open-ended questions (Ahlheim and Heger, 2000, 63).

Overall, only two questions, when World War II began and what the *Reichskristallnacht* represented, were correctly answered by more than three quarters of the respondents. In contrast, less than half of the participants knew the correct answer to the questions on the Wannsee Conference, the *Einsatzgruppen*, and Auschwitz–Birkenau.³ Finally, between a half and two thirds of the respondents knew about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Theresienstadt, and the Nuremberg Laws. In regard to potential regional differences, Figure 7.2 indicates that there is no significant knowledge difference between East and West Germans, partly disproving my original hypothesis that historical awareness of both regimes varies substantially between these two groups.⁴ There is, however, a knowledge difference between the top- and the bottom-ranking states at the 95 percent significance level.

Average number of correct answers

R-sample (n = 1,335)

SIG. = .667



SIG. = .046

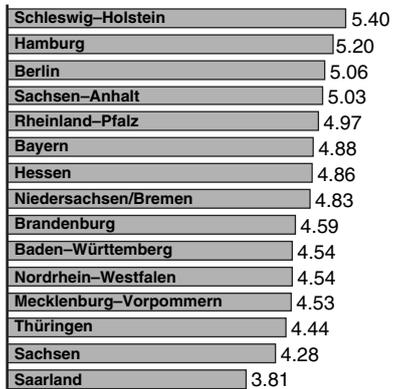


Figure 7.2 Knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust by Region

³The low level of knowledge in regard to Auschwitz–Birkenau results from the fact that 56 percent of the respondents confused Birkenau, the extermination center of the Auschwitz complex, with Auschwitz, the concentration camp.

⁴See Chapter 2.

Although it appears that respondents residing in one of the old states know a little bit more about National Socialist Germany than those residing in one of the new states, this difference is statistically not significant.⁵ Conversely, Figure 7.2 suggests that the knowledge difference between Schleswig–Holstein and Hamburg on one hand and Sachsen and the Saarland on the other hand is significant, although the result for the Saarland might represent an outlier. A further segmentation into knowledge categories by the number of correctly answered questions confirms that there is a need to strengthen fact-based knowledge of World War II and the Holocaust. This breakdown into the three categories High, Medium, and Low is shown in Figure 7.3.

Based on Figure 7.3, less than a quarter of German adults have a High level of knowledge of the Holocaust and World War II, and only 8.9

Level of knowledge – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)

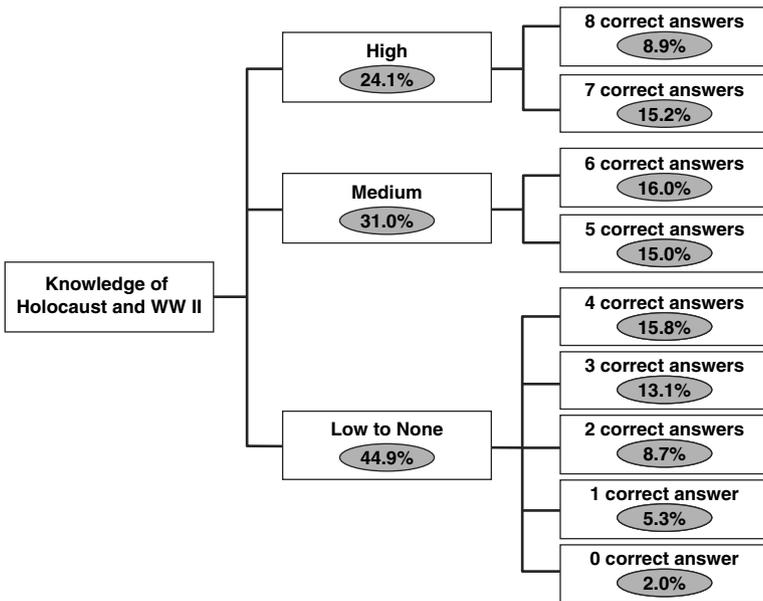


Figure 7.3 Percentage Distribution by Level of Knowledge Category

⁵ ‘Significance measures the reliability of differences found in samples. Social sciences typically work with .05 (95%) significance levels’ (Voss, 2010, 55). For details and computation of significance, see Diekhoff (1996), 152.

percent of the participants answered all questions correctly. Thirty-one percent of the respondents fall into the Medium knowledge segment with five to six correct answers, whereas almost forty-five percent have a Low level of knowledge of the topic with less than five correct answers. Two percent did not know the correct answer to any of the eight questions.

Knowledge gaps by educational attainment

While the overall high proportion of people that fall into the Low knowledge segment suggests that more needs to be done to foster and encourage learning of the history of the NS regime, the scope of the issue becomes more evident when taking a closer look at the impact of education on the level of knowledge. The basic relationship between education and knowledge is shown in Figure 7.4.

Two main conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. First, knowledge correlates strongly with education at a better than 99 percent significance level. While more than forty percent of the highly educated respondents (those with at least a college or university degree), have extensive knowledge about the topic, the respective share declines to 17 percent for participants whose educational attainment level is low (those who have earned no more than a lower secondary level degree).⁶

Level of knowledge by education – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)

Knowledge

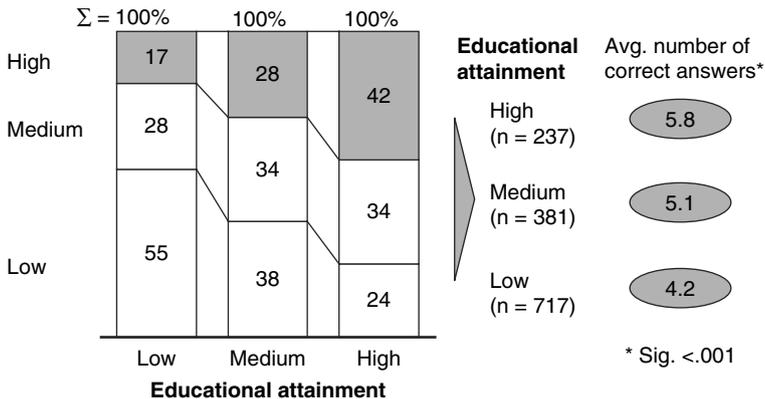


Figure 7.4 Size of Knowledge Segments by Educational Attainment

⁶ See target group definition in section 6.1.2.

This relationship is reflected in the average number of correct answers that decline from 5.8 for people with a high level of education to 4.2 for respondents with a low educational attainment level. Second, while it doesn't come as a surprise that knowledge and education correlate positively, the issue is that there are considerable knowledge gaps even among well-educated people. Almost a quarter of the respondents who have a high level of educational attainment fall into the Low knowledge segment.

Knowledge gaps by generation

Since 18 to 34-year-old respondents have completed their education more recently than those thirty-five years of age and older, one would expect that because of their more recent exposure to the subject in school, younger people should know more about the era of National Socialist Germany than older people.

Figure 7.5, however, suggests that this is not the case. Instead, knowledge of the Holocaust and World War II appears to be fading from generation to generation. While 27 percent of the older generation has a high level of knowledge of the topic, only 20 percent of the younger generation falls into the High knowledge category.⁷ Inter-generational

Level of knowledge by age – all states
R-sample (n = 1,335)

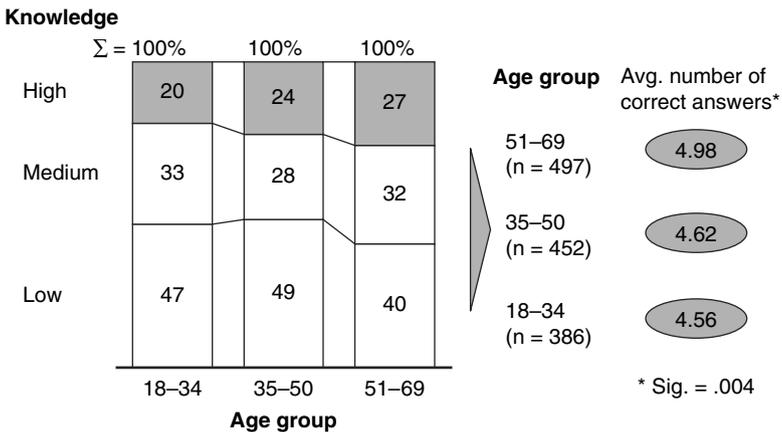


Figure 7.5 Size of Knowledge Segments by Generation

⁷The international Holocaust study arrived at similar results; see Voss (2010), 57.

knowledge differences are also reflected in the number of correct answers. On average, the 51 to 69-year-old participants correctly answered almost five questions, whereas respondents aged 18 to 34 knew the correct answers to 4.56 questions. This difference is significant at 99.6 percent. Nevertheless, the high share of people with a low knowledge of the Holocaust and World War II across all age groups confirms my hypothesis that there is a need to preserve and build fact-based knowledge of the era as an important dimension of historical consciousness.

7.1.2 General attitudes about the NS regime and the Holocaust

In addition to knowledge, a strong attitude against crimes committed by dictatorial regimes represents a further critical prerequisite for the learning of and from history. The results of this survey by and large confirm Friedlander's notion that collective attitudes about the topic have moved to a middle ground between Holocaust condemnation on the one hand and a view of the events from the perspective of dispassionate historiography on the other hand (Friedlander, 1993, viii). In the sections that follow I will address the results of the survey as they relate to general historical consciousness about the NS regime and the Holocaust. More specifically, I will discuss three main conclusions: (1) the degree of Holocaust condemnation is high; (2) the extent of extenuation of the NS regime is only partially low; and (3) passion about the topic needs to be strengthened.

Holocaust condemnation

The Holocaust is such an unprecedented crime against humanity that it must be vehemently condemned by everyone. Figure 7.6 confirms that this attitude is shared by the overwhelming majority of the survey participants. About ninety percent of German adults agree or strongly agree with the statement that they vehemently condemn the Holocaust.⁸ This anti-genocide attitude is so broadly shared that there is no difference between East and West Germans. Yet, two percent disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. When aggregating all ratings from '1' to '3', a troubling five percent of the respondents do not principally agree with the statement that they vehemently condemn the Holocaust.

⁸ This represents the aggregated percentage of those responding with a rating of '5' or '6'.

I vehemently condemn the Holocaust
 R-sample (n = 1,335)

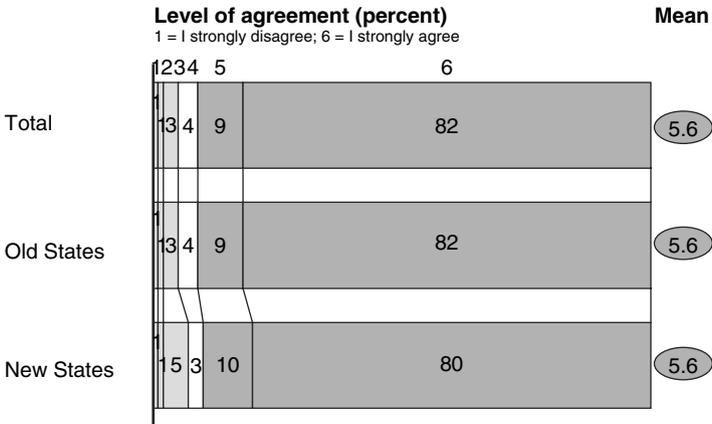


Figure 7.6 Degree of Holocaust Condemnation

Extenuation of the NS regime

While a large majority of Germans do not downplay the seriousness of crimes committed by the Third Reich, some extenuation of the NS regime exists. Figure 7.7 illustrates that, when counting all ratings from '4' to '6', eighteen percent of the respondents at least to some extent agree with the statement that not everything was as bad in the Third Reich as it is portrayed today. In contrast, two thirds of participants disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. On the other hand, the proportion of people who believe that documentaries and reports about concentration camps and persecution of Jews are exaggerated appears to be at the low end. Six percent of the respondents agree or tend to agree with this statement, whereas 87 percent disagree or strongly disagree. Figure 7.7 also shows that there is no rating difference between East and West Germans.

Passion about the topic

Overall interest in the Holocaust and Nazi topics is rather moderate and needs to be rejuvenated. Figure 7.8 shows the survey results in regard to both interest in the topic and consternation and guilty responsibility as a German. Based on the ratings '5' or '6', less than one quarter of the respondents are very interested in Holocaust and Nazi subject matter. The majority (55 percent when counting all ratings from '1' to '3'), do

Attitudes – Extenuation of NS regime

R-sample (n = 1,335)

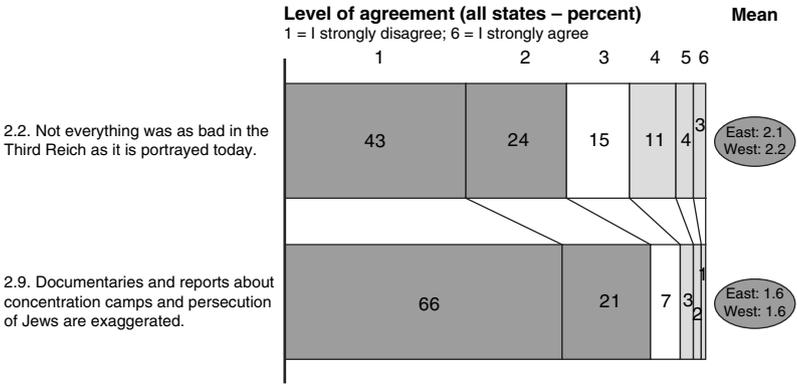


Figure 7.7 Magnitude of Extenuation of NS Regime

Attitudes – Interest and consternation

R-sample (n = 1,335)

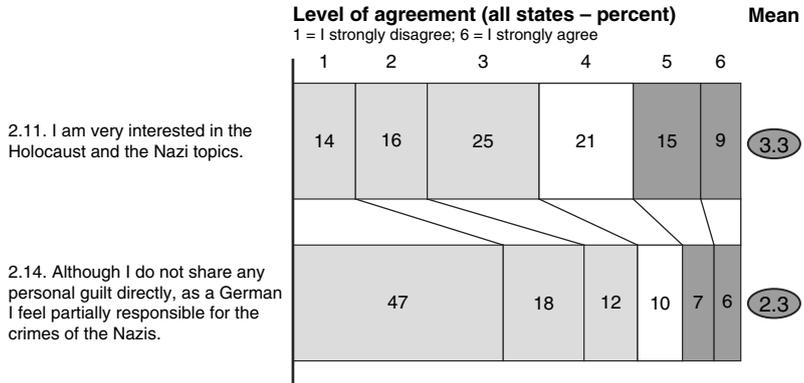


Figure 7.8 Interest in the NS Topic and Personal Consternation

not agree that they are very interested in the topic. Moreover, more than three quarters of Germans do not feel partially responsible for the crimes of the Nazis purely because they are Germans. Only 13 percent show a high level of consternation by agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that although they do not share any personal guilt directly, as a German they feel partially responsible for the crimes of the

Nazis. The high share of people that have a comparatively low level of interest and consternation is also reflected in a high share of respondents who don't want to be bothered with the topic anymore. Figure 7.9 takes a closer look at the current state of *Schlussstrich* mentality.⁹

The responses to the three statements in Figure 7.9 suggest that almost half of the people lack any interest in dealing with the Holocaust or the Nazi topic. When counting all ratings from '4' to '6', sixty-four percent of the respondents at least partly agree with the statement that public remembrance of the Holocaust is a compulsory exercise and not a result of true consternation. Forty-eight percent tend to agree or strongly agree with the thought that the Nazi dictatorship is past history, which they do not want to deal with. And another 47 percent follow the *Schlussstrich Debatte* notion that, since there are so many other problems, it is about time to bring this topic to rest. While these results are similar to those seen in the international Holocaust study (Voss, 2010, 78–80), the *Schlussstrich* statement on putting the topic to rest represents the only item in this section with a statistically significant difference between East and West.

Interestingly, Figure 7.10 suggests that West Germans are more inclined to put the topic to rest than East Germans. For all other related

Attitudes – Bring topic to rest

R-sample (n = 1,335)

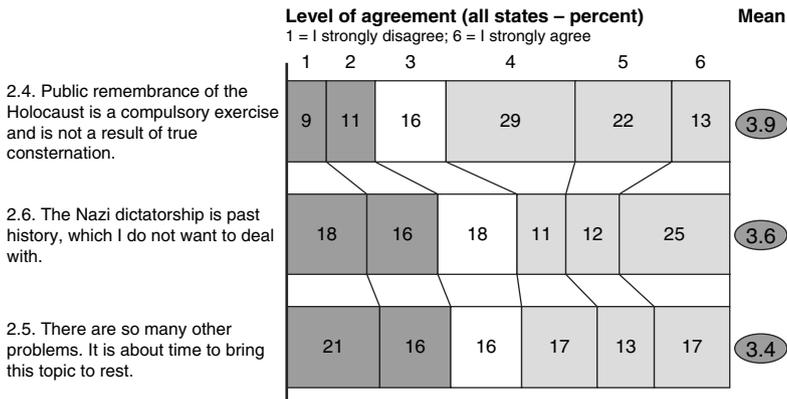


Figure 7.9 Putting the NS Topic to Rest

⁹ See *Schlussstrich Debatte* discussion in section 4.1.2.1.

Mean ratings* East versus West Germany

R-sample (n = 1,335)

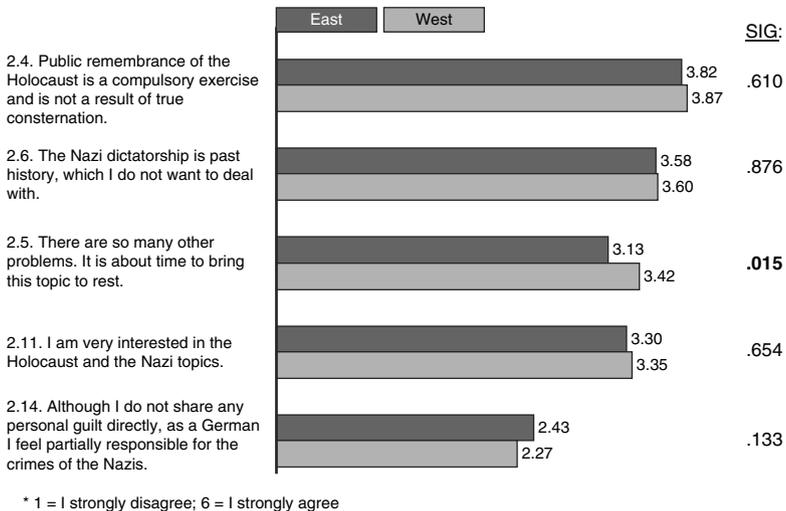


Figure 7.10 Regional Differences in Regard to Consternation about the NS topic

statements, minor differences between the new and the old states are statistically not significant, disproving again my initial hypothesis that East Germans are more likely than West Germans to not identify themselves with the shared history of the Third Reich.

In summary, while Holocaust condemnation is high, and denial and extenuation of the NS regime are low, yet improvable, attitudes about the topic have indeed moved to a middle ground between vehement condemnation on one hand and the dispassionate view of putting the Holocaust debate to rest on the other hand. As a result, interest in and passion about the topic needs to be strengthened in order to improve the odds of learning from the past.

7.1.3 Action consciousness in regard to the NS regime and the Holocaust

As discussed in section 5.1.1, action consciousness should be viewed as a construct that links the past with the present and the future. More specifically, I have defined action consciousness as a predisposition to act and as the expressed desire of an individual, group, or society to act if past conditions re-emerge in the present. To assess such predisposition to act, the respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from '1' to '6' to what extent

they agree with a set of six statements that either directly or indirectly relate to the notion of action consciousness.¹⁰ Analyses of the respective responses confirm the basic model assumptions developed in section 5.2 and indicate that knowledge and attitude-building initiatives would contribute to strengthening action consciousness in regard to the NS regime and the Holocaust, both overall and for the younger generation in particular.

This overall conclusion is based on four key findings: (1) while there is no significant difference between East and West Germans, current action consciousness is not at desired overwhelmingly high levels; (2) education and knowledge have a considerable impact on the level of action consciousness; (3) younger people are less action conscious in regard to the NS dictatorship and the Holocaust than older people; and (4) the level of action consciousness significantly depends on overall passion or strength of attitude. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss these findings in more detail.

Current state of action consciousness

The percentage distributions for the six statements comprising action consciousness are shown in Figure 7.11. Two of these statements directly measure the respondents' preparedness to actively or at least passively resist, that is, 'If I was confronted with Nazi propaganda and the rise of the Nazis in my country, I would get involved in an Anti-Nazi activist group' (2.12); and 'If I was confronted with Nazi propaganda and the rise of the Nazis in my country, I would not participate in anything that might harm human rights' (2.13). The remaining four statements that reflect the degree of personal engagement in regard to the topic were chosen as indirect indicators of action consciousness because of their high correlation with the two main variables 2.12 and 2.13.

Based on this set of items, Figure 7.11 indicates that an overwhelming majority of people, more than ninety percent, agrees or strongly agrees with the statement that every country, regardless of guilt, has a special responsibility to prevent the Holocaust or a similar event from happening again. Moreover, more than eighty percent indicate or strongly indicate that they are prepared to educate others and/or to at least not participate in anything that might harm human rights. Three quarters of the people would support or strongly support Adorno's pedagogic imperative that preventing the Holocaust from happening again should be the primary goal of all education (Adorno, 1970, 92). In contrast,

¹⁰ '1' means 'I strongly disagree', and '6' means 'I strongly agree'.

Action Consciousness statements – NS regime

R-sample (n = 1,335)

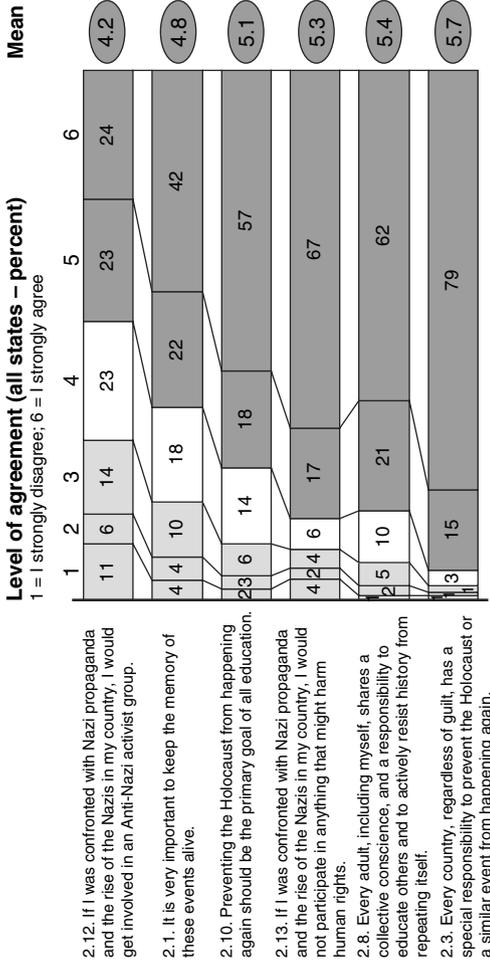


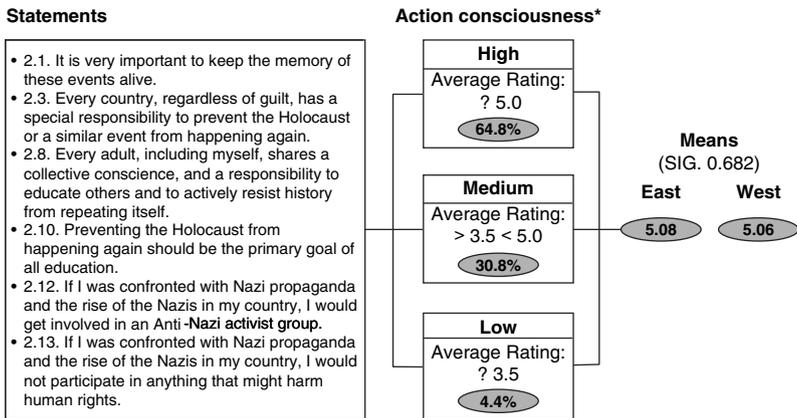
Figure 7.11 Current State of Action Consciousness – NS Regime and Holocaust

only 64 percent of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that it is very important to keep the memory of these events alive, and only less than fifty percent of the people appear to be prepared to actively engage in an activist group should trends similar to the NS dictatorship re-emerge. Particularly concerning is the fact that ten percent of the respondents disagree or at least tend to not agree with the imperative not to engage in anything that might harm human rights.

The extent to which current levels of action consciousness fall short of desired levels that in an ideal world should approach 100 percent, is illustrated in Figure 7.12. Based on the aggregated average rating of the six statements, it shows a breakdown of the survey participants into the three basic action consciousness segments, High, Medium, and Low. While participants with average ratings of '5' or higher fall into the High action consciousness segment, those with average ratings smaller than or equal to '3.5' are considered people with a Low level of action consciousness. All other average ratings are then defined as a Medium level of action consciousness. Based on this segmentation, Figure 7.12 indicates that the glass appears to be more than half full. About sixty five percent of the respondents have a high level of *Aktionsbewusstsein* and are likely to stand up against a potential rise of an NS-like dictatorship. In contrast, over four percent of the participants fall into the Low

Action consciousness segments – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)



* Rating scale: 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.12 Size of Action Consciousness Segments – NS Regime and Holocaust

level of action consciousness category, comprising the group of people that might be inclined to collaborate with a new fascist regime. Finally, about thirty-one percent of Germans have a Medium level of action consciousness and might be unininvolved bystanders that look the other way. Figure 7.12 also suggests that there is no significant difference between East and West Germans in regard to mean levels of action consciousness.

Importance of education and knowledge

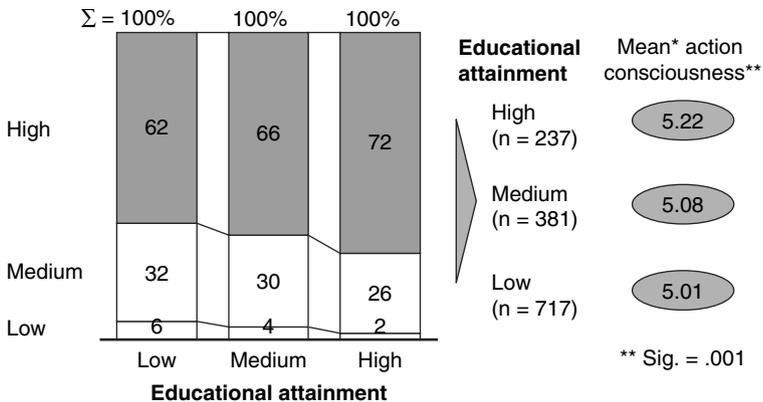
It does not come as a surprise that education, and knowledge as the result of education, play an important role in shaping *Aktionsbewusstsein*. Figure 7.13 shows that 72 percent of the highly educated respondents also have a high level of action consciousness, whereas this share is only 62 percent for those people who have a low educational attainment level. The difference between the mean action consciousness values by level of education is statistically significant at the 99 percent level.

Likewise, Figure 7.14 shows that there is a strong relationship between knowledge and level of action consciousness. The analysis confirms that the more people know about the Nazi dictatorship and the Holocaust the higher is the overall level of action consciousness. While 77 percent of those participants who have a high level of knowledge fall into the

Level of action consciousness by education – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)

Action consciousness



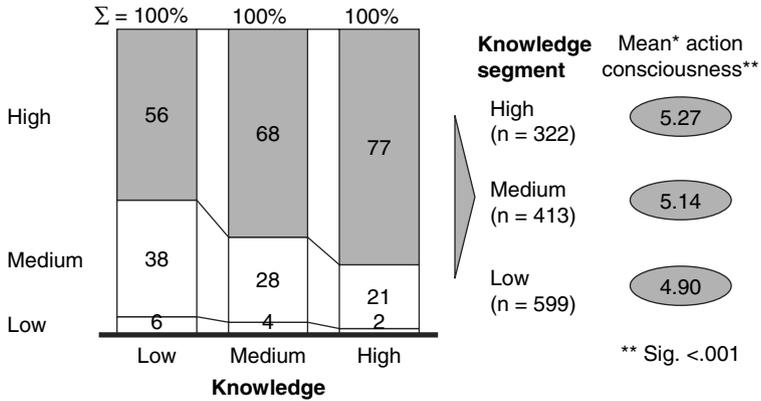
* Rating scale: 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree)

Figure 7.13 NS Regime-related Action Consciousness by Educational Attainment

Level of action consciousness by knowledge – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)

Action consciousness



* Rating scale: 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.14 NS Regime-related Action Consciousness by Knowledge

high level of action consciousness segment, this share declines to only 58 percent for those who have a low level of knowledge of the subject. Consistent with this conclusion is the fact that the mean action consciousness values increase as the knowledge level increases. This difference is significant at a better than 99 percent level.

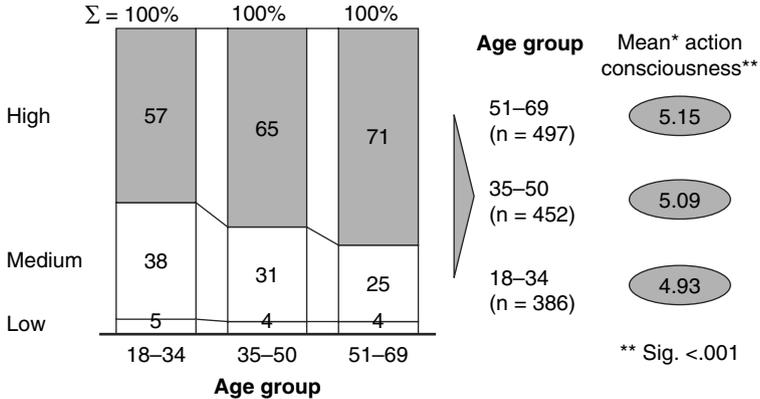
Action consciousness by generation

While it was to be expected that education and knowledge positively influence action consciousness, it is somewhat surprising that the older generation is more action conscious regarding the NS regime and the Holocaust than the younger generation. This to some extent contradicts the notion that younger people are typically the ones that take issues to the streets. Yet, Figure 7.15 suggests that this is not the case. More than seventy percent of the generation between the ages of 51 and 69 has a high level of *Aktionsbewusstsein*. In contrast, only fifty-seven percent of the 18 to 34-year-old respondents fall into the high level of action consciousness segment. Moreover, the action consciousness mean is lower for younger than for middle-aged and older people. Again, the difference is statistically significant at a better than 99 percent level.

Level of action consciousness by age – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)

Action consciousness



* Rating scale: 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.15 NS Regime-related Action Consciousness by Age

Impact of attitudinal strength

In addition to education, knowledge, and age, the level of action consciousness is significantly impacted by the strength of the respondents' attitudes. As a matter of fact, passion about the topic, expressed as strong anti-genocide attitudes, is a key factor shaping action consciousness. How important it is to raise passion and strengthen attitudes about the topic is illustrated in Figure 7.16.¹¹ The more strongly respondents agree with the statement that the Holocaust must be vehemently condemned, the higher is their level of action consciousness.

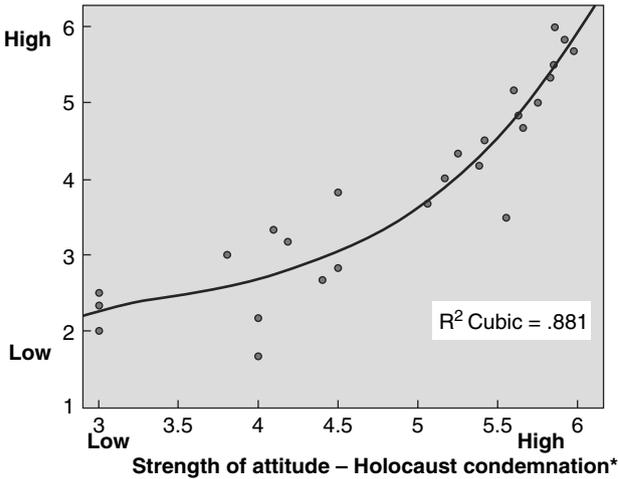
The high R² cubic of 0.881 indicates that the relationship between Holocaust condemnation and *Aktionsbewusstse*in is very strong.¹² Also,

¹¹ The individual dots of the plot represent all combinations of means of the respective dimensions.

¹² R² is defined as the squared Pearson correlation coefficient. It measures the explained variance and is an indicator for the strength of the relationship between two variables. Possible values range between 0 and 1; the more this value approaches 1 the closer is the relationship (Voss, 2010, 62). For details and computation of the Pearson correlation coefficient, refer to Warner (2008), 255-309). For curve estimation and computation of cubical R², see Warner (2008), 255-304 or SPSS (2005), 441-6.

Relationship between attitudinal strength and action consciousness

Action consciousness**



* I vehemently condemn the Holocaust (1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree)
 ** Average rating questions 2.1, 2.3, 2.8, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13

Figure 7.16 Strength of Attitudes and Action Consciousness – NS Regime

the cubic shape of the curve confirms my hypothesis that this relationship is non-linear.¹³ This means that as the strength of attitude increases, action consciousness initially increases under-proportionally, and subsequently over-proportionally. The implication is that it should be less difficult to raise the level of action consciousness from Medium to High than from Low to Medium. While the above measurement of action consciousness is based on a set of statements that implicitly describe the respondents’ predisposition to act, the survey participants have also been asked to explicitly express their desire to act, should another Nazi-like dictatorship resurface.¹⁴ Figure 7.17 shows the magnitude and scope of political action relative to the level of action consciousness.

¹³ See model discussion in section 5.2.

¹⁴ See question 9.2 in Appendix A.

Should there be another Nazi-like dictatorship, I would ...
 R-sample (n = 1,335)

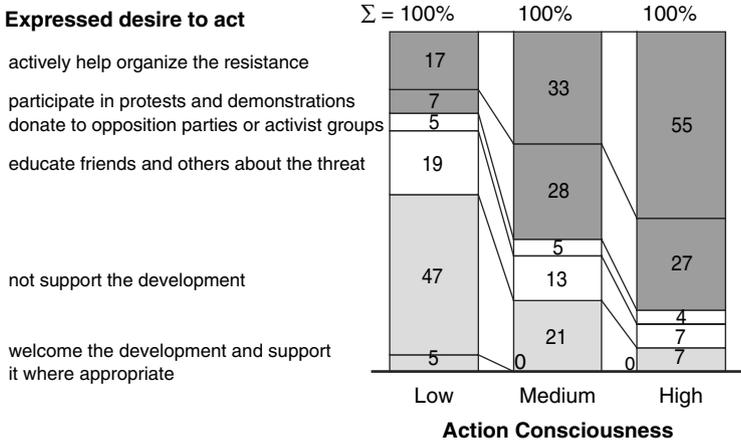


Figure 7.17 Action Consciousness and Expressed Desire to Act – NS Regime

The analysis in Figure 7.17 suggests that there is a strong relationship between the level of action consciousness or the implicit predisposition to act on one hand and the expressed desire to act on the other hand. While more than eighty percent of the respondents that have a high level of *Aktionsbewusstsein* would actively participate in protests and demonstrations or would even actively help in organizing the resistance, the share of active resisters declines to only 24 percent for participants that have a low level of action consciousness. Conversely, almost half of the respondents with a low level of action consciousness would rather remain uninvolved and five percent would even welcome a new Nazi-like regime. In contrast, none of the respondents with a medium or high level of *Aktionsbewusstsein* would welcome and possibly collaborate with a new fascist regime. The strong positive relationship between action consciousness and expressed desire to act also suggests that the six statements selected and scaled to measure action consciousness represent the construct of *Aktionsbewusstsein* reasonably well.

In conclusion, while almost two thirds of the Germans have a high level of action consciousness in regard to the NS regime and the Holocaust, knowledge, passion, and overall interest in the topic need to be strengthened in order to preserve and build collective remembrance

and strong anti-fascist attitudes to be passed on from generation to generation.

7.1.4 On the effectiveness of forms of historical-cultural socialization with respect to the NS regime

A core module of the theoretical model developed in section 5.2 is the linkage between knowledge, attitudes, and action consciousness on the one hand and the forms of historical cultural socialization on the other. As illustrated in Figure 5.4, a key hypothesis is that all *Formen geschichtskultureller Sozialisation* should in one way or another shape knowledge, attitudes, and *Aktionsbewusstsein* while likely differing in terms of magnitude and scope of impact. I argued that the rationale for this hypothesis is that some socialization sources, for example textbooks, rely on a predominantly fact-based approach while others, such as movies, have an inherently higher potential to shape people's emotions. The results of this survey, as they relate to the NS regime and the Holocaust, confirm this basic hypothesis. More specifically, two main conclusions can be drawn from the empirical data analysis: (1) each form of historical cultural socialization has a positive impact on knowledge and action consciousness, but magnitude and scope differ significantly among the individual sources; and (2) TV documentaries, movies, literature, and museums have the highest impact on knowledge and action consciousness, whereas schools have a comparatively insignificant impact, particularly in regard to shaping knowledge.

Source usage

In their *Schlussstrich Debatte* study, Ahlheim and Heger revealed that the surveyed college students have predominantly acquired their knowledge about the Holocaust from school, television, movies, and books (Ahlheim and Heger, 2002, 70).¹⁵ Despite the different scope and target subjects, this survey arrives at similar conclusions. Figure 7.18 summarizes the interviewees' mean score responses to the two questions relating to from which source they gained their knowledge and which source has affected their attitudes and feelings about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship. With mean scores over 4.7, the primary sources of knowledge about the NS dictatorship and the Holocaust

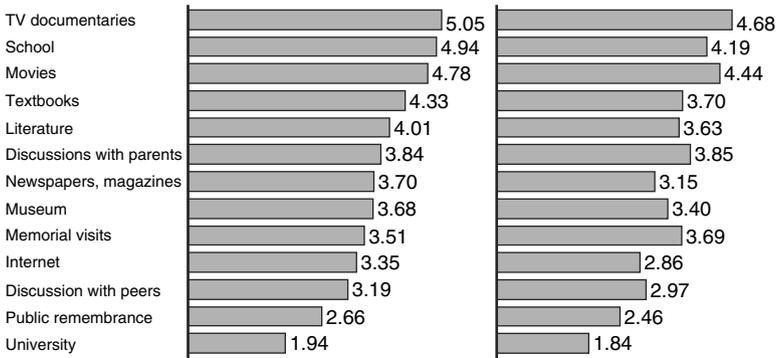
¹⁵ Over forty percent of the students stated that school and TV, and twenty-seven to thirty percent that films and books, were the primary knowledge sources regarding the Holocaust (Ahlheim and Heger, 2002, 71, in Voss, 2010, 58).

From which of the following sources did you gain knowledge about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship?

Means* – R-sample (n = 1,335) Sig. <.001

Which of these sources has affected your attitudes and feelings about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship?

Means** – R-sample (n = 1,335) Sig. <.001



* I learned about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship through ...; 1 = I strongly disagree, 6 = I strongly agree

** 1 = Did not influence me at all, 6 = Strongly influenced me

Figure 7.18 Sources of Knowledge and Feelings about the Holocaust and the NS Regime

are TV documentaries, school, and movies. Textbooks, literature, and discussions with parents or grandparents represent the second tier of sources with mean ratings of around four, followed by newspapers or magazines, museums, and memorial visits. The Internet, discussions with peers, public remembrance events, and universities are the least utilized forms of historical cultural socialization in regard to acquiring knowledge about the topic. The low usage of universities as a source of knowledge, however, can be explained by the fact that only a minority of respondents have a college or university degree and that the history of the Third Reich is not necessarily part of the curriculum.

With some limited relative variations, the respondents believe that the main sources of knowledge have similarly affected the way how they feel about the Holocaust and the NS dictatorship. TV documentaries, movies, and school again lead the list in regard to the respondents' perceived effect on their feelings about the topic. Discussions with parents and grandparents and memorial visits have a moderately higher mean score in regard to attitudes and feelings about the Holocaust than in regard to usage as a knowledge source. As for knowledge, the Internet, discussions with peers, public events, and universities also trail the list with respect to feelings about the topic.

Source performance

Utilizing individual forms of historical cultural socialization as sources of knowledge does not necessarily mean that the most intensively used sources also have the highest impact on knowledge and/or action consciousness. As a matter of fact, the survey results suggest that school as a primary source of knowledge fails to significantly impact knowledge about the NS regime. There are several methodologies to roughly assess the relative importance of independent variables, in this case the forms of historical cultural socialization, on dependent variables – knowledge and action consciousness. Among others, these methodologies include Pearson squared correlation coefficients, multiple regression beta weights,¹⁶ and relative importance measurement approaches from Pratt¹⁷ and from Tonidandel and LeBreton.¹⁸

Without discussing each of these approaches in detail, simple Pearson R^2 coefficients appear to represent appropriate and directionally correct indicators for relative performances whereas the Tonidandel/LeBreton relative weight methodology can be used as a tool to complement and roughly validate, confirm, or disprove the results of the Pearson R^2 analyses. This study's analyses on assessing the effectiveness of the forms of historical cultural socialization on knowledge and action consciousness primarily rely on Pearson R^2 coefficients and, for validation purposes, on the Tonidandel/LeBreton approach.

In terms of methodology, R^2 measures the variance of knowledge or action consciousness independently explained by each individual source, and it represents an indicator for the strength of the relationships between such variables.¹⁹ Tonidandel and LeBreton's relative importance analysis also principally relies on item correlation, but uses multiple regression analysis as a basis for partitioning the explained variance among multiple predictors (Tonidandel and LeBreton, 2011, 1). The limitations of this approach are associated with the general limitations of all multiple regression analyses such as potential measurement or misspecification errors and multicollinearity. Tonidandel and LeBreton, therefore, recommend using their approach for supplementing regression and correlation analysis (Tonidandel and LeBreton, 2011, 5). With these caveats in mind, Figure 7.19 shows the estimated relative impact each source has on knowledge for both the R^2 and the relative importance method.

¹⁶ For more details on beta weights see Courville and Thompson (2001), 229–48.

¹⁷ For details on Pratt's approach, see Pratt (1987), 245–60.

¹⁸ For details on the Tonidandel/LeBreton approach, see Tonidandel and LeBreton (2011), 1–9.

¹⁹ For computation of R^2 , see Warner (2008), 255–309.

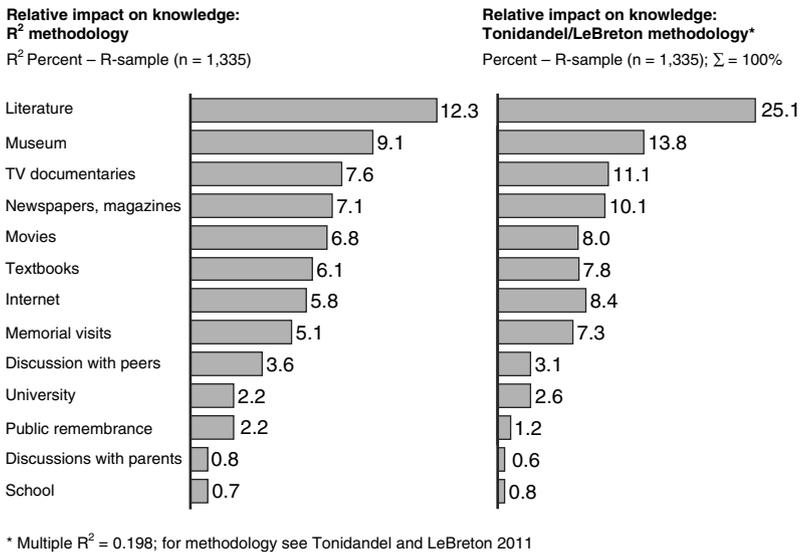
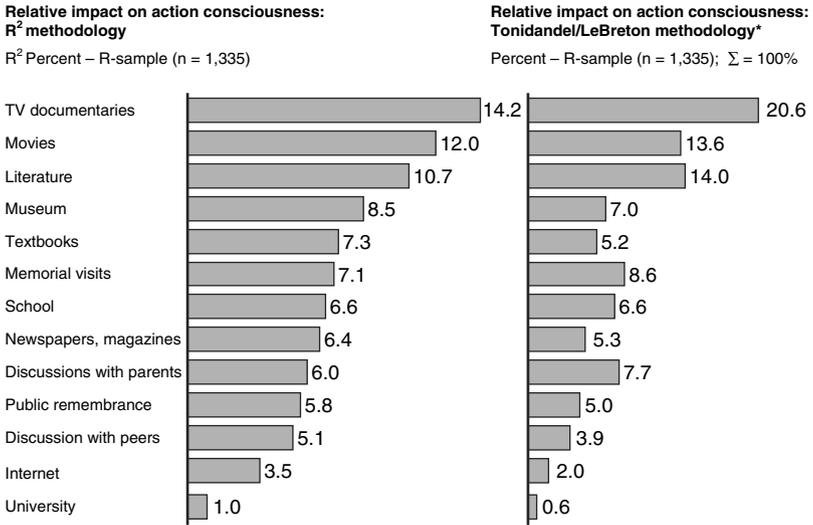


Figure 7.19 Impact of Sources on Knowledge – NS Regime

In Figure 7.19, questions 3.1 A through N (see Appendix A) about the sources from which the respondent gained knowledge about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship represent the independent variables that have been correlated with the number of correct answers to the knowledge questions 1.1 to 1.8 as dependent variable. While the analysis suggests that each form of historical cultural socialization has a positive effect on knowledge, literature, with an R² of 12.3 percent or a relative importance of 25.1 percent, appears to have by far the largest impact on what people know about the Holocaust and the NS dictatorship. Museums, TV documentaries, newspapers and magazines, films, textbooks, the Internet, and memorial visits follow with lower but still considerable contributions to knowledge building. In contrast, universities, public events, discussion with parents, and schools in particular do not seem to substantially shape knowledge about the topic. Although it can be argued that schools do utilize other forms of socialization such as textbooks, literature, or films and that therefore the effectiveness of schools is underestimated, both measurement approaches indicate that the school as an institution does not appear to deliver on its mission of effectively disseminating and building knowledge in regard to the NS regime topic.

The conclusion changes somewhat when taking a closer look at the impact of each source on action consciousness. In Figure 7.20, the average action consciousness, as defined in section 7.1.3, represents the dependent



* Multiple R² = 0.209; for methodology see Tonidandel and LeBreton 2011

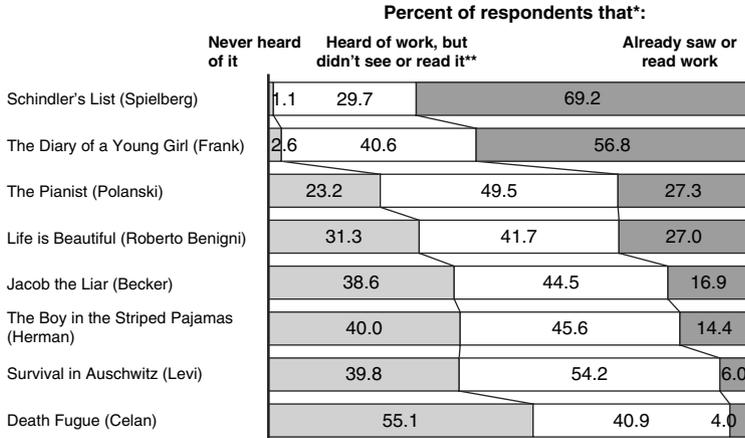
Figure 7.20 Impact of Sources on Action Consciousness – NS Regime

variable, whereas questions 3.2 A through N (see Appendix A) about which sources have affected the subjects’ attitudes and feelings about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship, represent the independent variables. With an R² of 14.2 percent or a relative importance of 20.6 percent, TV documentaries have the highest impact on action consciousness, followed by movies and literature. With the exceptions of the Internet and universities, all other forms of historical cultural socialization noticeably shape action consciousness as well. With 6.6 percent, schools load substantially higher on *Aktionsbewusstsein* than knowledge, indicating that teachers do have an influence on students’ predisposition to act. To validate the importance of film and literature in regard to knowledge and action consciousness, the respondents were also asked to indicate their level of interest in watching or reading certain well-known films or texts.

While these do not represent a comprehensive selection of Nazi- or Holocaust-related works, they were chosen based on their popularity and expected reach. As Figure 7.21 indicates, *Schindler’s List* and *Anne Frank* are the most popular works with viewer or readership shares well above half of the respondents, followed by *The Pianist*, *Life is Beautiful*, *Jacob the Liar*, and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. Only *Survival in Auschwitz* and *Death Fugue* have readership shares below ten percent.

Awareness and viewer / reader shares

R-sample (n = 1,335)



* Question: How high is your interest in seeing the following films or reading the following works?

** Aggregate percentages for interest: 2 = None; 3 = Low; 4 = Medium; 5 = High

Figure 7.21 Works Seen or Read – NS Regime and Holocaust

That erudition in a broader sense does have a considerable impact on knowledge and *Aktionsbewusstsein* can be considered confirmed, based on the analysis shown in Figure 7.22.

While the number of works watched or read on the x-axis relates to the selection of works as shown in Figure 7.21, the knowledge dimension is defined as the number of correct answers from questions 1.1 to 1.8, and action consciousness represents the average rating for items 2.1, 2.3, 2.8, 2.10, 2.12, and 2.13 (see Appendix A for all). Both plots in Figure 7.22 suggest that the more works people have seen or read the higher are knowledge on the one hand and action consciousness on the other. These basic relationships validate the above results of the relative importance analyses and confirm that film and literature represent very influential forms of historical cultural socialization. Not surprisingly, Figure 7.23 illustrates that erudition does increase with higher education.

While, on average, people with a high level of educational attainment have watched or read 2.67 works, this number declines to less than two for people with a low level of education. In regard to age it appears that the older generation watches or reads more literature than the younger generation. However, with a significance level of 0.1 this difference is statistically not significant.

Relationship between number of works watched or read and knowledge and action consciousness

R-sample (n = 1,335); Sig. <.01

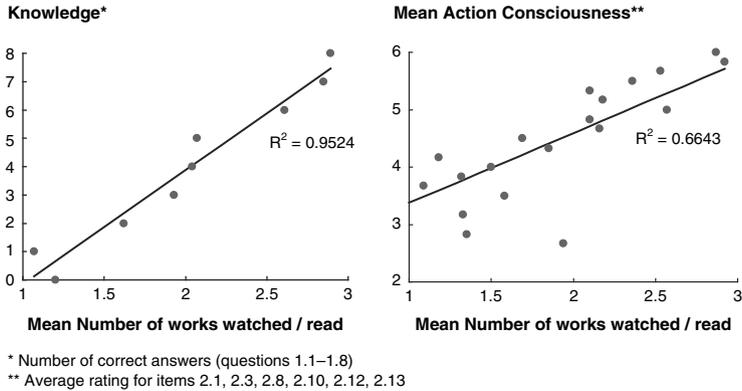


Figure 7.22 Impact of Erudition – NS Regime

Average number of works watched or read

R-sample (n = 1,335)

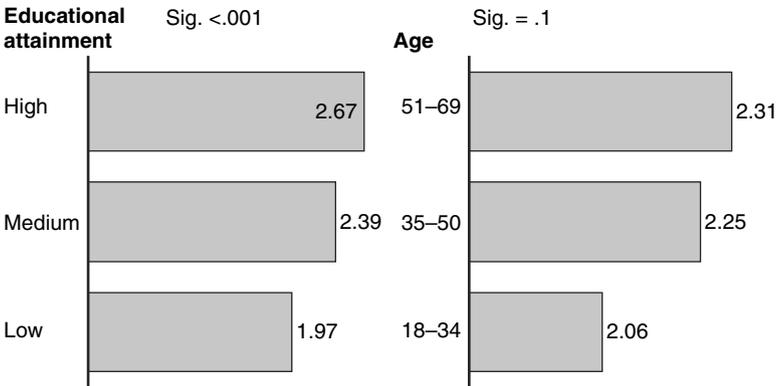
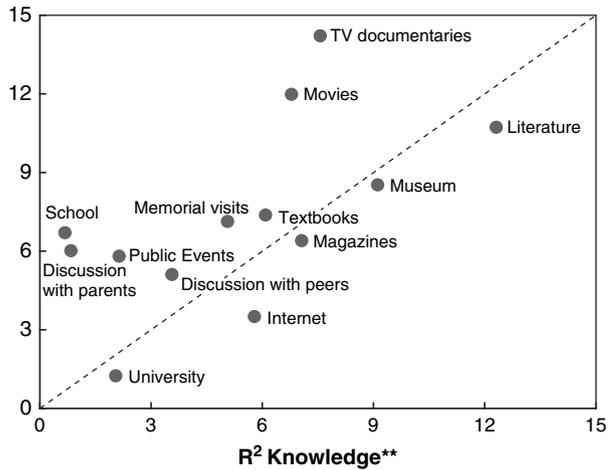


Figure 7.23 Erudition by Education and Age – NS Regime

To assess the combined effectiveness of the forms of historical cultural socialization, the relative impact of each source on knowledge and action consciousness can be plotted based on the squared Pearson correlation coefficients as indicators of the relative strength of the relationship between the variables. The result of this attempt is illustrated in Figure 7.24.

Relative contributions to knowledge and action consciousness

R-sample (n = 1,335); Sig. <.01

R² Action Consciousness*

* Average rating for items 2.1, 2.3, 2.8, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13

** Number of correct answers (questions 1.1–1.8)

Figure 7.24 Effectiveness of Forms of Historical Cultural Socialization – NS Regime

The plot shows the relative position of each form of historical cultural socialization by estimated impact on knowledge and action consciousness. The y-axis represents the Pearson R^2 values with the average action consciousness as dependent and question 3.2 about which of the sources has affected the subjects' attitudes and feelings about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship as the independent variables.²⁰ Similarly, the x-axis reflects Pearson R^2 values with knowledge as dependent and question 3.1 about from which of the sources the subjects gained knowledge about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship as independent variables.²¹ As already explained above, attitude and knowledge research is not an exact science. Instead, the results of this analysis can only be interpreted as a rough indicator of relative strengths and weaknesses of socialization sources with directional validity.

²⁰ The R^2 values are identical with those in Figure 7.20.

²¹ The R^2 values are identical with those in Figure 7.19.

Also, sources can overlap to a certain degree, such as between textbooks or literature with school as a source of information. Having reiterated this caveat, the dotted line in Figure 7.24 represents the line of balanced relative contributions in regard to knowledge and action consciousness with the overall impact growing from the lower left to the upper right corner. While socialization forms below the dotted line have a comparatively higher impact on knowledge, sources above the line are relatively more effective with respect to action consciousness.

In summary, Figure 7.24 suggests that Literature and TV documentaries are the most effective forms of historical cultural socialization. Among the two, literature is more effective in building knowledge whereas TV documentaries have a higher impact on action consciousness. The second tier consists of museums and movies, with museums scoring higher on knowledge and movies contributing more to action consciousness. Universities trail the list, most likely due to the fact that the majority of respondents didn't attend college and that possibly most of those who did were not confronted with the topic as part of the curriculum. All other sources have a medium to low relative impact on knowledge and/or action consciousness. Again, schools score reasonably well in regard to action consciousness, but fail to noticeably contribute to the building of knowledge about the NS regime and the Holocaust.

7.2 SED dictatorship

The above discussion of the survey results in regard to the NS regime and the Holocaust has shown that knowledge and attitudes represent key factors determining action consciousness. This raises the question if the fundamental relationships between these factors also apply to modern Germany's second dictatorship, the SED regime. The short answer to this question is that this is indeed the case. More specifically, while there are differences in regard to what people know and how they think about the SED regime as compared to the NS regime, the survey results suggest that again knowledge and strength of attitudes represent the key factors shaping anti-dictatorship action consciousness.

The purpose of this section is to summarize the results of the survey that are related to the SED dictatorship. In the following four subsections, I will first review the current state of knowledge of GDR history (7.2.1), subsequently investigate general attitudes about the GDR and the SED regime (7.2.2), then assess the state of and the factors determining collective action consciousness related to the former communist

SED dictatorship (7.2.3), and finally discuss the estimated impact of the forms of historical cultural socialization on knowledge and action consciousness.

7.2.1 Knowledge of GDR history

While East and West Germany shared the history of the Third Reich era, the two parts of Germany experienced fundamentally different histories during the period between the end of World War II and the reunification. While the former BRD enjoyed Western-style democratic liberties and economic prosperity, the former GDR became a member state of the Warsaw Pact and, under the influence of the Soviet Union, was controlled by a repressive communist regime. These different histories and associated life experiences are reflected in the results of the survey in that there are significant knowledge differences between East and West Germans. Nevertheless, the overall conclusions to be drawn are quite similar to those found in the NS regime portion of the study, in that collective knowledge must be strengthened for three reasons: (1) there are considerable knowledge gaps in regard to GDR history both overall, but particularly among West Germans; (2) while education is an important factor determining knowledge, there is still a high share of well-educated people that know little about GDR history; and (3) consistent with the results related to the NS regime, the older generation knows more about the history of the former SED state than the younger generation.

Knowledge gaps

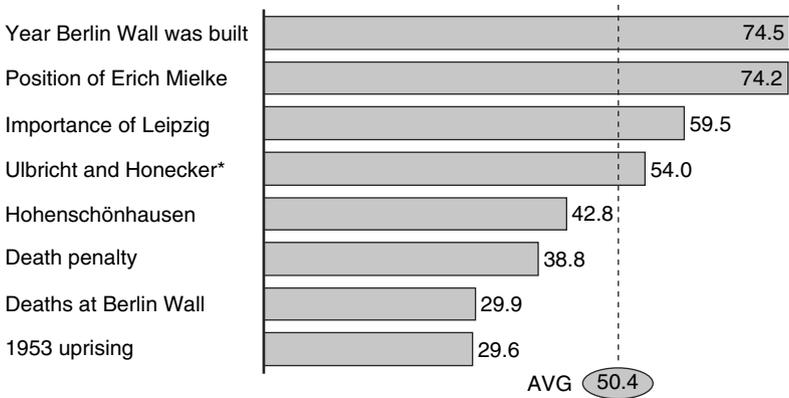
To assess the knowledge dimension of historical consciousness, the respondents were presented with eight fundamental multiple-choice questions about the Berlin Wall, the SED leadership, the importance of Leipzig before the collapse of the GDR, Hohenschönhausen, whether or not there was a death penalty, deaths at the Berlin Wall, and about the uprising against the regime in 1953.²² The aggregated results for Germany, shown in Figure 7.25, indicate that on average the correct answer to each question was only known by half of the respondents. This share is considerably lower than the 59 percent correct response rate found in the NS regime portion of the survey.

While about three quarters of the participants knew that the Berlin Wall was built in 1961 and/or that Erich Mielke headed the Ministry of State Security, less than thirty percent were aware of the fact that

²² For more details see discussion of questionnaire in section 6.2.

Correct answers – all states (R-sample: n = 1,335)

Percent



* Correct answer for question 4.7 that asked for which of the four statements was wrong: Ulbricht and Honecker were [not] the only leaders of East Germany

Figure 7.25 Knowledge of GDR History

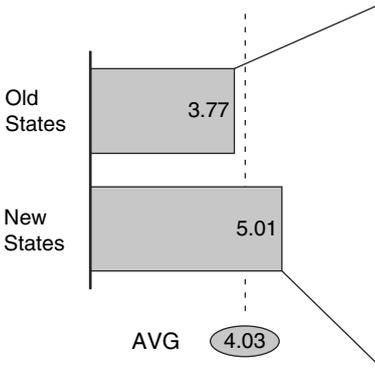
the 1953 uprising was a response to a rise in work quotas and/or that between 100 and 400 people were killed at the Berlin Wall while trying to escape. The importance of Leipzig as a focal location for the *Montagsdemonstrationen* and/or the fact that Ulbricht and Honecker were not the only leaders of East Germany was known by 54 to 60 percent of the respondents, whereas only about forty percent knew that Hohenschönhausen was a prison of the Ministry of State Security and/or that there was (for a certain time) a death penalty in the former GDR. While these aggregated numbers suggest that in regard to knowledge of the GDR history, the glass is half full, Figure 7.26 indicates that there is a substantial difference in knowledge gaps between East and West Germans.

Participants residing in the 'new' states knew, on average, the correct answers to five questions whereas people residing in the 'old' states correctly answered only less than four questions. Likewise, with the exception of Schleswig-Holstein, the new *Bundesländer* lead the 'old' states in regard to knowledge of GDR history by a considerable margin, a difference that is significant at a better than 99 percent level. A further segmentation of knowledge into the three basic categories, High, Medium, and Low confirms that overall a sizeable share of German adults has insufficient knowledge of the history of the former SED state. Figure 7.27

Average number of correct answers – GDR

R-sample (n = 1,335)

Sig. <.001



Sig. <.001

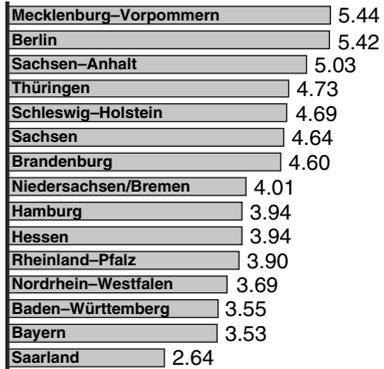


Figure 7.26 Knowledge of GDR History by Region

Level of knowledge: GDR – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)

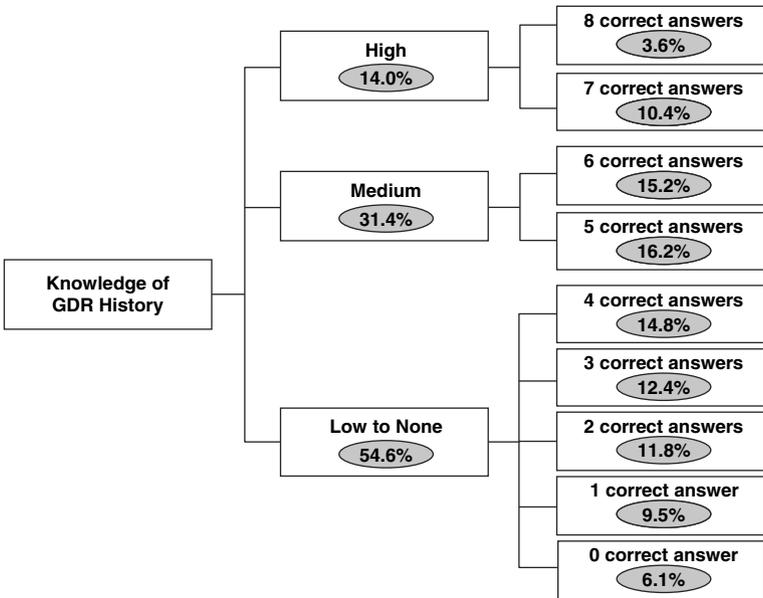


Figure 7.27 GDR History Knowledge Segments

illustrates that only 14 percent of the participants have a high level of knowledge of GDR history, and only 3.6 percent of the respondents knew the correct answer to all of the eight questions.

With five to six correct answers, about thirty-one percent of the interviewees fall into the medium knowledge category, and the remainder, almost fifty-five percent of the respondents, have a low level of knowledge of the topic. Six percent could not correctly answer any of the eight questions. Yet, Figure 7.28 shows that, not surprisingly, the share of East Germans that have a high or at least a medium level of knowledge of GDR history is substantially higher than the respective share of West Germans. However, the Figure also illustrates that with a high level knowledge share of only 24 percent, the level of knowledge needs to be raised even for people who live in the new *Bundesländer*.

Knowledge gaps by educational attainment

Similar to the NS regime-related findings on knowledge and education, it is not surprising that the level of education impacts the level of knowledge of GDR history. Figure 7.29 confirms that the higher the

Level of knowledge by region: GDR history
 R-sample (n = 1,335); Sig. <.001

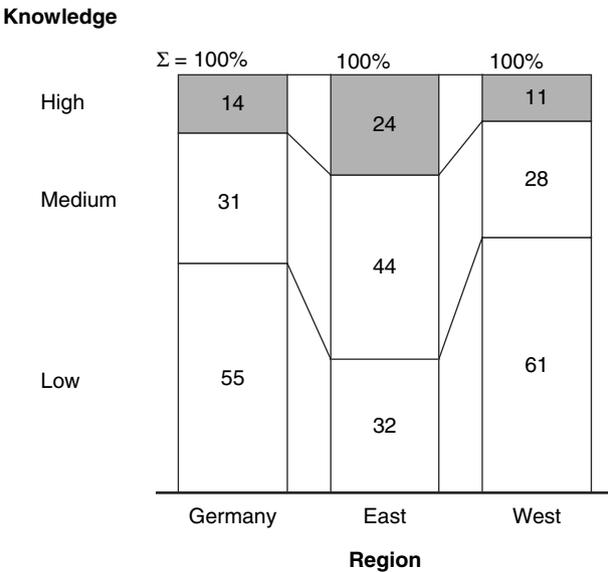


Figure 7.28 GDR History Knowledge Levels by Region

Level of knowledge by education: GDR – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)

Knowledge

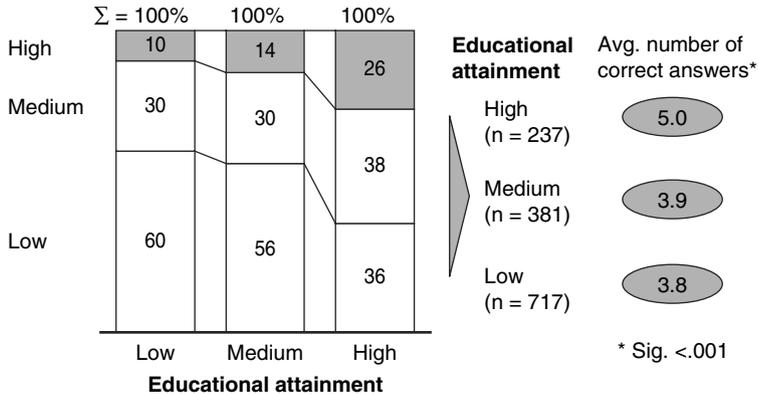


Figure 7.29 Knowledge of GDR History by Educational Attainment

level of educational attainment, the higher is the level of knowledge. While 26 percent of the highly educated people belong to the high knowledge segment, this share decreases to ten percent for those with a low level of educational attainment.

Likewise, while highly educated people knew the correct answers to five questions, less well-educated people only answered less than four questions correctly. That said, substantial knowledge gaps nevertheless exist even among college or university graduates. More than a third of the respondents that have a high level of educational attainment fall into the Low knowledge category.

Knowledge gaps by generation

The observation in regard to the NS regime section of the survey, that older people know more about historical facts than younger people, is again confirmed in respect of the history of the former GDR. Figure 7.30 illustrates that the older respondents knew significantly more about the GDR history than the younger generation. While 19 percent of the 51 to 69-year-old participants have a high level of knowledge of the topic, only six percent of the participants aged 18 to 34 years fall into the High knowledge segment.

Level of knowledge by age: GDR – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)

Knowledge

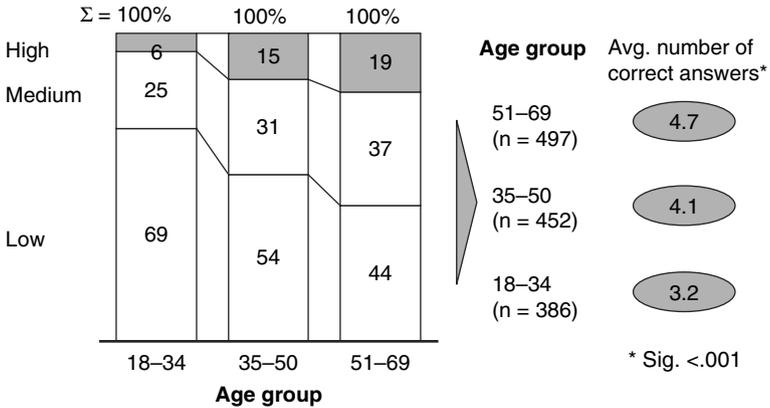


Figure 7.30 Knowledge of GDR History by Age

A disturbing 69 percent of the younger generation has a low level of knowledge of the GDR history, whereas 55 percent of the middle-aged and 44 percent of the older generation fall into this category. In conclusion, the significant knowledge gaps regarding recent German history indicate that targeted initiatives are required to preserve and strengthen knowledge of historical facts as a critical dimension of historical consciousness in general and action consciousness in particular.

7.2.2 General attitudes towards the SED dictatorship

As discussed in section 5.2, general attitudes about a regime, such as knowledge, are important factors in shaping action consciousness. The results of this survey indicate that anti-dictatorship attitudes in regard to the former SED regime differ considerably between East and West Germans. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss three main findings in more detail: (1) condemnation of the SED regime is pronounced but not overwhelmingly high; (2) while a clear majority takes a critical stance against the former GDR, some extenuation of the regime and anti-reunification sentiment exists; and (3) East Germans tend to view the former GDR in a more nostalgic and forgiving way than West Germans.

Condemnation of the SED regime

When asked about their overriding attitude towards the SED state, 80 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they vehemently condemn the tactics used by the East German government to suppress opposition.

Yet, a closer look reveals that East Germans do not share this attitude as much as West Germans. More specifically, 82 percent of West Germans as compared to only 71 percent of East Germans vehemently condemn the actions of the regime. Figure 7.31 also illustrates that a minority of 13 percent of East Germans do not share this attitude.

Extenuation of the SED regime

The majority of respondents see the former GDR in a critical light, but some extenuation of the regime exists as shown in Figure 7.32. When counting all ratings from '4' to '6', close to thirty percent of the respondents agree at least to some extent with the statement that the GDR was not as bad as is often claimed. Another 16 percent of the interviewees believe at least somewhat that the former West Germany was no better than the GDR. And a disturbing ten percent agree or tend to agree with the statement that documentation and reports on the persecution of political prisoners in the GDR are exaggerated.

I vehemently condemn the actions used by the East German government to suppress opposition
 R-sample (n = 1,335)

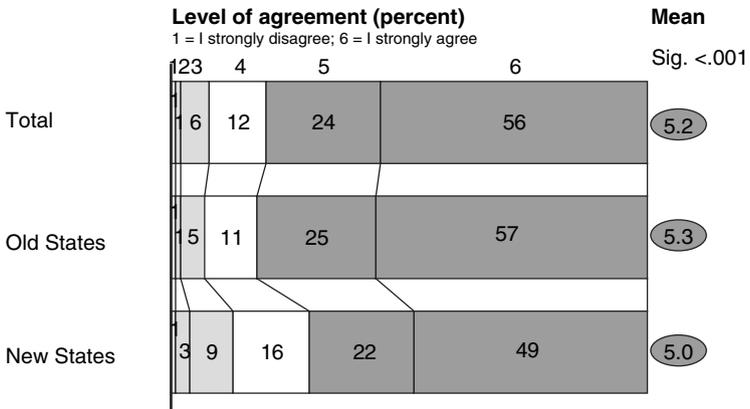


Figure 7.31 Degree of Condemnation of SED Regime

Attitudes – GDR regime extenuation

R-sample (n = 1,335)

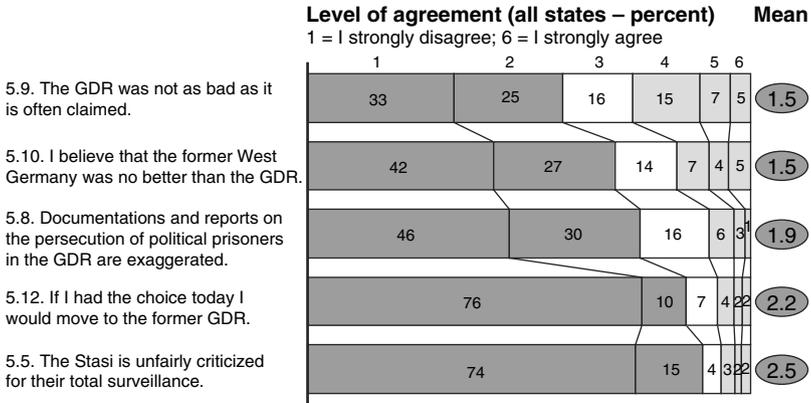


Figure 7.32 Magnitude of Extenuation of GDR Regime

In contrast, close to ninety percent majorities criticize the Stasi for their surveillance and would not want to move to the former GDR if they had the choice. The scope of extenuation, while overall not large, becomes more evident when taking a closer look at the respondents' sentiments regarding reunification. Figure 7.33 suggests that there appear to be some that feel they have lost out because of the reunification process and wish their old life back.

Based on the cumulative ratings from '4' to '6', more than a third of Germans feel at least to some extent that they were better off before 1990 than afterwards. Another 27 percent have second thoughts on reunification in view of the solidarity tax burden, and a minority of 17 percent agrees with the statement that they wished that it never came to the reunification of Germany.

Nostalgic tendencies

A breakdown of general attitudes by region reveals that extenuation of the GDR regime is primarily a result of some nostalgia among East Germans, whereas the notable anti-reunification sentiment is primarily an issue among West Germans.

Figure 7.34 shows that East Germans substantially agree more than West Germans with the statements that the GDR was not as bad as it is often claimed; that West Germany was no better than the GDR; that reports on

Attitudes – anti-reunification sentiment

R-sample (n = 1,335)

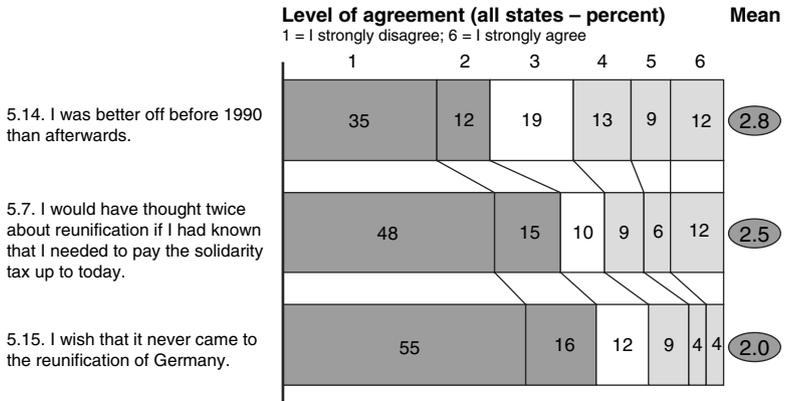
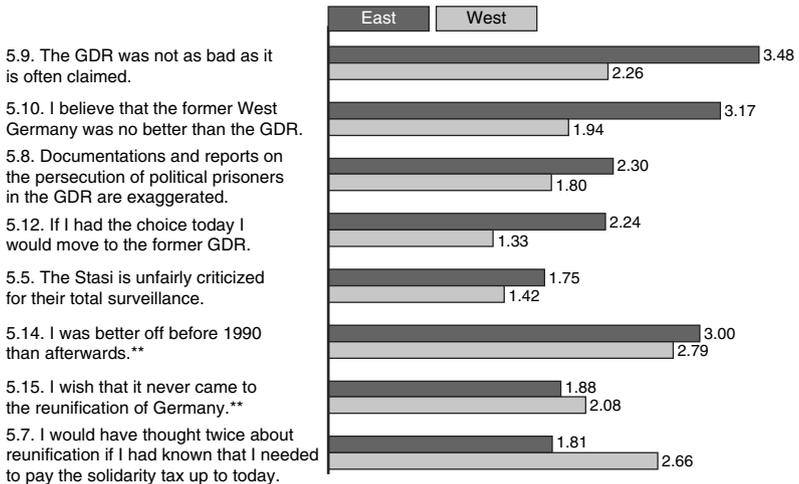


Figure 7.33 Scope of Anti-Reunification Sentiment

Nostalgia mean ratings* East versus West Germany

R-sample (n = 1,335); Sig. <.001**



* 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

** Applies to all statements except for 5.14 (Sig. >.05) and 5.15 (Sig. = .044)

Figure 7.34 Nostalgia and General Attitudes about the GDR by Region

the persecution of political prisoners in the GDR are exaggerated; and that given the choice they would move to the former GDR. This more forgiving attitude of East Germans towards the SED state is likely a result of the nostalgic trend in East Germany combined with the wish of many people to rediscover their East German identity.²³ Conversely, West Germans are more critical than East Germans in regard to reunification. In summary, the respondents have by and large a critical stance against the former SED state, yet with pronounced differences between East and West Germans.

7.2.3 Action consciousness in regard to the SED regime

Similar to the NS regime section of the study, the respondents were asked to indicate on a scale from '1' to '6' to what extent they agree to a set of seven statements comprising the notion of action consciousness.²⁴ While again confirming the basic theoretical model assumptions, analyses of the responses show that the level of action consciousness against the SED regime needs to be raised overall, but more for East Germans than West Germans and in particular for the younger generation. The rationale for this conclusion is fourfold: (1) action consciousness towards the SED regime is high, but not at desired very high levels, which applies in particular to East Germans; (2) education and knowledge influence action consciousness positively; (3) the younger generation has a lower level of action consciousness in regard to the SED dictatorship than middle-aged and older generations; and (4) attitudinal strength has a strong impact on action consciousness.

Current level of action consciousness

The seven statements comprising action consciousness in regard to the former SED state and the respective percentage distributions are summarized in Figure 7.35. While one statement, 'If it should ever become a GDR-like dictatorship again I would emigrate', directly addresses the respondents' readiness to act in a certain way, the other six statements are a reflection of inner resistance against the SED state. These statements were chosen as variables for measuring action consciousness based on their respective correlations with the main action variable, question 5.16 (as above and in Appendix A). When counting only the ratings '5' and '6', Figure 7.35 illustrates that only 45 percent of the

²³ For a more detailed discussion of the *Ostalgie* phenomenon see, for example, Ahbe (2005).

²⁴ '1' means 'I strongly disagree', and '6' means 'I strongly agree'.

Action Consciousness statements – SED regime

R-sample (n = 1,335)

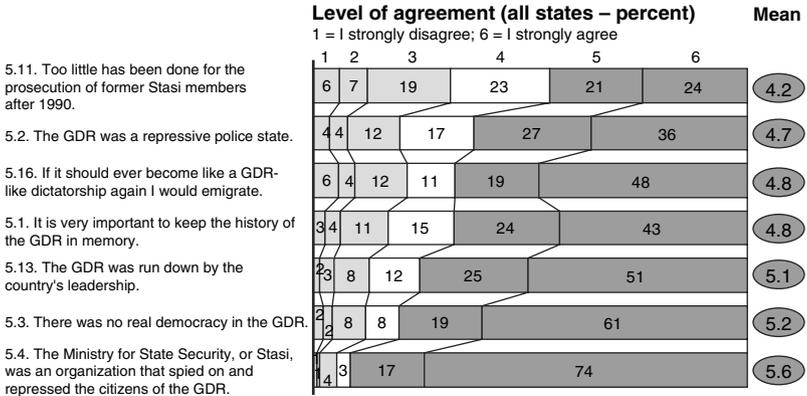


Figure 7.35 Current State of Action Consciousness – SED Regime

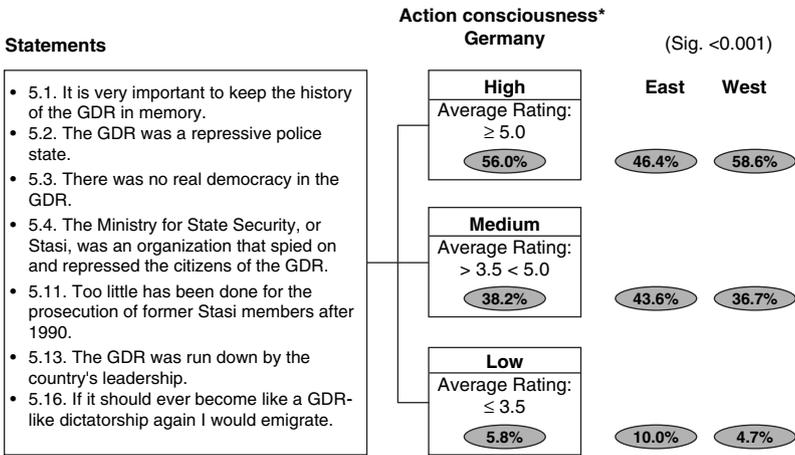
respondents agree with the statement that too little has been done for the prosecution of former Stasi members after 1990.

Between two thirds and three quarters of the participants agree or strongly agree with the statements that the GDR was a repressive police state, that it is very important to keep the history of the GDR in memory, and/or that the GDR was run down by the country's leadership. Likewise, two thirds of respondents would be prepared to emigrate should a GDR-like dictatorship resurface. Finally, a large majority of 80 percent or more agree or strongly agree with the statement that there was no real democracy in the GDR and/or that the Stasi was an organization that spied on and repressed the citizens of the GDR. What is concerning is that a sizeable minority of 20 percent does not believe that the GDR was a repressive police state. To assess the magnitude and scope of action consciousness in regard to the SED regime on an aggregated basis, Figure 7.36 shows a segmentation of the respondents in the three action consciousness categories, High, Medium, and Low.

Respondents with average ratings of '5' or more are considered to have a High level of action consciousness towards the SED regime. Those participants whose average rating is smaller than or equal to '3.5' fall into the Low action consciousness segment, and all other average ratings are defined as Medium level of *Aktionsbewusstsein*. Based on these criteria, Figure 7.36 indicates that action consciousness is not at

Action consciousness segments: SED regime

R-sample (n = 1,335)



* Rating scale: 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.36 Size of Action Consciousness Segments – SED Regime

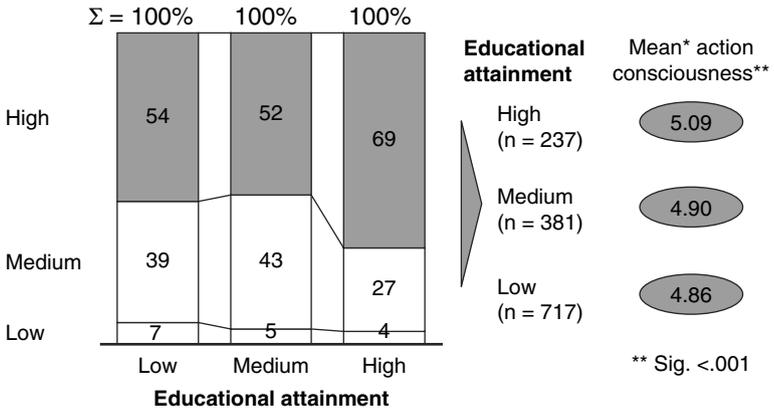
desired overwhelmingly high levels, particularly for East Germans. Less than sixty percent of West Germans and less than fifty percent of East Germans have a high level of action consciousness in regard to the SED dictatorship. A sizeable minority of ten percent of East Germans has a low level of *Aktionsbewusstsein*, which mirrors the nostalgia trend and general attitudes discussed in section 7.2.2. Finally, around forty percent of the respondents have a Medium level of action consciousness comprising the group of potentially uninvolved bystanders should a GDR-like dictatorship resurface.

Impact of education and knowledge

Similar to the findings of the NS regime portion of this study, education and knowledge also play an important role in shaping action consciousness in regard to the SED regime. Figure 7.37 shows that the higher the level of education, the higher is the mean action consciousness level. While 69 percent of highly educated people fall into the High action consciousness level segment, the same applies to only 54 percent of respondents that have a low level of educational attainment. Figure 7.38 confirms that knowledge is an important prerequisite for action consciousness to form.

Level of action consciousness by education: SED regime – all states
 R-sample (n = 1,335)

Action consciousness

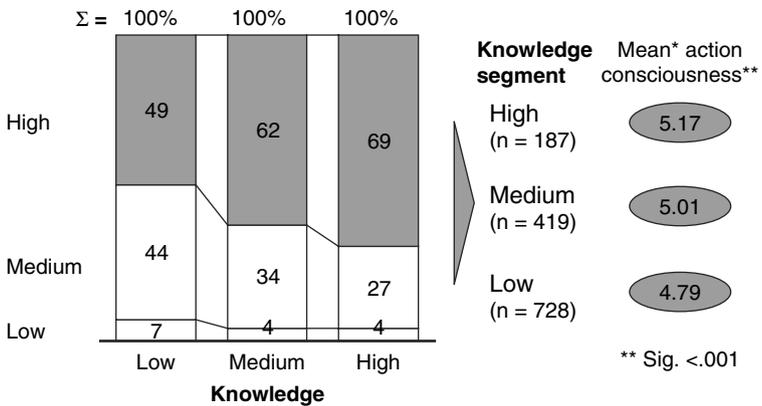


* Rating scale: 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.37 SED Regime-related Action Consciousness by Educational Attainment

Level of action consciousness by age: SED regime – all states
 R-sample (n = 1,335)

Action consciousness



* Rating scale: 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.38 SED Regime-related Action Consciousness by Knowledge

Sixty-nine percent of people with a high level of knowledge of GDR history have a high level of action consciousness, whereas this share declines to 49 percent for those participants who have a low level of knowledge. The differences in action consciousness by level of knowledge are significant at a better than 99 percent level.

Differences by age

The results of this survey confirm that the phenomenon of inter-generational fading of knowledge and attitudes also applies to *Aktionsbewusstsein* in regard to the SED regime. Figure 7.39 illustrates that the mean action consciousness value grows from 4.67 for the younger generation to 5.08 for the older generation. Consistent with these values, while sixty-five percent of the 51 to 69-year-old respondents have a high level of action consciousness, only forty-two percent of the 18 to 34-year-old participants are highly action conscious. The differences are again statistically significant at a better than 99 percent level.

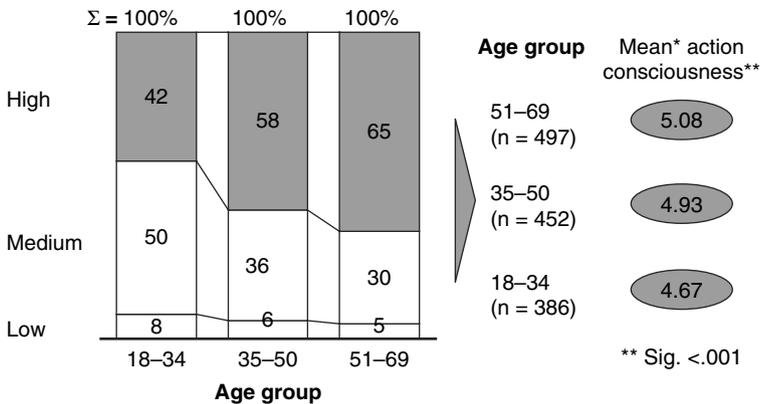
Importance of attitudinal strength

As in the NS regime part of the study, the survey results confirm the hypothesis that strong attitudes significantly shape the level of action consciousness. Figure 7.40 shows the relationship between the strength

Level of action consciousness by age: SED regime – all states

R-sample (n = 1,335)

Action consciousness

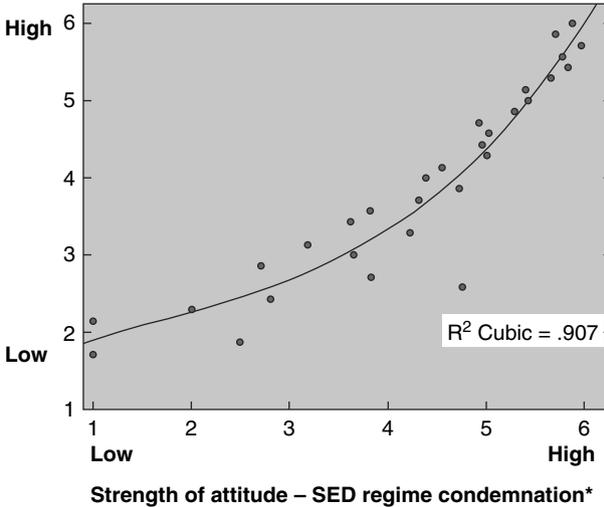


* Rating scale: 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.39 SED Regime-related Action Consciousness by Age

Relationship between attitudinal strength and action consciousness – SED regime

Action consciousness**



* I vehemently condemn the actions used by the East German government to suppress opposition (1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree)
 ** Average rating questions 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.11, 5.13, 5.16

Figure 7.40 Strength of Attitudes and Action Consciousness – SED Regime

of attitude on the one hand, expressed as the extent of condemnation of the SED state’s actions, and action consciousness on the other hand, expressed as an average rating of the seven statements comprising action consciousness. As the strength of anti-SED dictatorship attitudes grows, so does the average level of action consciousness. The high R² cubic of more than 0.9 indicates that this relationship is very strong. Moreover, the shape of the curve suggests that the relationship between strength of attitude and action consciousness in regard to the SED regime is non-linear.

This in turn means that it should be easier to convert an uninvolved bystander into an activist, rather than a convinced collaborator into a bystander. To complement the assessment of action consciousness as an implicit predisposition to act with an analysis of the respondents’ explicit desire to act, the survey participants were asked to state to what extent they would get involved should there be another SED- or

Stasi-like dictatorship. The responses by level of action consciousness are shown in Figure 7.41.

Similar to the results regarding the NS dictatorship, the Figure indicates that there is a consistent and strong relation between implied predisposition to act and expressed desire to act. Eighty-two percent of people with a high level of action consciousness would actively participate in protests, or even help organize the resistance should a Stasi- or SED-like regime re-emerge. In contrast, only 21 percent of respondents with a low level of action consciousness would get actively involved in a protest movement. Consistent with this result, more than half of the respondents with a low level of *Aktionsbewusstsein* would not engage in active or passive resistance, or might even welcome and support a new SED-like regime in rising to power. The corresponding share of bystanders is only seven percent for people with a high level of action consciousness.

In summary, action consciousness levels towards the SED state are considerably lower than those in regard to the NS regime. With less than fifty percent of respondents that fall into the High level of action consciousness segment, this applies in particular to East Germans. As a result, targeted initiatives are required to raise the level of action consciousness and passion about the topic in order to improve the odds of preventing detrimental dictatorships from rising to power again.

Should there be another SED / Stasi-like dictatorship, I would ...
 R-sample (n = 1,335)

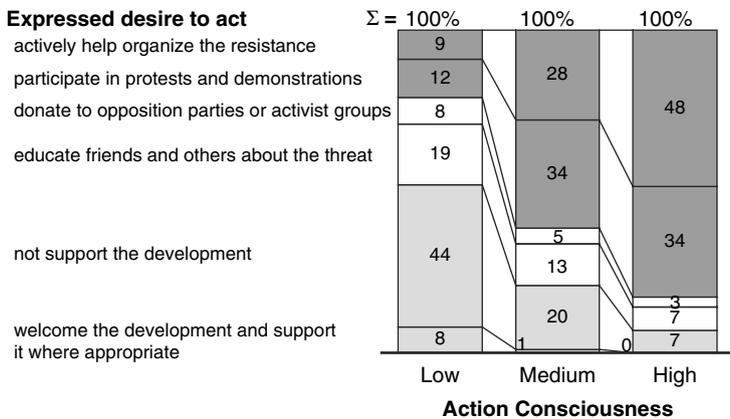


Figure 7.41 Action Consciousness and Expressed Desire to Act – SED Regime

7.2.4 On the effectiveness of forms of historical-cultural socialization with respect to the SED regime

Similar to the NS regime section of the study, an important objective of the survey was to assess the contributions of individual forms of historical cultural socialization to preserving and building knowledge and action consciousness with respect to the SED dictatorship. To establish the data requirements for accomplishing this objective, the respondents were presented with two questions: 6.1, relating to which sources each participant used to gain knowledge about the GDR, and 6.2, which of these sources has affected the subjects' attitudes and feelings about the GDR.²⁵ To estimate the impact of each form of historical cultural socialization, the sources as independent variables were correlated with knowledge and *Aktionsbewusstsein* as dependent variables using the same methodology as discussed in section 7.1.4 of this study.

Based on these analyses, the two main conclusions are similar, yet not identical when compared to those found in the NS regime portion of the survey: (1) while the forms of historical cultural socialization have an impact on how people think and feel about the GDR, magnitude and scope differ significantly among the individual sources; and (2) TV documentaries, movies, newspapers and magazines, and literature represent the most effective sources. Schools, in contrast, however, do not appear to materially impact knowledge and action consciousness in regard to the SED regime.

Source usage

The mean scores of responses to the two questions, 6.1 and 6.2, are listed in Figure 7.42. As for the NS regime section of the survey, TV documentaries, films, and school lead the list in source usage and together with discussions with parents and grandparents also represent the leading sources that are perceived to have affected the respondents' attitudes and feelings about the GDR. Since the history of the GDR is more recent than the history of the Third Reich, the middle-aged and older survey participants have personally experienced important events, notably the peaceful revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Therefore, although technically not a form of historical cultural socialization, personal experiences are as important as textbooks and even newspapers and magazines as sources of knowledge and feelings about the GDR. Discussions

²⁵ For details see the questionnaire in Appendix A.

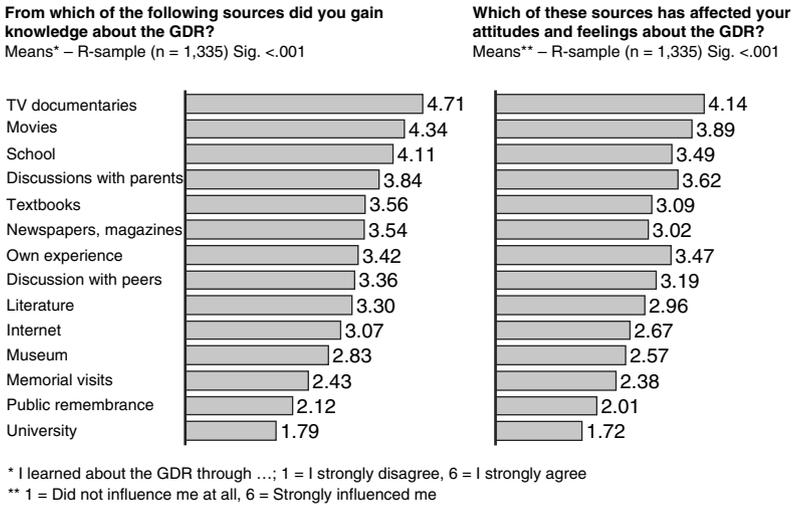


Figure 7.42 Sources of Knowledge and Feelings about the GDR

with peers, literature, and the Internet represent third-tier sources, followed by museums, memorial visits, and public events. Universities are not utilized as a form of historical cultural socialization with respect to the GDR, most likely due to the fact that the majority of respondents didn't attend college and that the history of the GDR has not necessarily been part of the curriculum.

Source performance

Similar to the results found in the NS regime section of the study, high source usage does not necessarily translate into high impact. Figure 7.43 shows the estimated relative impact of each source on knowledge, based on the R² and the Tonidandel/LeBreton relative importance method. Not surprisingly, personal experience leads the list with an R² value of 9.7 percent and a relative importance value of 35.5 percent. Newspapers and magazines, literature, and TV documentaries also have a comparatively high relative impact on knowledge, followed by museums, discussion with peers, movies, and the Internet. The remaining sources – public events, discussions with parents, memorial visits, textbooks, universities, and schools – do not have a material impact on knowledge about the GDR. Schools in particular do not appear to explain knowledge differences between respondents in any significant way.

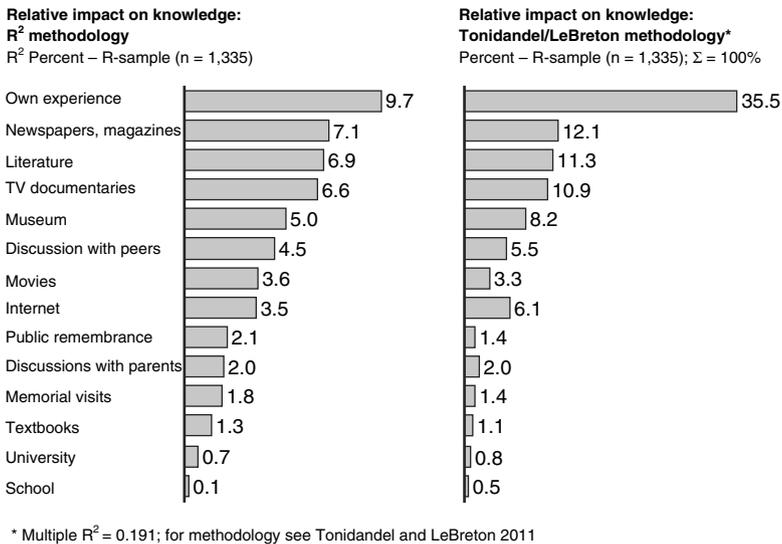


Figure 7.43 Impact of Sources on Knowledge – SED Regime

The rank order changes when analyzing the estimated relative impact of each form of historical cultural socialization on action consciousness. Figure 7.44 lists the R² values and the relative importance values in regard to *Aktionsbewusstsein* by source. With an R² value of 11.5 percent and a relative importance value of 26.4 percent, the analysis suggests that TV documentaries represent the most effective socialization form, followed by films, newspapers and magazines, and literature. Personal experience appears to impact action consciousness to a lesser degree than knowledge, possibly due to the fact that not all GDR citizens who lived through major historical events were concurrently the target of SED suppression, or that those respondents are not aware at least that they may have been a target of the SED or Stasi. Other sources such as discussions with parents, the Internet, museums, public events, textbooks, and memorial visits have a comparatively low impact on action consciousness in regard to the GDR.

Schools and universities trail the list, based on R² values, but appear to have a moderate impact on *Aktionsbewusstsein* based on the Tonidandel/LeBreton methodology. Nevertheless, to validate the high relative importance of TV documentaries, movies, and literature, respondents were presented with a short list of seven popular works and asked to indicate their level of interest in watching or reading the respective

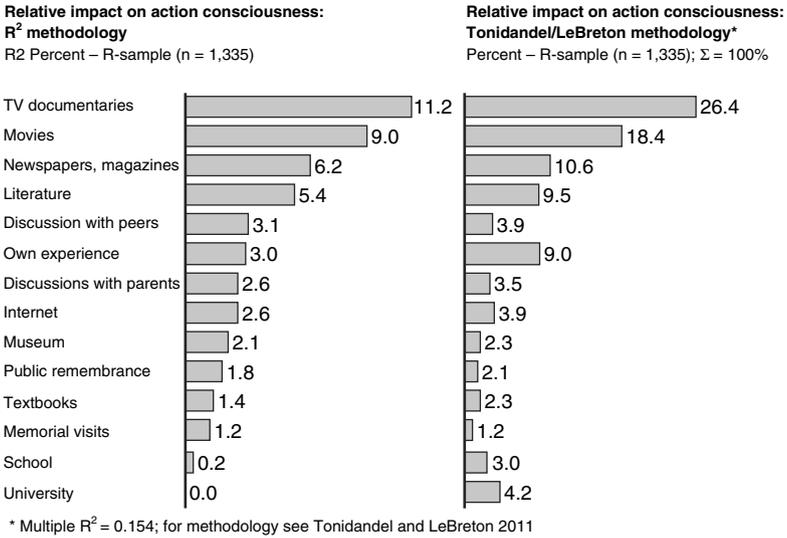


Figure 7.44 Impact of Sources on Action Consciousness – SED Regime

film or text. The individual viewer and reader shares are summarized in Figure 7.45. With a viewer or reader share of about sixty percent of the respondents, *Goodbye Lenin* is the most popular among the works surveyed, followed by *Life of Others*, *Sonnenallee*, *New Sorrows of Young W*, and *Damals in der DDR*. Two of the works, *Ein Tag im Jahr* and *Meine FDJ*, have only a readership reach of less than five percent.

Correlations between the mean number of works watched or read, knowledge, expressed as number of correct answers to the knowledge questions, and action consciousness, measured as a mean rating of the items comprising *Aktionsbewusstsein* towards the SED regime, by and large confirm the analyses on the relative importance of literature and film on knowledge and action consciousness.

Figure 7.46 indicates that the more films or books people have watched or read the higher are the levels of knowledge and *Aktionsbewusstsein* in regard to GDR history and the SED dictatorship. Moreover, Figure 7.47 shows that highly educated people watch or read more films or texts than those people who have a low level of educational attainment. While on average respondents with a college or university degree have watched or read 2.28 works, those without a college degree have only watched or read between 1.43 and 1.83 works. This difference is significant at a better than 99 percent level. In contrast, age does not appear

Awareness and viewer / reader shares

R-sample (n = 1,335)

	Percent of respondents that*:		
	Never heard of it	Heard of work, but didn't see or read it**	Already saw or read work
Goodbye Lenin (Becker)	8.7	31.2	60.1
Life of Others (von Donnersmarck)	23.0	38.7	38.3
Sonnenallee (Haußmann)	24.5	33.9	41.6
New Sorrows of Young W (Plenzdorf)	40.1	42.5	17.4
Damals in der DDR (MDR/WDR)	44.9	45.0	10.1
Ein Tag im Jahr (Wolf)	52.4	43.6	4.0
Meine FDJ (Rusch)	57.9	39.9	2.2

* Question: How high is your interest in seeing the following films or reading the following works?

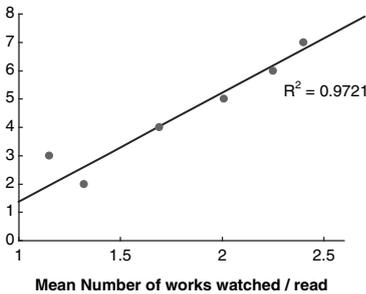
** Aggregate percentages for interest: 2 = None; 3 = Low; 4 = Medium; 5 = High

Figure 7.45 Works Seen or Read – SED Regime

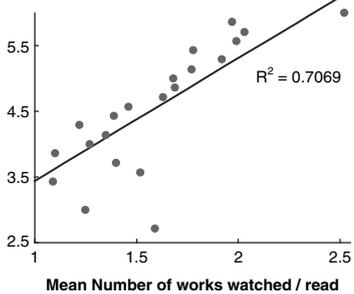
Relationship between number of works watched or read and knowledge and action consciousness

R-sample (n = 1,335); Sig. <.01

Knowledge*



Mean Action Consciousness**



* Number of correct answers (questions 4.1–4.8)

** Average rating questions 5.1–5.4, 5.11, 5.13, 5.16

Figure 7.46 Impact of Erudition – SED Regime

Average number of works watched or read

R-sample (n = 1,335)

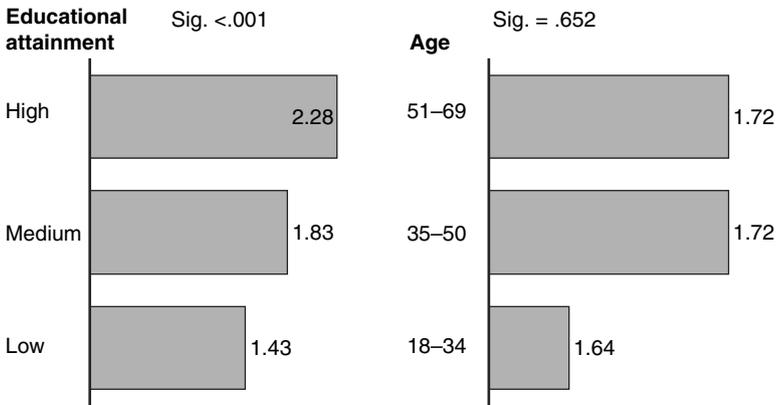


Figure 7.47 Erudition by Education and Age – SED Regime

to be an explanatory variable for erudition. The difference between the age groups is statistically not significant.

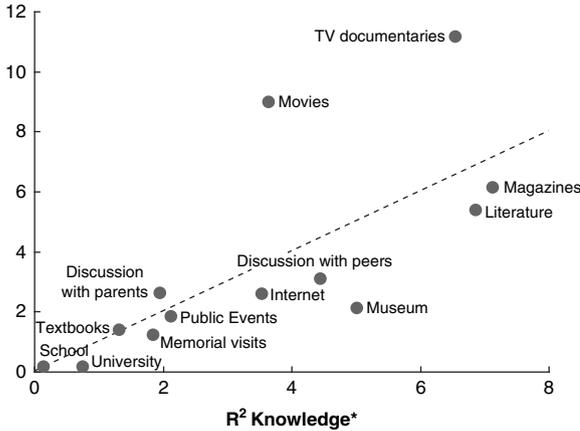
Overall, the above analyses indicate that TV documentaries, movies, magazines, and literature are more effective in shaping knowledge and action consciousness in regard to the SED regime than other forms of historical cultural socialization. This conclusion is reflected in Figure 7.48 that graphically summarizes the position of each source by estimated relative impact on knowledge and *Aktionsbewusstsein*. As already explained in section 4.1.4, the R^2 values can only be taken as a rough approximation of relative performances with directional validity. Nevertheless, Figure 7.48 suggests that TV documentaries and movies are the most effective forms of historical cultural socialization with respect to action consciousness, whereas newspapers and magazines as well as literature have the highest impact on building knowledge about GDR history and the SED state.²⁶ All other sources shape the two variables to a lesser extent.

While museums seem to perform relatively well in regard to contributing to knowledge, their estimated relative impact on action consciousness is somewhat limited. Moreover, discussions with peers, the Internet, public events, and memorial visits only appear to moderately shape action consciousness, but load somewhat higher on knowledge. In contrast,

²⁶ Personal experience has not been plotted because it does not represent a form of historical cultural socialization.

Relative contributions to knowledge and action consciousness – GDR
 R-sample (n = 1,335); Sig. <.01

R² Action Consciousness**



* Number of correct answers (questions 4.1–4.8)
 ** Average rating questions 5.1–5.4, 5.11, 5.13, 5.16

Figure 7.48 Effectiveness of Forms of Historical Cultural Socialization – SED Regime

textbooks, schools, and universities do not seem to have a noticeable effect on either knowledge or action consciousness. Again, there may be overlaps with other forms of historical cultural socialization that might explain their low relative performances.

7.3 Empirical relevance of expanded model assumptions

In sections 7.1 and 7.2, I have discussed the survey results for both the NS and the SED regimes as they relate to the level and structure of, and the relationships between, the core model elements – knowledge, attitudes, action consciousness, and the relative impact of the forms of historical cultural socialization on knowledge and action consciousness. While the empirical results have principally confirmed the model assumptions developed in Chapter 5, the objective of this section is to take a closer look at the expanded model assumptions and their empirical relevance. More specifically, I will address two areas of debate: (1) in section 7.3.1, I will review the survey results in regard to how and to what extent historical thinking in general and action consciousness

in particular may have materialized in concrete political actions; and (2) in section 7.3.2 I will assess the current state of action consciousness in regard to potentially current authoritarian trends.

7.3.1 Linkages between action consciousness and political action

Any empirical research attempting to validate hypotheses associated with linking past attitudes with past actions is faced with the dilemma that tailored empirical data on attitudes that were present at the time an event occurred are not readily available. While there may be newspaper articles or other archival historical documents that touch on certain aspects of how people felt during the time when political action was actually taken, these sources are typically too general in nature and do not meet the data requirements needed for statistical analysis. That said, this study benefits from the fact that the peaceful revolution in the former GDR happened only about twenty-four years ago so that people who participated in the protest movement can be interviewed about the motives that caused action consciousness to turn into concrete political action. As described in section 6.1.3, a special boost sample was drawn consisting of people who were born and raised in the GDR, who were at least 18 years old before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and who in one way or another participated in the uprising against the former SED state.

This approach allows for both a rough analysis of factors linking action consciousness and political action, and an analysis of differences in knowledge, attitudes, and action consciousness between protest movement participants and non-participants. To be comparable and to minimize distortions, the non-participant group also only consists of people who were born and raised in the GDR and who were at least 18 years old before the fall of the Wall. As a result, with the exception of participating versus not participating in the uprising, the target group attributes are identical for both protest movement participants and non-participants. While the results of this survey section are based on a total of 415 protest movement participants and a comparison group of 121 non-participants, one has to take into account that this methodology has two limitations in regard to the validity of conclusions.

First, the analysis of linkages between *Aktionsbewusstsein* and political action is based on what people think today were their motives to act almost a quarter of a century ago. So there may be differences between what they think today and what their level of action consciousness is today, as compared to how they felt then. Second, as already explained in section 6.1.3, the boost sample is not representative of the German population. Conclusions from this section can therefore only represent

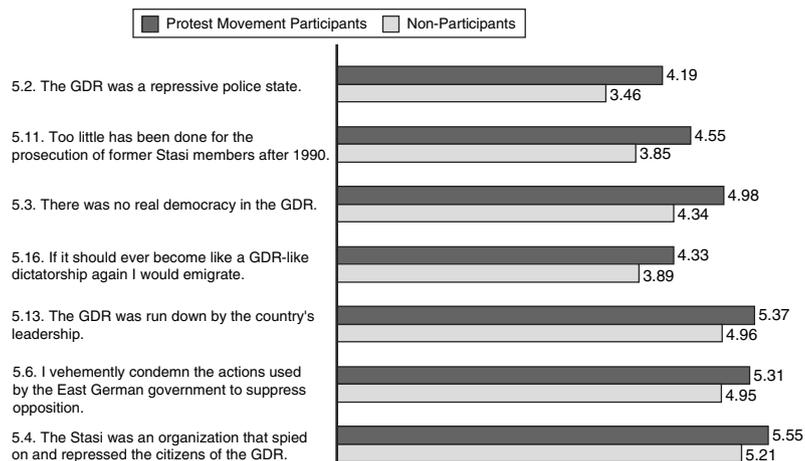
a rough proof of concept and approximations with directional validity. With these caveats in mind, the three main findings of this survey section are that protest movement participants in comparison to non-participants (1) have a more critical attitude about the SED regime; (2) know more about GDR history and have a higher level of action consciousness; and (3) that a combination of perceived deficiencies and an opportunity to act represent the core ingredients to reach the tipping point beyond which action consciousness is transformed into political action.

Attitudes

The notion that protest movement participants appear to have a more critical stance against the SED state than non-participants is illustrated in Figure 7.49. In particular, the resisters believe more than non-participants that the GDR was a repressive police state; that too little has been done towards the prosecution of former Stasi members after 1990; that there was no real democracy in the GDR; and that if it should ever become a GDR-like dictatorship again they would emigrate. Moreover, the protest movement participants' convictions that the GDR was run

Mean ratings* Protest Movement Participants versus Non-Participants**

B-sample (n = 536); Sig. <.005



* 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

** Protest movement participants n = 415, non-participants n = 121; filter: born in GDR; lived in GDR for at least 18 years; at least 42 years old

Figure 7.49 Attitudes of Protest Movement Participants towards the SED State

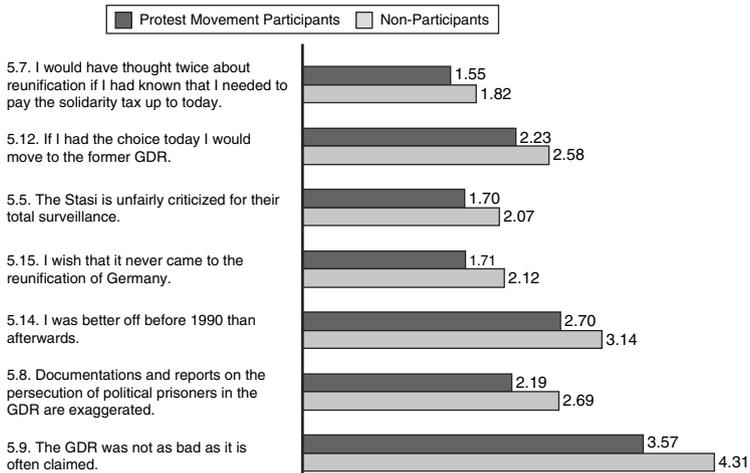
down by the country's leadership and that the Stasi was an organization that spied on and repressed the citizens of the GDR are more pronounced than those of the non-participants.

As a consequence, resisters condemn the actions by the East German government to suppress opposition more than non-resisters. Figure 7.50 confirms that this critical stance against the government is mirrored in a less forgiving attitude vis-à-vis the country overall and a lower level of nostalgia. Resisters disagree significantly more than non-resisters with the statements that the GDR was not as bad as it is often claimed; that documentation and reports on the persecution of political prisoners in the GDR are exaggerated; and that they felt they were better off before 1990 than afterwards. Not surprisingly, protest movement participants think significantly less negatively about reunification than non-participants and by and large would not want to move to the former GDR if they had the choice.

Knowledge and action consciousness

Consistent with the survey results so far, resisters also have higher levels of knowledge and *Aktionsbewusstsein* as shown in Figure 7.51. Of the protest movement participants, 35 percent have a high level of

Mean ratings* Protest Movement Participants versus Non-Participants**
 B-sample (n = 536); Sig. <.005



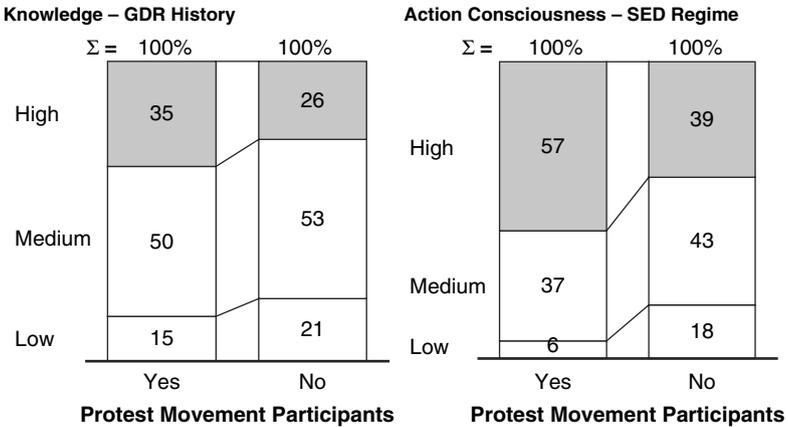
* 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

** Protest movement participants n = 415, non-participants n = 121; filter: born in GDR; lived in GDR for at least 18 years; at least 42 years old

Figure 7.50 Protest Movement Participants' Level of Nostalgia

Level of knowledge & action consciousness

B-sample (n = 536*)



* Protest movement participants n = 415, non-participants n = 121; filter: born in GDR; lived in GDR for at least 18 years; at least 42 years old

Figure 7.51 Knowledge and Action Consciousness of Protest Movement Participants

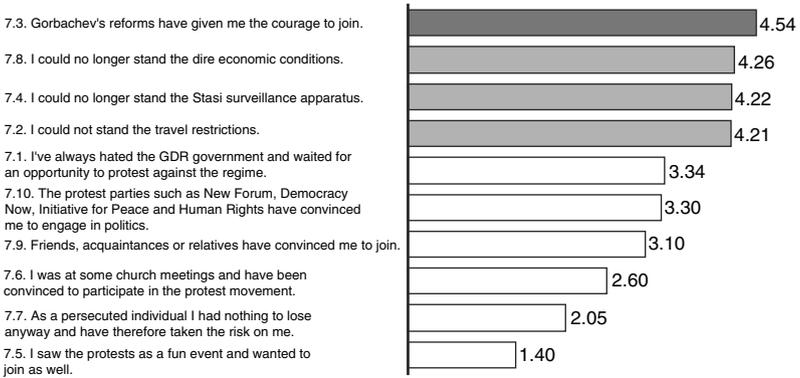
knowledge of GDR history, and 57 percent have a high level of action consciousness in regard to the SED regime. In contrast, of the non-resisters, only 26 percent are highly knowledgeable about the history of the GDR, and only 39 percent have a high level of action consciousness. Also, the shares of protest movement participants that have a low level of knowledge and/or *Aktionsbewusstsein* are considerably lower than the respective shares of the non-resisters.

Political action

The pronounced differences between resisters and non-resisters raise a question – which factors have the potential to ultimately move action consciousness beyond the tipping point and turn the predisposition to act into concrete political action? Figure 7.52 suggests that all it appears to take are a set of perceived deficiencies combined with an exogenous opportunity to act. According to Figure 7.52, there are three perceived deficiencies that caused the protest movement participants to act – poor economic conditions, the Stasi surveillance apparatus, and the existing travel restrictions. However, the statement that Gorbachev’s reforms have given people the courage to join the protest movement leads the list, suggesting that the combination of perceived deficiencies

Mean ratings* Protest Movement Participants' motives

B-sample (n = 415)



* 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.52 Protest Movement Participants' Motives to Act

and opportunity represent the prerequisites for moving people beyond action consciousness into concrete political action.

Figure 7.52 also indicates that reference groups such as political parties, friends, or relatives appear to have a rather moderate influence on whether or not an individual engages in political action. Moreover, the fact that the protest movement participants exclude fun as a motivating factor supports the notion that perceived serious issues combined with a risk-reducing opportunity to act represent the key ingredients that turn action consciousness into political action.

7.3.2 About current authoritarian trends and the state of action consciousness

The conclusion that poor economic conditions, the surveillance state, and travel restrictions combined with Glasnost were the key enabling factors for the protest movement participants to engage, raises the question of if and to what extent similar trends exist today, possibly as a precursor of, or indicator for, a history of the future. To assess present trends and the associated state of action consciousness, the survey participants were presented with a set of questions concerning how they think about democracy in general, what they would do if certain authoritarian tendencies re-emerged, and how they deliberate

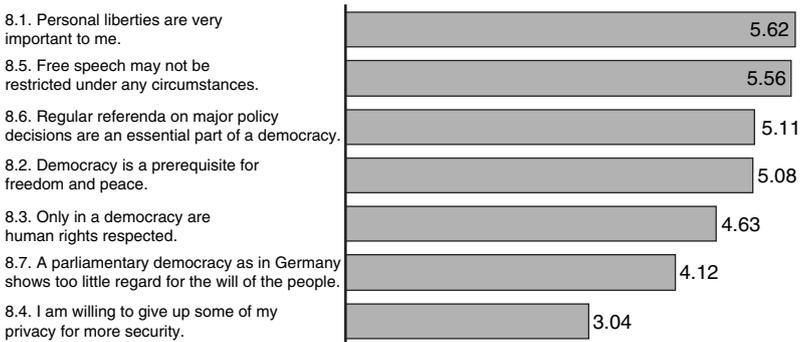
about authoritarian trends in the present.²⁷ Based on the survey analyses, the answer to the above questions is threefold: (1) the survey participants have a generally positive attitude about democracy and personal liberties; (2) critical issue areas that would cause people to act are similar to those causing East Germans to join the resistance movement against the SED state; and (3) the threshold that turns action consciousness into political action does not appear to have been reached at this time.

Attitudes about democracy and liberties

Overall, Figure 7.53 illustrates that the survey participants have a high regard for democracy in general. On a scale from '1' (I strongly disagree) to '6' (I strongly agree), the two most important attributes are personal liberties with a mean rating of 5.62, and free speech with a mean rating of 5.56. The respondents also agree by and large with the statements that regular referenda on major policy decisions should be an essential part of a democracy; that democracy is a prerequisite for freedom and peace; and that only in a democracy are human rights respected. In contrast, people agree less with the notion that a parliamentary democracy as in Germany shows too little regard for the will of the people, and they are not really inclined to sacrifice some privacy for more security.

Mean ratings* – Democracy

R-sample (n = 1,335)



* 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.53 Attitudes about Democracy and Liberties

²⁷ Refer to questions 8 to 10 in Appendix A.

Current Aktionsbewusstsein

When asked to what extent they would be willing to engage should a certain dictatorial tendency resurface, the important issue areas are similar to those expressed by the protest movement participants. Figure 7.54 shows a breakdown of the expressed desire to act into three categories: (1) active resistance consisting of people who would participate in demonstrations or even actively engage in organizing the resistance; (2) passive resistance comprising people who would educate others about the threat or donate to the opposition; and (3) no resistance consisting of people who prefer to remain uninvolved and who do not want to resist. While the protest movement participants, as shown in section 7.3.1, were motivated to resist the SED state primarily because of the poor economic conditions, the Stasi surveillance, and the travel restrictions, people today would be most sensitive to any restrictions on free speech, the right to vote, and the right to travel.

More than two thirds of the respondents would take to the streets should any of these rights be restricted. Another group of people, more than sixty percent, indicate that they would actively engage in protests should a police state emerge, should there be any restriction on property

Current action consciousness and scope of actions

R-sample (n = 1,335)

	Scope of actions (all states) – percent*		
	None**	Passive	Active
9.3. Restriction of free speech	13.6	16.0	70.4
9.10. Restrictions in right to vote	16.4	14.0	69.7
9.6. Travel restrictions	16.9	13.9	69.2
9.9. Police State	16.5	17.5	66.0
9.11. Restrictions in property rights	18.3	16.0	65.6
9.4. Spying and loss of privacy	17.3	21.2	61.5
9.5. Loss of independence of press/TV	18.9	20.3	60.8
9.13. Enforcement of <i>Notstandsgesetze</i>	20.4	26.5	53.1
9.8. Loss of national sovereignty in important areas	24.0	23.9	52.1
9.7. Capital controls	28.2	26.5	45.3
9.12. Further centralization of decisions in important political areas	29.5	30.0	40.5

* Aggregated ratings: None = '1' would welcome the development and support it where appropriate, or '2' would not support development; Passive = '2' would educate friends and others about the threat, or '3' would donate to opposition parties or activist groups; Active = '5' would participate in protests and demonstrations, or '6' would actively help organize the resistance
 ** The share of people who would welcome the development (rating '1') is negligible

Figure 7.54 Current Action Consciousness and Implied Actions

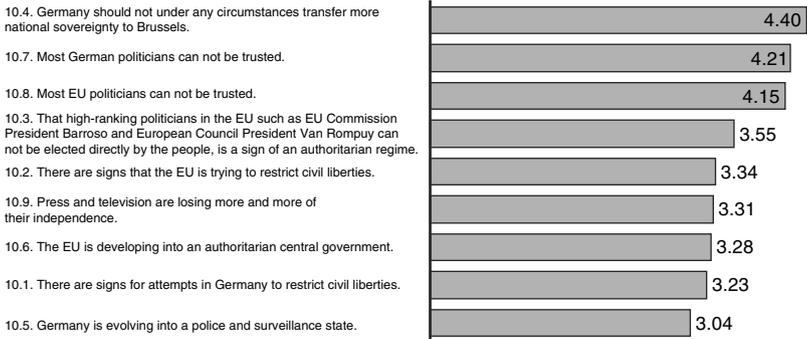
or privacy rights, or should the free press lose its independence. Half of the interviewees would actively resist if martial law was enforced or if national sovereignty was lost in important areas, and less than half of the participants would actively engage if capital controls were introduced or if decisions in important political areas were centralized or globalized further. In conclusion, restriction of freedom and liberties in a broader sense are the most sensitive issue areas today.²⁸

Present trends and tipping point

The respondents were also asked to what extent they believe that there are authoritarian tendencies in the present. The results regarding this set of questions are shown in Figure 7.55. Interestingly, the perceptions of the respondents are split into two categories. While on average the participants tend to agree that Germany should not under any circumstances transfer more national sovereignty to Brussels and that most German and most EU politicians cannot be trusted, they are not fully convinced as of today that there are already significant authoritarian tendencies in Germany and/or the EU. Instead, on average, the respondents are neutral in regard to the existence of authoritarianism in Germany and/or the EU. With a mean rating of

Mean ratings* – present authoritarian trends

R-sample (n = 1,335)



* 1 = I strongly disagree; 6 = I strongly agree

Figure 7.55 Present Authoritarian Tendencies

²⁸ Economic conditions were not surveyed and are likely to be less relevant given the currently strong economy in Germany.

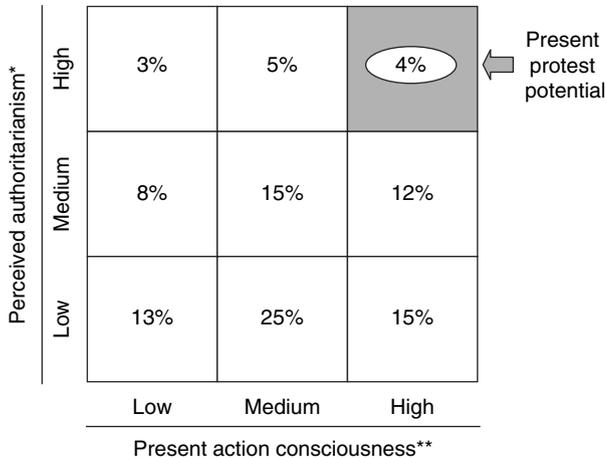
3.04, the respondents agree the least with the statement that Germany is evolving into a police and surveillance state. Nevertheless, when scaling the questions on present authoritarian trends and on present expressed desire to act into the three basic categories of High, Medium and Low, some protest potential exists as illustrated in Figure 7.56.

The scaling is based on the average ratings for questions 9.3 to 9.13; 10.1 to 10.3; and 10.5 to 10.9.²⁹ While average ratings larger than or equal to '5' are considered High, ratings lower than or equal to '3.5' are defined as Low. All other average ratings then fall into the Medium category. Based on this definition, four percent of the respondents comprise the segment of people who have a high level action consciousness in regard to the current political situation and who perceive present trends as highly authoritarian. While this protest potential appears to be low at this time, the possibility cannot be excluded that it could increase through shifts from neighboring segments should economic conditions

Present potential for political action

R-sample (n = 1,335)

Σ = 100%



* Aggregated average ratings for questions 10.1–10.3, 10.5–10.9: High ≥ 5.0; Medium > 3.5 < 5.0; Low ≤ 3.5

** Aggregated average ratings for questions 9.3–9.13: High ≥ 5.0; Medium > 3.5 < 5.0; Low ≤ 3.5

Figure 7.56 Current Scope of Protest Potential

²⁹ For details refer to questionnaire in Appendix A.

deteriorate and should there be a noticeable unpopular deterioration of liberties in Germany and/or the European Union.

In summary, some limited protest potential exists in Germany today that is likely to remain below the threshold of turning action consciousness into political action, provided that democracy and personal liberties are kept in high regard and continue to be granted as a precious gift of freedom and peace.

8

Extending the Reach and Role of History Didactics

Freedom and peace are precious gifts that cannot be taken for granted. The regimes of twentieth-century Germany are powerful examples demonstrating that this statement is fundamentally true. Both are embodiments of tyranny affecting just one country and continue to provide lessons for Germans and Europeans as a whole in the twenty-first century. National Socialism had profound consequences for the shaping of global events that followed World War II, ultimately leading to the rise of Germany's second repressive state, a regime that not only impacted global politics but also significantly influenced the mental and physical well-being of those that lived through it and subsequent generations.

In this theoretical and empirical study, I have argued that in order to improve the odds for securing peace and freedom for current and future generations, it is important not only to *learn* history as a subject, but to *learn from* history. To be effective, this 'learning from' is itself comprised of two processes: (1) encouraging and promoting the dissemination of knowledge and the understanding of history and specific historic events; and (2) assisting students of history to develop an inner preparedness and a competence to act should there be the likelihood of previous undesirable events resurfacing. This implies that learning from the past involves a willingness to act and respond to current and expected future situations.

I have labeled such individual or societal determination to engage in peace and freedom-preserving actions *Aktionsbewusstsein*, or in English terms *action consciousness* and I have argued that the notion of action consciousness should be an integral part of historical consciousness research. My review of existing theoretical concepts and empirical studies has revealed that *Aktionsbewusstsein* has not yet been a focus of historical consciousness research. Based on this study, I have proposed

a concise theory of action consciousness as an integral dimension of Pandel's multidimensional model of historical consciousness, and, with a focus on the two regimes of twentieth-century Germany I have subsequently taken a closer look at the model assumptions, variables, and relationships between the variables on an empirical basis.

As a result of this research, the two primary conclusions are that (1) action consciousness represents an important dimension of historical consciousness research; and (2) that targeted initiatives are required to raise awareness and knowledge, and strengthen passion, attitudes, and action consciousness regarding the detrimental aspects of dictatorships in general and the NS and the SED regimes specifically. There are three key reasons supporting these conclusions:

- (1) Profound knowledge of historical events is a critical prerequisite for understanding the past, but knowledge alone is insufficient for learning *from* the past. In addition to knowledge, strong attitudes and ultimately high levels of action consciousness are required to turn historical thinking and understanding into concrete political action should liberties and peace be threatened by detrimental developments such as an emerging new repressive or authoritarian regime.
- (2) Overall, the basic model assumptions and relationships between the model variables developed in the theoretical part of this study appear to be valid, based on the results of the empirical analyses. Although the glass appears to be only 'half full', the empirical study has revealed that considerable knowledge gaps exist and that passion, general attitudes, and action consciousness are not at desired high levels in regard to both the NS and the SED dictatorships. Moreover, while there is a noticeable level of action consciousness or preparedness to act with respect to preserving current liberties, only a minority of survey participants feel that 21st-century authoritarian trends have reached a threshold that is serious enough to justify political action.
- (3) While all *Formen der geschichtskulturellen Sozialisation* contribute in one way or another to preserving and building knowledge and action consciousness, literature, TV documentaries, movies, and museums have the highest relative impact on building knowledge and *Aktionsbewusstsein*. In contrast, schools appear to shape knowledge only marginally, and action consciousness rather moderately. While by and large these conclusions apply to both the NS and the SED regimes, the low relative performance of schools may in part be a result of overlaps or interrelationships with other forms of historical cultural

socialization, such as the use of relevant literature in the curriculum. Nevertheless, all analyses indicate that there appears to be substantial room for schools to improve their relative performance with respect to building knowledge and action consciousness.

As a pre-eminent dual-focus discipline developed around history and teacher education, history didactics is uniquely positioned to carry forward the notion of action consciousness and to develop supporting concepts and tools for helping society gain a better understanding of historical events and building a related competence to act. To capitalize on the opportunities associated with improving knowledge and action consciousness, history didactics needs to extend its reach and role along three dimensions as illustrated in Figure 8.1.

- (1) Functionally, in terms of contents or substance, history didactics should expand its scope in two areas. First, in regard to its research pillar, history didactics should make the notion of action consciousness a focus of its historical consciousness research efforts. While a basic theory of action consciousness has been proposed as part of this project, the concept has potential for further refinements and empirical validation including qualitative research that goes into deeper detail than is possible through quantitative research. Second, history didactics should develop new interdisciplinary concepts

Dimensions and leverage points

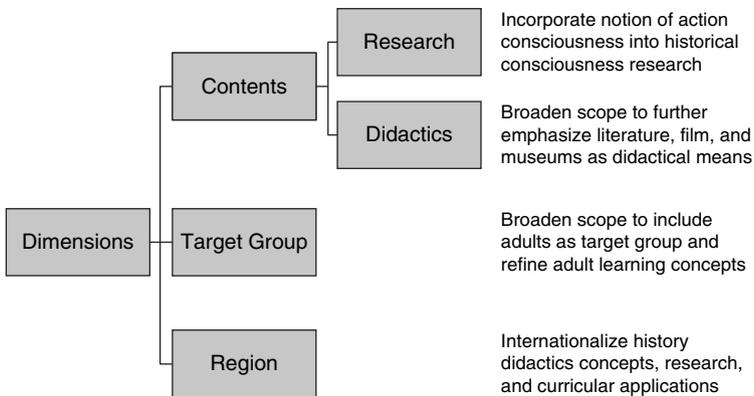


Figure 8.1 Extending the Reach and Role of History Didactics

and tools to incorporate literature, film, and museums as didactical means both for teacher education and for subsequent translation and implementation into the classroom.

- (2) With respect to the target group, history didactics is currently focused on teacher education and associated student instruction. This focus on school students, however, may be too narrow because it does not reach adults who ultimately represent the section of society that needs to stand up against any new authoritarian tendencies that might develop. As a result, history didactics needs to think about how to reach adults and how to refine and further develop adult learning concepts.
- (3) Regarding the regional dimension, revitalizing the discourse on dictatorial regimes and building action consciousness is an international task. Since history didactics in Germany is a well-established discipline, it is uniquely positioned to drive an initiative to internationalize history didactics' concepts, tools, frameworks, and curricular applications and to facilitate the required international coordination and country-specific implementation.

How history didactics should precisely proceed to broaden its charter along these three dimensions has not been a subject of this study, but it would be worthwhile to further investigate this topic as part of a future research effort. Likewise, refining the concept of action consciousness and complementing the quantitative analysis of this research with more in-depth qualitative investigation would contribute to carrying forward the discourse on the role and impact of history in general and history didactics in particular. In any event, given the results of this study, it can be concluded that history didactics, for the benefit of all society, can and should play a leading role in preserving the precious gifts of freedom and peace.

Appendix A: Questionnaire (English text)

Study of the Regimes of Twentieth-Century Germany

Questionnaire

Categorization questions

S1.1: How old are you?

_____ years

S2: Are you ... ?

1. Male
2. Female

S3: Where were you born?

1. In the former GDR, or in one of the new federal states
2. In one of the old federal states
3. Abroad

S4: How many years have you in total ...

1. Lived in eastern Germany (former GDR and the new federal states)? _____ years
2. Lived in West Germany (old federal states)? _____ years
3. Lived abroad? _____ years

S5: In which of the following states do you live?

1. Baden-Württemberg
2. Bavaria
3. Berlin
4. Brandenburg
5. Bremen
6. Hamburg
7. Hessen
8. Mecklenburg-Pomerania
9. Nether Saxony
10. North Rhine-Westphalia
11. Rhineland-Palatinate
12. Saarland
13. Saxony
14. Saxony-Anhalt
15. Schleswig-Holstein
16. Thuringia

S6: What is currently your highest educational degree?

1. Still in school education
2. Haupt- (primary school) degree
3. Completed polytechnic high school
4. Secondary middle school or equivalent degree
5. Baccalaureate or equivalent degree
6. Did not complete school

S7: What is currently your highest level of educational attainment?

1. No vocational training
2. Apprentice
3. Master's certificate
4. Bachelor or equivalent degree
5. University diploma or Master
6. Doctorate
7. Habilitation/Professor
8. Still studying for university degree
9. Completed apprenticeship
10. Other qualifications

0. Preliminary questions for participants who have grown up in the former GDR and who are today at least 42 years old.

Please answer the following two questions each by clicking your answer on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means that the statement does not apply, and '6' means that it applies fully.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Does not apply</u>					<u>Applies fully</u>

0.1 I was actively involved in protests before the fall of the Berlin Wall such as the Monday demonstrations.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

0.2 Before the Fall of the Berlin Wall I engaged in a political SED opposition party such as New Forum, Democracy Now, Initiative for Peace and Human Rights to do something against the grievances in the GDR.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

**0.3 Please answer the following question by clicking your response.
I tried to flee the GDR before the fall of the Wall.**

1. Does not apply
2. I thought about it, but I did not act on it
3. I fled the GDR with parents, relatives or friends when I was a child
4. I actually tried it, but I was unsuccessful
5. I was able to escape from the GDR before the Fall of the Wall

Questions on the NS Regime

Let us now begin with questions on the National Socialist dictatorship.

1. What do you know about the time of National Socialism? Please answer the following eight questions each by clicking your response.

1.1. World War II broke out in:

- A: 1914
- B: 1939
- C: 1870
- D: 1945
- E: Don't know

1.2. The Nuremberg Laws were all of the following except:

- A: It restricted Jews from marrying non-Jews
- B: It deprived Jews of German citizenship
- C: It banned Jews from public and private employment
- D: It established laws against genocide
- E: Don't know

1.3. What was 'Kristallnacht' ('Night of Broken Glass')?

- A: A Nazi holiday celebrating the failed beer hall putsch
- B: An organized campaign of terror in which Synagogues were burned, Jewish businesses destroyed and looted, and where thousands of Jews were arrested
- C: An event the Nazis staged to glorify Hitler's accomplishments as a leader
- D: The night the German Reichstag was burned down
- E: Don't know

1.4. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising was:

- A: A successful military victory that pushed the Germans out of Warsaw
- B: A protest by the local populace against the harsh treatment of their Jewish counterparts
- C: An armed revolt of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto that ultimately led to the complete destruction of the ghetto
- D: An armed revolt that saved the lives of thousands of Jews in Warsaw
- E: Don't know

1.5. The *Einsatzgruppen* (special death squads) were:

- A: Special squads called to the front to rescue stranded frontline troops
- B: Specialized anti-partisan squads whose task it was to fight resistance behind the front
- C: Squads of police battalions and volunteer soldiers whose task it was to execute Jews in areas behind the front
- D: Squads that volunteered for the German Workers Front
- E: Don't know

1.6. Auschwitz–Birkenau was:

- A: A concentration camp in Germany
- B: An army supply depot in Poland
- C: The site of Hitler's eastern headquarters
- D: The extermination center of the Auschwitz complex
- E: Don't know

1.7. Theresienstadt was:

- A: A model concentration camp to fool the International Red Cross into believing that the concentration camps were humane
- B: A major industrial center in southern Germany
- C: The site of the largest ghetto in occupied Europe
- D: A prison camp for Allied pilots
- E: Don't know

1.8. The Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942:

- A: Was the meeting where Hitler decided to invade Russia
- B: Was a heated discussion on Germany's war production priorities
- C: Laid the groundwork for the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question'
- D: Was a meeting of conspirators who were planning to assassinate Hitler
- E: Don't know

2. Many years have passed since the crimes of the Nazi regime against the European Jews commonly referred to as the 'Holocaust' has taken place. What do you think about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship today?

Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means you strongly disagree and '6' means you strongly agree.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Strongly disagree</u>					<u>Strongly agree</u>

2.1. It is very important to keep the memory of these events alive.

1	2	3	4	5	6
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

2.2. Not everything was as bad in the Third Reich as it is portrayed today.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.3. Every country, regardless of guilt, has a special responsibility to prevent the Holocaust or a similar event from happening again.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.4. Public remembrance of the Holocaust is a compulsory exercise and is not a result of true consternation.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.5. There are so many other problems. It is about time to bring this topic to rest.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.6. The Nazi dictatorship is past history that I do not want to deal with.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.7. I vehemently condemn the Holocaust.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.8. Every adult, including myself, shares a collective conscience, and a responsibility to educate others and to actively resist history from repeating itself.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.9. Documentaries and reports about concentration camps and persecution of Jews are exaggerated.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.10. Preventing the Holocaust from happening again should be the primary goal of all education.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.11. I am very interested in the Holocaust and the Nazi topics.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.12. If I was confronted with Nazi propaganda and the rise of the Nazis in my country, I would get involved in an activist group.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.13. If I was confronted with Nazi propaganda and the rise of the Nazis in my country, I would not participate in anything that might harm human rights.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.14. Although I do not share any personal guilt directly, as a German I feel partially responsible for the crimes of the Nazis.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

3. From which of the following sources did you learn the about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship? Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means you strongly disagree, and '6' means you strongly agree.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Strongly disagree</u>					<u>Strongly agree</u>

3.1. I learned about the Holocaust and the Nazi Dictatorship through:

- A. School
- B. Films
- C. TV documentaries
- D. Textbooks
- E. Literature (fiction and non-fiction)
- F. Poems
- G. Discussions with parents, grandparents or other relatives
- H. Museums
- I. University/high school
- J. Memorial visits
- K. Public remembrance days or events
- L. Discussions with people my age
- M. Internet
- N. Magazines or newspapers

3.2. Which of these sources has influenced your attitudes and feelings about the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship? Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means that the source did not influence your attitudes

and feelings about the Holocaust, and '6' means that the source has strongly influenced your attitudes and feelings about the Holoca

This source:

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Did not influence me at all</u>					<u>Influenced me strongly</u>

- A. School
- B. Films
- C. TV documentaries
- D. Textbooks
- E. Literature (fiction and non-fiction)
- F. Poems
- G. Discussions with parents, grandparents or other relatives
- H. Museums
- I. University/high school
- J. Memorial visits
- K. Public remembrance days or events
- L. Discussions with people my age
- M. Internet
- N. Magazines or newspapers

3.3. Here is a list of films and literary works. Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 6 how large your interest is to see the respective film or read the respective text.

What is your level of interest in seeing the following films or reading the following works?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Never heard of it</u>	<u>Not interested</u>	<u>Low interest</u>	<u>Medium interest</u>	<u>High interest</u>	<u>Already seen or read it</u>

- A. Schindler's List (Steven Spielberg)
- B. The Pianist (Roman Polanski)
- C. The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas (Mark Herman)
- D. Jakob the Liar (Jurek Becker)
- E. Survival in Auschwitz (Primo Levi)
- F. Diary of a Young Girl (Anne Frank)
- G. Death Fugue (Paul Celan)
- H. Das Leben ist schön (Roberto Benigni)

Questions on the SED Regime

Let us now turn to the German Democratic Republic.

4. What do you know from the time of the former GDR? Please answer the following eight questions each by clicking your response.

4.1. The Berlin Wall was built in the year ____:

- A: 1953
- B: 1961
- C: 1949
- D: 1965
- E: Don't know

4.2. Did the death penalty exist in both German states?

- A: No, in neither the GDR nor the FRD
- B: Yes, in both the GDR and the FRD
- C: Yes, but only in the GDR
- D: Yes, but only in the FRD
- E: Don't know

4.3. How many people have been killed at the Berlin Wall while trying to escape?

- A: Under 100
- B: 100–400
- C: 401–800
- D: Over 800
- E: Don't know

4.4. The 1953 uprising was a response to:

- A: A major coal shortage
- B: A crackdown on pro-communists in West Berlin
- C: A crackdown on rights and liberty
- D: A rise in work quotas
- E: Don't know

4.5. Hohenschönhausen was:

- A: The headquarters of the Ministry of State Security
- B: A prison of the Ministry of State Security
- C: An officer school for the Ministry of State Security
- D: The barracks for the Stasi regiment Felix Dzierzynski
- E: Don't know

4.6. Leipzig is known for:

- A: The Trabant car factory
- B: The largest prison in the GDR
- C: The Monday demonstrations
- D: The academy of the people's police
- E: Don't know

4.7. All of the following statements are true except:

- A: The GDR was founded in 1949
 B: Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker were the only leaders of East Germany
 C: The Monday demonstrations were a series of peaceful political protests against the government of the GDR
 D: The Ministry of State Security spied on GDR citizens
 E: Don't know

4.8. Erich Mielke was the head of:

- A: The National People's Army
 B: The Ministry of Economics
 C: The Ministry of State Security
 D: The Ministry of Agriculture
 E: Don't know

5. Over 23 years have passed since the collapse of the German Democratic Republic. What do you think about the GDR today?

Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means you strongly disagree and '6' means you strongly agree.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Strongly disagree</u>					<u>Strongly agree</u>

5.1. It is very important to keep the history of the GDR in memory.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.2. The GDR was a repressive police state.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.3. There was no real democracy in the GDR.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.4. The Ministry for State Security, or Stasi, was an organization that spied on and repressed the citizens of the GDR.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.5. The Stasi is unfairly criticized for their total surveillance.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.6. I vehemently condemn the actions used by the GDR leadership to suppress opposition.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.7. I would have thought twice about reunification if I had known that I needed to pay the solidarity tax up to today.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.8. Documentation and reports on the persecution of political prisoners in the GDR are exaggerated.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.9. The GDR was not as bad as it is often claimed.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.10. I believe that the former West Germany was no better than GDR.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.11. Too little has been done for the prosecution of former Stasi members after 1990.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.12. If I had the choice today I would move to the former GDR.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.13. The GDR was run down by the country's leadership.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.14. I was better off before 1990 than afterwards.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.15. I wish that it never came to the reunification of Germany.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5.16. Should it ever become like a GDR dictatorship again I would emigrate.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

6. From which of the following sources did you learn about the history of the GDR? Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means you strongly disagree and '6' means you strongly agree.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Strongly disagree</u>					<u>Strongly agree</u>

6.1. I learned about the GDR through:

- A. School
- B. Films
- C. TV documentaries
- D. Textbooks
- E. Literature (fiction and non-fiction)
- F. Poems
- G. Discussions with parents, grandparents or other relatives
- H. Museums
- I. University/high school
- J. Memorial visits
- K. Public remembrance days or events
- L. Discussions with people my age
- M. Internet
- N. Magazines or newspapers
- O. Own/personal experiences

6.2. Which of these sources has influenced your attitudes and feelings about the GDR? Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means your attitudes and feelings were not influenced in regard to the GDR and '6' means your attitudes and feelings were strongly influenced.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Did not influence me at all</u>					<u>Strongly influenced me</u>

- A. School
- B. Films
- C. TV documentaries
- D. Textbooks
- E. Literature (fiction and non-fiction)
- F. Poems
- G. Discussions with parents, grandparents or other relatives
- H. Museums
- I. University/high school
- J. Memorial visits

- K. Public remembrance days or events
- L. Discussions with people my age
- M. Internet
- N. Magazines or newspapers
- O. Own/personal experiences

6.3. Here is a list of films and literary works. Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 6 how large your interest is to see the respective film or read the respective text.

What is your level of interest in watching the following film or reading the following text?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Never heard of it</u>	<u>Not interested</u>	<u>Low interest</u>	<u>Medium interest</u>	<u>High interest</u>	<u>Already seen or read it</u>

- A. Life of Others (Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck)
- B. Sonnenallee (Leander Haußmann)
- C. Damals in der DDR (MDR/WDR/Looks Film & TV)
- D. Meine FDJ (Claudia Rusch)
- E. Goodbye Lenin (Wolfgang Becker)
- F. The New Sorrows of Young W (Ulrich Plenzdorf)
- G. Ein Tag im Jahr (Christa Wolf)

QUESTIONS 7.1. TO 7.10. SHOULD ONLY BE ANSWERED BY MEMBERS OF THE PROTEST GROUP IDENTIFIED IN QUESTIONS 0.1 TO 0.3.

7. What prompted you to get politically involved before the fall of the Wall and/or participate in protest events such as the Monday demonstrations, or flee from the GDR? Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means you strongly disagree and '6' means you strongly agree.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Strongly disagree</u>					<u>Strongly agree</u>

7.1. I've always hated the GDR government and only waited for an opportunity to protest against the regime.

1	2	3	4	5	6

7.2. I could not stand the travel restrictions.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

7.3. Gorbachev's reforms have given me the courage to participate.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

7.4. I could no longer stand the Stasi surveillance apparatus.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

7.5. I saw the protests as a fun event and wanted to join as well.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

7.6. I was at some church meetings and have been convinced to participate in the protest movement.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

7.7. As a persecuted individual I had nothing to lose anyway and have therefore taken the risk on me.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

7.8. I could no longer stand the dire economic conditions.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

7.9. Friends, acquaintances or relatives have convinced me to join.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

7.10. The protest parties such as New Forum, Democracy Now, Initiative for Peace and Human Rights have convinced me to become politically engaged.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

General questions on dictatorships

Let us now look at general questions on democracy and on dictatorships.

8. What do you think about democracy in general? Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means you strongly disagree and '6' means you strongly agree.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Strongly disagree</u>					<u>Strongly agree</u>

8.1. Personal liberties are very important to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

8.2. Democracy is a prerequisite for peace and freedom.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

8.3. Only in a democracy are human rights respected.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

8.4. I am willing to give up some of my privacy for more security.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

8.5. Freedom of speech may not be restricted under any circumstances.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

8.6. Regular referenda on major policy decisions are an essential part of a democracy.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

8.7. A parliamentary democracy as in Germany shows too little regard for the will of the people.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9. What would you do if it should come to a dictatorship or dictatorship-similar circumstances again? Please answer the following questions in regard to how far you personally would be willing to go at a MAXIMUM to get involved. Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers to the following scale of 1 to 6. '1' means that you would welcome the development and support where appropriate; '2' means that you would not support the development; '3' means that you would educate friends and others about the threat; '4' means that you would donate to opposition parties or activist groups; '5' means that you would participate in protests and demonstrations; and '6' means that you would actively help organize the resistance.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>would welcome the development and support where appropriate</u>	<u>would not support the development</u>	<u>would educate friends and others about the threat</u>	<u>would donate to opposition parties or activist groups</u>	<u>would participate in protests and demonstrations</u>	<u>would actively help organize the resistance</u>

9.1. Should there be another SED/Stasi-like dictatorship, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.2. Should there be another Nazi-like dictatorship, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.3. If freedom of speech would suddenly be restricted, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.4. If the state would violate the right to privacy through broad surveillance, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.5. If the press and television would lose their independence, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.6. If the government should restrict the freedom to travel, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.7. If the free trade or capital movements should be restricted, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.8. If major areas of national sovereignty would be called into question, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.9. If it were to come to the rise of a police state, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.10. If voting rights would be restricted, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.11. If the government should restrict the right of ownership, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.12. Should it come to further centralization/globalization of important political responsibilities, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

9.13. Should the government put *Notstandsgesetze* (Martial Law) into force, I would ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10. In your view, are there signs today that there are undemocratic tendencies in Germany or in the European Union? Please answer the following questions by clicking each of your answers on a scale of 1 to 6. '1' means you strongly disagree and '6' means you strongly agree.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Strongly disagree</u>					<u>Strongly agree</u>

10.1. There are signs for attempts in Germany to restrict civil liberties

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.2. There are signs that the EU is trying to restrict civil liberties.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.3. That high-ranking politicians in the EU such as EU Commission President Barroso and European Council President Van Rompuy cannot be elected directly by the people is a sign of an authoritarian regime.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.4. Germany should not under any circumstances transfer more national sovereignty to Brussels.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.5. Germany is evolving into a police and surveillance state.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.6. The EU is developing into an authoritarian centralized state.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.7. Most German politicians cannot be trusted.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.8. Most EU politicians cannot be trusted.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.9. Press and television are losing more and more of their independence.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.10. On the Internet you can still find objective information on politically sensitive issues.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Appendix B: Questionnaire (German text)

Study of the Regimes of Twentieth-Century Germany
Fragebogen

Kategorisierungs Vorfragen

S1.1: Wie alt sind Sie?

_____ Jahre

S2: Sind Sie ... ?

1. Männlich
2. Weiblich

S3: Wo sind Sie geboren?

1. In der ehemaligen DDR bzw. in einem der neuen Bundesländer
2. In einem der alten Bundesländer
3. Im Ausland

S4: Wie viele Jahre haben Sie insgesamt ...

1. In Ostdeutschland (ehemalige DDR und neue Bundesländer) gelebt? _____ Jahre
2. In Westdeutschland (alte Bundesländer) gelebt? _____ Jahre
3. Im Ausland gelebt? _____ Jahre

S5: In welchem Bundesland wohnen Sie?

1. Baden-Württemberg
2. Bayern
3. Berlin
4. Brandenburg
5. Bremen
6. Hamburg
7. Hessen
8. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
9. Niedersachsen
10. Nordrhein-Westfalen
11. Rheinland-Pfalz
12. Saarland
13. Sachsen
14. Sachsen-Anhalt
15. Schleswig-Holstein
16. Thüringen

S6: Welcher ist derzeit Ihr höchster Schulabschluss?

1. Noch in schulischer Ausbildung
2. Haupt-(Volks-)schulabschluss
3. Abschluss der polytechnischen Oberschule
4. Realschul- oder gleichwertiger Abschluss
5. Abitur, Fachhochschul- oder Hochschulreife
6. Ohne allgemeinen Schulabschluss

S7: Welcher ist derzeit Ihr höchster Bildungsabschluss?

1. Keine abgeschlossene Berufsausbildung
2. Auszubildende/-r
3. Meisterbrief
4. Diplom FH oder Bachelor
5. Universitäts – Diplom oder Master
6. Promotion
7. Habilitation/Professor
8. Noch im Hochschulstudium
9. Abgeschlossene Lehre
10. Andere Qualifikation

0. Vorabfragen für Teilnehmer, die in der ehemaligen DDR aufgewachsen sind und heute mindestens 42 Jahre alt sind.

Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden zwei Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass die Aussage gar nicht zutrifft, und „6“ bedeutet, dass sie voll zutrifft.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Trifft gar nicht zu</u>					<u>Trifft voll zu</u>

0.1 Ich habe mich vor der Wende aktiv an Protestkundgebungen wie z.B. den Montagsdemonstrationen beteiligt.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

0.2 Ich habe mich vor dem Fall der Mauer in einer nicht von der SED gewünschten politischen Partei wie z.B. Neues Forum, Demokratie Jetzt, Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte engagiert, um etwas gegen die Misstände in der DDR zu tun.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

0.3 Bitte beantworten Sie diese Frage durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort.

Ich habe vor der Wende versucht, aus der DDR zu fliehen.

1. Trifft nicht zu
2. Ich habe darüber nachgedacht, es aber nicht getan
3. Ich bin mit Eltern, Verwandten oder Bekannten als Kind aus der DDR geflohen
4. Ich habe im Erwachsenenalter tatsächlich versucht, zu fliehen, es hat aber nicht geklappt
5. Mir ist im Erwachsenenalter die Flucht aus der DDR vor dem Mauerfall gelungen

Fragen zum NS Regime

Beginnen wir zunächst mit der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur.

1. Was wissen Sie noch aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus? Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden acht Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort.

1.1 Der zweite Weltkrieg begann im Jahr:

- A: 1914
- B: 1939
- C: 1870
- D: 1945
- E: Weiß ich nicht

1.2. Welche der folgenden Maßnahmen war nicht Bestandteil der Nürnberger Gesetze?

- A: Juden wurde verboten, Nicht-Juden zu heiraten
- B: Juden wurde die deutsche Staatsbürgerschaft entzogen
- C: Öffentliche und private Institutionen durften mit Juden keine Arbeitsverhältnisse eingehen
- D: Es wurden Gesetze gegen den Völkermord erlassen
- E: Weiß ich nicht

1.3. Worum handelt es sich bei der sogenannten „Reichskristallnacht“?

- A: Um einen Nazi Feiertag zur Feier des gescheiterten Hitler-Ludendorff-Putsches
- B: Um eine organisierte Terrorkampagne, in der Synagogen niedergebrannt, jüdische Geschäfte zerstört und geplündert und tausende von Juden verhaftet wurden
- C: Um eine von den Nazis organisierte Veranstaltung zur Glorifizierung von Hitlers Verdiensten als Führer
- D: Um die Nacht, in der der Deutsche Reichstag niedergebrannt wurde
- E: Weiß ich nicht

1.4. Der Warschauer Ghettoaufstand war:

- A: Eine erfolgreiche militärische Offensive, die die deutschen Besatzungstruppen aus Warschau vertrieb
- B: Ein Protest der Bevölkerung gegen die schlechte Behandlung der Juden
- C: Ein bewaffneter Aufstand der Juden im Warschauer Ghetto, der im Ergebnis zur vollständigen Zerstörung des Ghettos führte
- D: Ein bewaffneter Aufstand, dem tausende von Juden ihr Leben zu verdanken haben
- E: Weiß ich nicht

1.5. Die „Einsatzgruppen“ waren:

- A: Spezialeinheiten, die an die Front gerufen wurden, um im Feindesland verschlagene Fronttruppen zu befreien
- B: Spezielle Anti-Partisanen Kommandos, deren Aufgabe es war, Widerstand hinter der Front zu bekämpfen
- C: Aus Polizei und freiwilligen Soldaten bestehende Spezialeinheiten, die den Auftrag hatten, Juden in den Besatzungsgebieten hinter der Front zu exekutieren
- D: Freiwillige Einsatzkommandos, die die Interessen der Deutschen Arbeiterfront vertraten
- E: Weiß ich nicht

1.6. Auschwitz-Birkenau war:

- A: Ein Konzentrationslager in Deutschland
- B: Ein Armeeverorgungsdepot in Polen
- C: Hitlers Hauptquartier im Osten
- D: Das Vernichtungszentrum des Auschwitz Komplexes
- E: Weiß ich nicht

1.7. Theresienstadt war:

- A: Ein Muster-Konzentrationslager, durch das dem Internationalen Roten Kreuz bewiesen werden sollte, dass die Konzentrationslager human geführt werden
- B: Ein wichtiges Industriezentrum in Süddeutschland
- C: Der Ort, wo sich das größte Ghetto im besetzten Europa befand
- D: Ein Kriegsgefangenenlager für Piloten der Alliierten
- E: Weiß ich nicht

1.8. Die Wannsee Konferenz vom 20. Januar 1942:

- A: War die Konferenz, in der Hitler die Entscheidung traf, in Russland einzumarschieren
- B: War eine hitzige Debatte über Deutschlands Prioritäten für die Kriegsproduktion
- C: Schaffte die Grundlage für die „Endlösung der Judenfrage“
- D: War ein Treffen von Verschwörern, die ein Attentat auf Hitler planten
- E: Weiß ich nicht

2. Seit dem von den Nazis an den europäischen Juden begangenen Massenmord, der gemeinhin als „Holocaust“ bezeichnet wird, sind schon viele Jahre vergangen. Wie denken Sie heute über den Holocaust und die Nazi Diktatur?

Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass Sie gar nicht zustimmen, und „6“ bedeutet, dass Sie voll zustimmen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Stimme gar nicht zu</u>					<u>Stimme voll zu</u>

- 2.1. Es ist sehr wichtig, die Erinnerung an das Geschehene am Leben zu erhalten.

1	2	3	4	5	6

- 2.2. Nicht alles war im Dritten Reich so schlimm wie es heute dargestellt wird.

1	2	3	4	5	6

- 2.3. Unabhängig von Schuld trägt jedes Land eine besondere Verantwortung, nämlich dafür zu sorgen, dass sich der Holocaust oder ein ähnliches Ereignis nie wiederholt.

1	2	3	4	5	6

- 2.4. Das öffentliche Gedenken an den Holocaust ist meist eine Pflichtübung und nicht Ausdruck echter Betroffenheit.

1	2	3	4	5	6

- 2.5. Es gibt so viele andere Probleme. Es ist an der Zeit, unter dieses Thema einen Schlussstrich zu ziehen.

1	2	3	4	5	6

- 2.6. Die Nazi Diktatur ist Vergangenheit, mit der ich nichts zu tun haben möchte.

1	2	3	4	5	6

- 2.7. Ich verurteile den Holocaust auf das Schärfste.

1	2	3	4	5	6

2.8. Alle Erwachsenen, mich selbst eingeschlossen, tragen Verantwortung dafür, Wissen weiterzugeben und sich aktiv dafür einzusetzen, dass sich das Geschehene nicht wiederholt.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.9. In den Berichten über Konzentrationslager und die Judenverfolgung wird vieles übertrieben dargestellt.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.10. Das Verhindern einer Wiederholung des Holocausts sollte das oberste Ziel aller Erziehung sein.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.11. Ich interessiere mich sehr für die Holocaust- und Nazithematik.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.12. Wenn ich mit Nazi Propaganda und einer Wiedererstarkung der Nazis in meinem Land konfrontiert werden sollte, würde ich mich einer Widerstandsgruppe anschließen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.13. Wenn ich mit Nazi Propaganda und einer Wiedererstarkung der Nazis in meinem Land konfrontiert werden sollte, würde ich mich nicht an Dingen beteiligen, die die Menschenrechte verletzen könnten.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

2.14. Auch wenn mich keine persönliche Schuld trifft, fühle ich mich als Deutsche(r) mitverantwortlich für die Verbrechen der Nazis.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

3. Von welchen der nachfolgenden Quellen haben Sie über den Holocaust und die Nazi Diktatur erfahren? Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass Sie gar nicht zustimmen, und „6“ bedeutet, dass Sie voll zustimmen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Stimme gar nicht zu</u>					<u>Stimme voll zu</u>

3.1. Ich habe über den Holocaust und die Nazi Diktatur erfahren durch:

- A. Schule
- B. Filme
- C. Fernsehdokumentationen
- D. Lehrbücher
- E. Literatur (erfundene oder wahre Geschichten)
- F. Gedichte
- G. Diskussionen mit Eltern, Großeltern oder anderen Verwandten
- H. Museen
- I. Universität/Hochschule
- J. Gedenkstättenbesuche
- K. Öffentliche Gedenkveranstaltungen
- L. Diskussionen mit Gleichaltrigen
- M. Internet
- N. Zeitschriften oder Zeitungen

3.2. Welche dieser Quellen hat ihre Einstellungen und Gefühle in Bezug auf den Holocaust und die Nazi Diktatur beeinflusst? Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass die Quelle Ihre Einstellungen und Gefühle in Bezug auf den Holocaust gar nicht beeinflusst hat, und „6“ bedeutet, dass die Quelle Ihre Einstellungen und Gefühle in Bezug auf den Holocaust sehr stark beeinflusst hat.

Diese Quelle:

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Hat mich gar nicht beeinflusst</u>					<u>Hat mich sehr stark beeinflusst</u>

- A. Schule
- B. Filme
- C. Fernsehdokumentationen
- D. Lehrbücher
- E. Literatur (erfundene oder wahre Geschichten)
- F. Gedichte
- G. Diskussionen mit Eltern, Großeltern oder anderen Verwandten
- H. Museen
- I. Universität/Hochschule
- J. Gedenkstättenbesuche
- K. Öffentliche Gedenkveranstaltungen
- L. Diskussionen mit Gleichaltrigen
- M. Internet
- N. Zeitschriften oder Zeitungen

3.3. Hier ist eine Liste von Filmen und literarischen Werken. Bitte geben Sie jeweils auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6 an, wie groß Ihr Interesse ist, den jeweiligen Film zu sehen oder den jeweiligen Text zu lesen.

Wie groß ist Ihr Interesse, den jeweils folgenden Film zu sehen bzw. das folgende Werk zu lesen?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Nie davon gehört</u>	<u>Kein Interesse</u>	<u>Gering</u>	<u>Mittel</u>	<u>Groß</u>	<u>Habe ich bereits gesehen bzw. gelesen</u>

- A. Schindlers Liste (Steven Spielberg)
- B. Der Pianist (Roman Polanski)
- C. Der Junge im gestreiften Pyjama (Mark Herman)
- D. Jakob der Lügner (Jurek Becker)
- E. Überleben in Auschwitz (Primo Levi)
- F. Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank (Anne Frank)
- G. Todesfuge (Paul Celan)
- H. Das Leben ist schön (Roberto Benigni)

Fragen zum SED Regime

Wenden wir uns jetzt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zu.

4. Was wissen Sie noch aus der Zeit der ehemaligen DDR? Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden acht Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort.

4.1. Die Berliner Mauer wurde im Jahr ____ gebaut:

- A: 1953
- B: 1961
- C: 1949
- D: 1965
- E: Weiß ich nicht

4.2. Gab es in den beiden deutschen Staaten die Todesstrafe?

- A: Nein, weder in der DDR noch in der BRD
- B: Ja, sowohl in der DDR als auch in der BRD
- C: Ja, aber nur in der DDR
- D: Ja, aber nur in der BRD
- E: Weiß ich nicht

4.3. Wie viele Menschen sind an der Berliner Mauer beim Fluchtversuch getötet worden?

- A: Unter 100
- B: 100–400
- C: 401–800
- D: Über 800
- E: Weiß ich nicht

4.4. Der Volksaufstand von 1953 war eine Reaktion auf:

- A: Einen großen Kohlemangel
- B: Ein Vorgehen gegen Pro-Kommunisten in West-Berlin
- C: Ein Vorgehen gegen Rechte und Freiheit
- D: Den verordneten Anstieg der Arbeitsquoten
- E: Weiß ich nicht

4.5. Hohenschönhausen war:

- A: Der Hauptsitz der Staatsicherheit
- B: Ein Gefängnis der Staatsicherheit
- C: Eine Schule für Offiziere der Staatsicherheit
- D: Die Kaserne des Stasiregiments Felix Dzierzynski
- E: Weiß ich nicht

4.6. Leipzig ist bekannt für:

- A: Die Trabant Autofabrik
- B: Das größte Gefängnis der DDR
- C: Die Montagsdemonstrationen
- D: Die Akademie der Volkspolizei
- E: Weiß ich nicht

4.7. Alle der folgenden Aussagen sind wahr, außer:

- A: Die DDR wurde 1949 gegründet
- B: Walter Ulbricht und Erich Honecker waren die einzigen Parteichefs Ost-Deutschlands
- C: Die Montagsdemonstrationen waren eine Reihe von friedlichen politischen Protesten gegen die Regierung der DDR
- D: Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit bespitzelte DDR-Bürger
- E: Weiß ich nicht

4.8. Erich Mielke war der Chef:

- A: Von der Nationalen Volksarmee
- B: Vom Wirtschaftsministerium
- C: Vom Ministerium für Staatsicherheit
- D: Vom Ministerium für Landwirtschaft
- E: Weiß ich nicht

5. Über 23 Jahre sind seit dem Zusammenbruch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vergangen. Wie denken Sie über die DDR heute?

Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass Sie gar nicht zustimmen, und „6“ bedeutet, dass Sie voll zustimmen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Stimme gar nicht zu</u>					<u>Stimme voll zu</u>

5.1. Es ist sehr wichtig, die Geschichte der DDR in Erinnerung zu behalten.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.2. Die DDR war ein repressiver Polizeistaat.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.3. Es gab keine wirkliche Demokratie in der DDR.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.4. Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, oder Stasi, war eine Organisation, die die Bürger der DDR ausspionierte und unterdrückte.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.5. Die Stasi wird zu Unrecht für ihre Totalüberwachung kritisiert.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.6. Ich verurteile die Maßnahmen die die DDR-Führung benutzte, um Opposition zu unterdrücken, auf das Schärfste.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.7. Ich hätte auf die Wiedervereinigung verzichtet, wenn ich gewusst hätte, dass ich bis heute die Solidaritätssteuer bezahlen muss.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.8. Dokumentationen und Berichte über die Verfolgung von politischen Gefangenen in der DDR sind übertrieben.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.9. Die DDR war nicht so schlimm wie es vielfach behauptet wird.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.10. Ich glaube, dass die ehemalige BRD auch nicht besser als die DDR war.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.11. Es ist nach 1990 zu wenig für die Verfolgung ehemaliger Stasi Mitglieder getan worden.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.12. Wenn ich heute die Wahl hätte, würde ich in die damalige DDR ziehen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.13. Die DDR wurde von der Führung des Landes runtergewirtschaftet.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.14. Es ging mir vor 1990 besser als danach.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.15. Ich wünschte, dass es nie zur Wiedervereinigung gekommen wäre.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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5.16. Sollte es noch einmal zu einer DDR – ähnlichen Diktatur kommen, würde ich auswandern.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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6. Von welchen der nachfolgenden Quellen haben Sie über die DDR Geschichte erfahren? Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass Sie gar nicht zustimmen, und „6“ bedeutet, dass Sie voll zustimmen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Stimme gar nicht zu</u>					<u>Stimme voll zu</u>

6.1. Ich habe über die DDR Geschichte erfahren durch:

- A. Schule
- B. Filme
- C. Fernsehdokumentationen
- D. Lehrbücher
- E. Literatur (erfundene oder wahre Geschichten)
- F. Gedichte
- G. Diskussionen mit Eltern, Großeltern oder anderen Verwandten
- H. Museen
- I. Universität/Hochschule
- J. Gedenkstättenbesuche
- K. Öffentliche Gedenkveranstaltungen
- L. Diskussionen mit Gleichaltrigen
- M. Internet
- N. Zeitschriften oder Zeitungen
- O. Eigene/persönliche Erfahrungen oder Erlebnisse

6.2. Welche dieser Quellen hat ihre Einstellungen und Gefühle in Bezug auf die DDR beeinflusst? Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass die Quelle Ihre Einstellungen und Gefühle in Bezug auf die DDR gar nicht beeinflusst hat, und „6“ bedeutet, dass die Quelle Ihre Einstellungen Gefühle in Bezug auf die DDR sehr stark beeinflusst hat.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Hat mich gar nicht beeinflusst</u>					<u>Hat mich sehr stark beeinflusst</u>

- A. Schule
- B. Filme
- C. Fernsehdokumentationen
- D. Lehrbücher
- E. Literatur (erfundene oder wahre Geschichten)
- F. Gedichte
- G. Diskussionen mit Eltern, Großeltern oder anderen Verwandten
- H. Museen
- I. Universität/Hochschule
- J. Gedenkstättenbesuche
- K. Öffentliche Gedenkveranstaltungen
- L. Diskussionen mit Gleichaltrigen
- M. Internet
- N. Zeitschriften oder Zeitungen
- O. Eigene/persönliche Erfahrungen oder Erlebnisse

6.3. Hier ist eine Liste von Filmen und literarischen Werken über die DDR. Bitte geben Sie jeweils auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6 an, wie groß Ihr Interesse ist, den jeweiligen Film zu sehen oder den jeweiligen Text zu lesen.

Wie groß ist Ihr Interesse, den jeweils folgenden Film zu sehen bzw. das folgende Werk zu lesen?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Nie davon gehört</u>	<u>Kein Interesse</u>	<u>Gering</u>	<u>Mittel</u>	<u>Groß</u>	<u>Habe ich bereits gesehen bzw.gelesen</u>

- A. Das Leben der Anderen (Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck)
- B. Sonnenallee (Leander Haußmann)
- C. Damals in der DDR (MDR/WDR/Looks Film & TV)
- D. Meine FDJ (Claudia Rusch)
- E. Goodbye Lenin (Wolfgang Becker)
- F. Die neuen Leiden des Jungen W (Ulrich Plenzdorf)
- G. Ein Tag im Jahr (Crista Wolf)

**DIE FRAGEN 7.1. BIS 7.10. WERDEN NUR DEN
TEILNEHMERN GESTELLT, DIE BEI DEN VORFRAGEN
0.1. BIS 0.3. DER GRUPPE „PROTESTTEILNEHMER“
ZUGEORDNET WURDEN**

7. Was hat Sie dazu bewogen, sich vor der Wende politisch zu engagieren und/oder an Protestveranstaltungen wie z.B. den Monagsdemonstrationen teilzunehmen oder aus der DDR zu fliehen? Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass Sie gar nicht zustimmen, und „6“ bedeutet, dass Sie voll zustimmen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Stimme gar nicht zu</u>					<u>Stimme voll zu</u>

7.1. Ich habe die DDR Regierung schon immer gehasst und nur auf eine Gelegenheit gewartet, gegen das Regime zu protestieren.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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7.2. Die Reisebeschränkungen konnte ich zuletzt nicht mehr ertragen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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7.3. Gorbatschows Reformen haben mir den Mut gegeben, mitzumachen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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7.4. Ich konnte den Stasi Überwachungsapparat einfach nicht mehr ertragen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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7.5. Ich habe die Proteste als Spassveranstaltung gesehen und wollte da auch mitmachen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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7.6. Ich war bei einigen Kirchentreffen und bin dort überzeugt worden, mich an der Protestbewegung zu beteiligen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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7.7. Ich hatte ohnehin als Verfolgter nichts mehr zu verlieren und habe deswegen das Risiko auf mich genommen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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7.8. Ich konnte die katastrophalen wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse nicht mehr ertragen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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7.9. Freunde, Bekannte oder Verwandte haben mich davon überzeugt, mitzumachen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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7.10. Die Protestparteien wie z.B. Neues Forum, Demokratie Jetzt, Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte haben mich überzeugt, mich politisch zu engagieren.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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Generelle Fragen zu Diktaturen

Wir haben jetzt noch einige allgemeine Fragen zu Demokratie und Diktatur.

8. Wie denken Sie über Demokratie im allgemeinen? Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass Sie gar nicht zustimmen, und „6“ bedeutet, dass Sie voll zustimmen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Stimme gar nicht zu</u>					<u>Stimme voll zu</u>

8.1. Persönliche Freiheiten sind für mich sehr wichtig.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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8.2. Demokratie ist Voraussetzung für Freiheit und Frieden.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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8.3. Nur in einer Demokratie werden Menschenrechte gewahrt.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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8.4. Ich bin bereit, für mehr Sicherheit einen Teil meiner Privatsphäre aufzugeben.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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8.5. Die Meinungsfreiheit darf unter keinen Umständen eingeschränkt werden.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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8.6. Regelmäßige Volksbefragungen zu wichtigen politischen Entscheidungen sind ein unverzichtbarer Bestandteil einer Demokratie.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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8.7. Eine parlamentarische Demokratie wie in Deutschland trägt dem Willen des Volks zu wenig Rechnung.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9. Was würden Sie tun, wenn es erneut zu einer Diktatur oder diktaturähnlichen Verhältnissen kommen sollte? Bitte geben Sie bei den nachfolgenden Fragen jeweils an, wie weit Sie persönlich MAXIMAL bereit wären, sich zu engagieren. Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort auf der nachfolgenden Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass Sie die Entwicklung begrüßen und gegebenenfalls unterstützen würden; „2“ bedeutet, dass Sie die Entwicklung nicht unterstützen würden; „3“ bedeutet, dass Sie Freunde und Bekannte über die Bedrohung aufklären würden; „4“ bedeutet, dass Sie für Oppositionsparteien oder Aktivistengruppen spenden würden; „5“ bedeutet, dass Sie an Protestveranstaltungen und Demos teilnehmen würden; und „6“ bedeutet, dass Sie aktiv den Widerstand organisieren helfen würden.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Würde die Entwicklung begrüßen und ggfs. unterstützen</u>	<u>Würde die Entwicklung nicht unterstützen</u>	<u>Würde Freunde und Bekannte über die Bedrohung aufklären</u>	<u>Würde für Oppositionsparteien / Aktivistengruppen spenden</u>	<u>Würde an Protestveranstaltungen und Demos teilnehmen</u>	<u>Würde aktiv den Widerstand organisieren helfen</u>

9.1. Sollte es zu einer SED-/Stasi- ähnlichen Diktatur kommen, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.2. Sollte es zu einer Nazi- ähnlichen Diktatur kommen, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.3. Wenn die Meinungsfreiheit plötzlich eingeschränkt würde, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.4. Wenn der Staat durch breite Bespitzelung das Recht auf Privatsphäre verletzen würde, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.5. Wenn Presse und Fernsehen ihre Unabhängigkeit verlören, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.6. Wenn die Reisefreiheit eingeschränkt werden sollte, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.7. Wenn der freie Handel oder Kapitalverkehr eingeschränkt werden sollte, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.8. Wenn wichtige Bereiche nationaler Selbstbestimmung in Frage gestellt würden, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.9. Wenn es zu einem Polizeistaat kommen sollte, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.10. Wenn das freie Wahlrecht eingeschränkt würde, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.11. Wenn das Eigentumsrecht eingeschränkt werden sollte, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.12. Sollte es zu verstärkter Zentralisierung/Globalisierung wichtiger politischer Zuständigkeiten kommen, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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9.13. Sollte die Notstandsgesetze in Kraft gesetzt werden, würde ich ...

1	2	3	4	5	6
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10. Gibt es aus Ihrer Sicht heute Anzeichen dafür, dass es in Deutschland oder in der Europäischen Union undemokratische Tendenzen gibt? Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen jeweils durch Klicken Ihrer Antwort

auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6. „1“ bedeutet, dass Sie gar nicht zustimmen, und „6“ bedeutet, dass Sie voll zustimmen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<u>Stimme gar nicht zu</u>					<u>Stimme voll zu</u>

10.1. Es gibt Anzeichen dafür, dass in Deutschland versucht wird, die Bürgerrechte einzuschränken.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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10.2. Es gibt Anzeichen dafür, dass in der EU versucht wird, die Bürgerrechte einzuschränken.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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10.3. Dass in der EU hochrangige Politiker wie z.B. EU-Kommissionspräsident Barroso oder EU-Ratspräsident van Rompuy nicht direkt vom Volk gewählt werden können, ist ein Anzeichen für ein sich abzeichnendes autoritäres Regime.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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10.4. Deutschland sollte auf keinen Fall weitere nationale Hoheitsrechte auf Brüssel übertragen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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10.5. Deutschland entwickelt sich immer mehr in einen Polizei- und Überwachungsstaat.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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10.6. Die EU entwickelt sich in einen autoritären Zentralstaat.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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10.7. Man kann den meisten deutschen Politikern nicht trauen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

10.8. Man kann den meisten EU-Politikern nicht trauen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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10.9. Presse und Fernsehen verlieren mehr und mehr ihre Unabhängigkeit.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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10.10. Im Internet findet man noch objektive Informationen zu politischen Themen.

1	2	3	4	5	6
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Index

- Academy of Educational Sciences
 see APW
- accuracy, historical 46, 141
- action component 5, 7, 9–11, 13,
 15–17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27–8, 30,
 38–40, 53, 56, 99–101
- action consciousness 4–8, 14–16,
 39, 95, 97–119, 132–3, 145,
 149–50, 160–1, 163–9, 171–8,
 187–9, 191–4, 196–207, 211–14
- and attitudes 167, 192
- average 172, 176
- building 104, 114, 120, 214
- categories 110, 164, 188
- concise theory of 7, 101, 103, 105,
 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117,
 119, 121, 123, 149, 212
- definition of 103, 110, 118–19
- degree of 102–3, 108
- dimension 49, 74, 110
- and expressed desire to act 168,
 193
- by generation 165
- high level of 164, 168, 188–9, 191,
 193, 204, 212
- historical 124
- and historical construction 112
- influence 103, 165
- key factors shaping
 anti-dictatorship 177
- knowledge influence 187
- label 4, 28
- level of 105, 161, 163–4, 166–8,
 187, 189, 191, 193, 201–2, 212
- low level of 163, 168, 193
- and political action 7, 117, 132,
 149, 201
- scope of 150, 188
- segments 163, 165, 189, 193
- shaping 183, 189
- society's 103
- state of 149, 161–2, 188, 201, 205
- theory of 7, 28–9, 102, 113
- twentieth-century Germany 150
- values 164–5, 191
- Adorno, Theodor 9, 161
- Advertising Research Foundation *see*
 ARF
- age groups 63, 127–8, 131, 155–6,
 166, 199
- Ahlheim, Klaus 79, 150–1, 169, 250
- Aktionsbewusstsein *see* action
 consciousness
- Angvik, Magne 91–3, 250
- APW 84, 86, 89
- ARF 127, 250, 252
- Arnswald, Ulrich 91, 93–4
- attitude 2–7, 48, 80–1, 90–5, 99–100,
 113–17, 140–2, 156, 158–61,
 166–7, 169–70, 176–7, 183–7,
 191–2, 200–3
- Auschwitz 9, 41, 82, 140–1, 150,
 152, 174, 218, 221, 254, 256,
 259
- Auschwitz-Birkenau 151–2
- authoritarian regimes 42, 48, 120,
 208, 212, 230
- authoritarian tendencies 144, 205,
 208, 214
- authoritarian trends 145, 149, 201,
 205–6, 208–9
- average rating 163, 188–9, 209
- Bayerische Studien 252–3, 256–7
- behavior 94, 116
- Berlin 95, 131, 250, 254, 256, 259
- Berlin Wall 2, 6, 22, 30, 83, 119,
 135–6, 141, 143, 178–9, 194,
 201, 216–17, 222, 226, 253
- bias 130, 138, 145–6, 148
- Borries, Bodo von 27, 31–2, 36–9,
 49–54, 73, 91–3, 98, 250
- models 36–7
- BRD 2, 18, 23, 44, 84, 91–2, 96,
 141–2, 178
- B-sample 137, 202–3, 205

- Bundesländer 131, 179, 181, 257
 Bürgerbewusstsein 62–3, 65
 bystander 116–17, 192–3
- capacity 67–8, 110
 chronology, narrative 68, 105–6
 citizens 14, 19, 23, 91, 144, 188–9, 202–3, 223
 civil rights 143–4
 Clark, Douglas B. 59–61, 251
 class 72, 75, 79–80, 87, 109–10
 collaborators 116–17
 communism 12–15, 255, 257, 259
 communist regimes 34, 109
 community 2, 10, 15, 19–20, 22–3, 35, 42–4, 47–8, 63–4, 72–3, 77, 102–3, 107, 257
 company 125, 129–30
 Comparative Education 22, 257
 comparative European survey on
 historical consciousness and
 political attitudes 91–2, 250
 compulsory exercise 140, 159–60, 219
 concentration camps 41, 77, 140, 151–2, 157–8, 218–19
 conceptual change 59–61, 254, 257
 research 58–60
 conscious effort 31, 33
 consciousness 14, 16, 31, 42, 48, 50, 65, 68–71, 74, 102, 106, 110, 112–13, 118, 121–2
 change 106–7, 110, 112
 community 62–3, 67
 economic–social 72, 108, 110
 historical, expanded structure
 of 110
 historicity 67, 69–71
 identity 3, 68, 70–1, 107, 110, 112
 knowledge and action 150, 169, 171, 173, 175–8, 194, 197–8, 200, 203
 moral 3, 71–2, 109–10, 112
 temporal 68–9, 71, 105, 110, 112
 consternation 50, 157–60, 219
 context 12, 56, 61, 63, 77, 101–2, 109, 112, 115, 117, 123
 contributions 29, 31, 34, 37, 39, 42, 53, 56, 60, 75, 81, 94, 172, 252, 260
- correlation 46, 77, 161, 166, 171, 175
 countries 5–6, 8–9, 11, 16–17, 41–2, 44, 47, 81, 83, 127, 143, 147, 151, 161–3, 219–20
 Creswell, John W. 125, 252
 crimes 3–4, 9, 39, 41–2, 48–9, 79, 81, 102, 104, 106, 120–1, 149–50, 156–8, 160, 218
 culture 20, 24, 26, 31, 43–4, 49, 54, 69, 92, 105
 cultural identity 71, 107
 cultural socialization 2, 7, 32–3, 35–6, 42, 46–7, 49, 57–8, 113–19, 121, 140, 142, 169–78, 194–6, 199–200
 historical 32, 34–5
- database 4–5, 8, 129, 132, 134, 139, 250
 DDR *see* GDR
Death Fugue 82, 140, 173–4, 221, 251
 death penalty 141, 178–9, 222
 deaths 10–11, 15, 42, 78, 178–9, 260
 democracy 11, 136, 143, 146–7, 205–6, 210, 216, 227–8
 real 142, 188–9, 202, 223
 demonstrations 136, 144, 168, 193, 207, 228
 Deutz-Schroeder, Moniker 91, 95–6, 252
 dictatorial regimes 103, 156, 214
 dictatorships 1, 3–4, 7, 9–10, 22, 42, 48–9, 97–9, 120, 122, 146–7, 187–9, 193, 202, 227–9
 didactics 5, 20, 26, 62, 64–5, 85, 87, 89–90, 213
 political 62, 65–7, 97
 dimensions 2, 6–7, 14, 25–6, 32–3, 36–7, 50, 52, 65–72, 98, 100, 104–6, 108–10, 112–13, 212–14
 basic 52
 political 91
 disciplines 2, 7, 15, 24–5, 27, 30, 58, 62, 65–7, 85, 88, 97, 99, 214, 253
 discourse 3, 7, 36, 58, 96–7, 119, 149, 214, 251
 historical 19, 31
 disobedience 121, 253
 dominance relationships 66, 72, 108

- East German National Identity 22, 252
- East Germany 1, 5, 17–23, 30, 56,
88–90, 92, 95, 107, 124, 131–2,
139, 142, 179, 187
- East Germany
state 84, 90
students 91, 95
- East Germany, Germans 5–7, 15–18,
22–3, 84–5, 124, 132, 135–6,
142–3, 159–60, 181, 183–5,
187, 189, 192–3, 202–3
- economic conditions 143, 204–5,
207–9, 227
- eco-social consciousness 110, 112
- education 6, 9, 16, 19–23, 64, 132,
150, 154–5, 161–6, 174–5, 178,
181, 187, 189, 257
political 62, 64–5
teacher 213–14
- education systems 7, 20–3, 83
- educational attainment 124, 132,
154–5, 174–5, 181–2, 189, 197
- educational mission 19–20
- effectiveness 8, 46, 73, 77, 81, 90,
92, 96–7, 169, 171–2, 194
- Ein Tag im Jahr* 142, 197–8, 226
- empirical research 3, 16–17, 74, 96,
123, 131, 138, 201
- epiphany 117–18
- equilibriums 36, 40, 53
- era 1, 17, 24–5, 45, 56, 73, 76, 100,
104, 109, 113, 139, 155–6
- erudition 174–5, 199
- escape 136–7, 179, 217, 222
- Europe 2, 11, 41, 43–5, 98, 253
- European Union 81, 144, 147, 210,
230
- expressed desire to act 110, 118,
168, 193, 207, 209
- fascist regime 164, 168
- FDJ* 142, 197–8, 226
- Federal Republic 2, 20–1, 45, 92
- federal states 95–6, 215
- fiction 106, 120, 220–1, 225
- fieldwork 63, 95, 123–4, 145–6
- films 2–3, 6, 24, 29, 36, 46–7, 80–3,
140–2, 169, 172–4, 194, 196–8,
213–14, 220–1, 225–6
- findings 7, 63, 76–7, 87–90, 93–4,
116, 120, 137, 161, 183, 189, 202
- formation 12–13, 21–2, 26, 33–4, 36,
41, 48, 57, 68, 70, 98, 106, 113
- foundation 3, 7, 16, 20, 24, 57,
73–4, 98, 100, 106, 111, 121
- Fragebogen *see* questionnaire
- France 1–2, 11–12, 81, 109, 147
- Frankfurt 250, 259
- freedom 2–3, 13, 15–16, 19, 23–4,
49, 104, 120, 122, 142–4, 206,
208, 210–11, 228–9, 253
- Freie Deutsche Jugend see* FDJ
- Freie Universität Berlin 251–2, 257,
259–60
- French Revolution 11, 19
- Friedeburg, Ludwig von 76–7, 253
- Friedlander, Saul 45, 82, 156, 253
- functions 10, 24, 27, 38–9, 42, 66,
68, 81, 85–6, 98, 100
- Fundamental Rights 80–1, 253
- GDR 2–3, 5–7, 15–18, 20–3, 44–6,
83–93, 95–6, 135–7, 141–3,
177–9, 182–9, 194–6, 200–4,
215–17, 222–6
- GDR
history 91, 93–4, 124, 177–9,
181–3, 191, 197, 199, 202, 204
history knowledge levels by
region 181
regime 2, 20, 124, 185
topic 142
- gender 63–4, 124, 134, 139
- generations 3, 5–7, 43, 48–9, 94–5,
113, 150, 155, 165, 169, 178,
182–3, 187, 191, 211
- German Democratic Republic *see* GDR
- Germans 6, 16, 41, 44–5, 79, 128,
157–8, 164, 168, 185, 211, 217,
256
- Germany 1–5, 19–20, 41–2, 47, 49,
83, 92–3, 108–9, 127–9, 141–2,
144, 185–6, 206, 208–11, 230
college students 150
history 1, 21, 81, 89, 91, 96, 149,
183
contemporary 21, 89
households 128

- regimes 46, 120
 states 1, 23, 63, 91, 95–6, 129, 131, 222
- Geschichtsbewusstheit 33–4, 37
 Geschichtsbewusstsein 2–3, 5–7, 13–16, 26–7, 30–1, 33–40, 49–58, 60, 67–70, 72–3, 96–9, 101, 104–5, 119, 251
 research 5, 40, 58, 61
- Geschichtsdidaktik 23–7, 39, 57, 97, 252–7
 Geschichtsunterricht 253, 255–7
 Geschichtsverlangen 33–4, 52
 Geschichtswissenschaft 25–6, 85, 256
- goals, primary 9, 161–3, 219
 government 10–11, 15, 23, 41–2, 48–9, 89, 102, 108, 120, 146–7, 203, 223, 229–30
- groups 10, 13, 22, 25–7, 43–7, 66, 68, 70–1, 75, 100, 102–4, 107–8, 110–11, 150, 152
 activist 140, 144, 163, 168, 193, 207, 220, 228
- guilt 78–9, 161–3, 219
 personal 158, 160, 220
- Hague, Paul 124–5, 138, 254
 Handlungskompetenz 38, 74
 Harris Interactive 7, 123–5, 129–31, 139
 Hasberg, Wolfgang 26–7, 29, 32–3, 35, 43, 55, 58, 74, 84, 86–9, 252–3, 256
 Heger, Bardo 79, 150–1, 169
 Hewson, Peter W. 59–60, 254
 historians 1, 90, 100
 historical analysis 36
 historical awareness 2, 6, 33, 49, 74–5, 87, 90, 152
 historical consciousness 2–3, 5–7, 26–7, 30–7, 39–40, 43–5, 49–55, 57–8, 60–2, 65, 67–8, 73–5, 79–81, 95–7, 110–12
 all-encompassing definition of 36, 39
 comparative European survey on 91–2, 250
 development of 33, 75, 96
 dimension of 106, 150, 156
 genesis of 39, 52–3, 100
 integral dimension of 7, 28, 66, 101, 113
 knowledge dimension of 139, 178
 model of 39–40, 54
 phenomenon of 56, 62, 73
 structure of 14, 67–8
 transformations of 90, 98
- historical consciousness research 4, 7, 10, 28, 41, 49, 65–7, 89, 98, 101, 113, 117, 123, 211–13
- historical construction 35–7, 40, 54–8, 111–13, 119
- historical cultural socialization 27, 32–3, 35–6, 42, 46–7, 49, 57–8, 113–19, 121, 140, 142, 150, 169–78, 194–6, 199–200
 theory of 58
- historical documents 29, 106, 201
- historical events 5, 17, 25, 31, 38, 45–8, 56, 76, 104, 111, 115, 117, 196, 212–13
 detrimental 81, 98, 113
- historical facts 26, 76, 112, 115, 182–3
- historical images 20, 33, 35–6, 56–7, 87, 96, 111
- historical imagining 44, 55–6, 60, 112
- historical information 15, 76
- historical knowledge 21, 27, 78, 97, 99, 106
- historical learning 15–16, 21, 57, 60, 113
- historical operations 54
- historical process 69, 72, 106
- historical research 16, 19, 26–7, 100
 traditional, 25, 97
- historical sites 80, 253
- historical thinking 15, 30–2, 35–9, 62, 74, 99, 101, 108, 117–19, 200, 212
- historical understanding 34–5
- historicity 3, 37, 67–8, 70, 106, 110, 113, 117
- historicization 45–6
- historiography 2, 44, 69, 85
- Historische Erinnerung 31–3, 37

- Historische Konstruktion 37, 55
 Historisches Denken 31, 38
 Historisches Lernen 57, 254, 258–9
 historisch-politische Didaktik 251–2, 257, 259–60
 Historizitätsbewusstsein 2, 37
 history 9–11, 15–17, 19–27, 34–8, 40–3, 45–50, 55–7, 70–1, 73–5, 77–8, 91–2, 97–100, 117–21, 178–9, 250–7
 class 24, 80, 93
 education 21, 88
 learning 73, 99–100, 103
 modern 13, 19, 83
 preserving 42–3
 teaching 52, 93
 world 2, 9, 25, 108, 251
 history didactics 3–4, 6–11, 13, 15–17, 19–21, 23–30, 58, 60–2, 65, 67, 73–5, 83–4, 97–101, 113, 213–14
 research 30, 67, 74, 84
 Hitler, Adolf 75–6, 108–9, 139, 218, 252
 Hohenschönhausen 178–9, 222
 Holocaust 1–6, 29–30, 38–9, 41–3, 74–5, 77–83, 139–42, 149–53, 156, 158–70, 172–4, 176–7, 218–21, 236, 250–1
 condemnation 156–7, 160, 166–7
 education 80, 253
 in German schools 47
 remembrance 79, 81, 83
 representations 77, 81, 96
 topic 47
 and World War II 153, 155–6
 Hübner, Peter 76–7
 human rights 15, 80, 115, 117, 120, 136, 143, 161–3, 205–6, 216, 220, 227–8
 education 80–1, 253
 humanity 1, 3, 9–12, 16, 19–20, 39, 102, 104, 106, 120, 149, 156, 256
 ideals 13–14, 19, 22–3
 Identitätsbewusstsein 2, 37, 70, 107
 ideology 12–13, 21, 87, 89
 imagining 15, 31, 34, 55, 58, 111–13
 implications 3–4, 7–8, 87, 97, 100, 115–16, 118–19, 148, 167
 inalienable rights 49, 104
 independence 144, 207–8, 229, 231
 individuals 18, 20, 23–6, 31–6, 42–3, 56–7, 59–60, 64, 66, 70–1, 73, 102–4, 107–8, 115–16, 118–19
 International Standard Classification of Education *see* ISCED
 Internet 64, 83, 127–8, 140, 142, 144, 170, 172–3, 195–7, 199, 220–1, 225–6, 231, 259
 interrelationships 36, 212
 interviews, personal 80, 125–6
 ISCED 132, 134, 252

Jacob the Liar 82, 140, 173–4, 250
 Jeismann, Karl-Ernst 31, 33–4, 38–9, 41, 54, 56, 98
 Jews 1, 40–2, 44, 47, 76–7, 79, 82, 120, 140, 157–8, 217–19, 253

 knowledge 2–6, 26–7, 72–5, 77–80, 99–101, 113–17, 140–1, 150–6, 164–6, 168–79, 181–3, 191, 194–7, 199–201, 211–12
 knowledge
 and action consciousness of protest movement participants 204
 as-elements 61
 as-theory 59, 61
 building 172, 177, 194, 199, 212–13
 collective 47, 83, 115, 150, 178
 differences 152–3, 156, 178, 195
 dimension 174
 fact-based 115, 153, 156
 gaps 79, 93–4, 150–1, 154–5, 178–9, 181–3, 212
 levels 40, 77, 93, 165
 prior 59
 questions 140–1, 172, 197
 segment 154–5
 shaping 169, 199
 sources 142, 170
 strengthening of 5, 48, 94, 183
 knowledge of Holocaust and WW II 153
 Körber, Andreas 32–3, 35, 43, 58

- Kraus, Karl 12–13, 255
 Küttler, Wolfgang 85, 255
- Lange, Dirk 62–6, 135, 251–2, 257, 259–60
- leadership, country's 188–9, 202–3, 224
- learners 59, 72, 106, 108, 110–11
- LeBreton, James M. 171–3, 196–7
- legends, historical 68, 110
- Leipzig 141, 178–9, 222
- liberties 13, 19, 23, 49, 120, 144, 206, 208, 210, 212, 222
 civil 146, 208, 230, 253
 personal 206, 210, 228
- Likert scales 138, 140, 143–5
- Loeb, Christian 129–31, 256
- magazines 83, 146, 170, 172, 194–7, 199, 220–1, 225–6
- members 20–2, 70–1, 127, 129–31, 135, 139, 226
- memorial sites 41, 47, 77, 81, 96
- memorials 3, 24, 29, 32, 36, 46–7, 79, 83, 96, 170, 172, 195–7, 199, 220–1, 225
- memory 14–15, 17, 24–5, 31–2, 41–8, 74, 79, 142, 162–3, 188–9, 218, 223, 252–3, 255
 collective 2–3, 15, 32, 38, 41–4, 46–7, 49, 77, 97, 254
- mental operations 31–2, 50, 65–6, 73
- Methode Geschichtsunterricht 86–7, 89
- Methodology 7, 86, 88, 123, 135–6, 171–3, 194, 196–7, 201, 254
 historical 30, 84, 86–7, 89–90
- Miller, Jeff 60, 125–7, 129, 251, 257
- ministry 17, 178–9, 188–9, 222–3
- model assumptions, expanded 149, 200
- models 2, 27, 30–1, 35–6, 38–9, 41, 49–50, 52–5, 57–8, 62–3, 65, 67, 73–5, 97–9, 104
 path 40, 52–3
 pyramid 40, 49, 52
- Monday demonstrations 6, 136, 143, 216, 222–3, 226
- Moralisches Bewusstsein 2, 37, 72
- movement 12–14, 16
- movies 83, 115, 169–70, 173, 177, 194–7, 199, 212
- multiple R² 172–3, 196–7
- museums 29, 41, 43, 46–7, 79–81, 83, 140, 142, 169–70, 172, 195–7, 199, 212–14, 220–1, 225
- myths 44, 68–9, 78, 106, 110, 255
- National Security Agency *see* NSA
- National Socialism 2, 16, 19, 23, 29, 39, 48, 73–6, 78–9, 83, 89, 106, 211, 217
- National Socialist *see* NS
- National Socialist Germany 11, 74, 76, 106, 139, 141, 149–50, 153, 155
- national sovereignty 144, 148, 207–8, 229–30
- nations 2, 21, 41–3, 45, 47–8, 72, 81, 87, 89, 92, 94, 100
- Nazi dictatorship 16, 49, 81, 140, 159–60, 164, 169–70, 172–3, 176, 218–20
- Nazi Germany 4, 18, 29, 82, 106, 120, 253
- Nazi propaganda 106, 161–3, 220, 237
- Nazi regime 3, 90, 218
- Nazi topics 157–60, 219
- Nazis 41, 82, 158–63, 173, 217, 220, 236–7, 254
- Nazism 45–6, 90
- newspapers 64, 170, 172, 194–7, 199, 220–1, 225–6
- nobles 10, 102
- non-fiction 220–1, 225
- non-participants 201–3
- non-resisters 203–4
- norms 73, 106, 109, 117
- NS 1, 4–7, 11, 20–1, 23, 41, 74, 76, 104, 106, 138–42, 149–50, 153, 155, 212
 dictatorship 2, 5, 39, 42, 45, 47, 106, 161, 163, 169–70, 172, 193
 regime 3, 6, 150, 154, 156–8, 160–1, 165, 167–71, 173, 175, 177–8, 187, 189, 191, 193–5

NS – *continued*

- regime and Holocaust 145, 162–3, 174
- regime-related Action Consciousness 166
- NS topic 158–60
- NSA 146
- Nuremberg Laws 139, 150–2, 217
- obedience 121–2
- Ökonomisch-soziales Bewusstsein 37, 108
- online market research 123, 125–7, 129
- opposition parties, political 136–7, 139, 143
- organization 61, 89, 188–9, 202–3, 223
- Özdemir, Gökhen 59–61, 257
- Pandel, Hans-Jürgen 3, 14, 27, 31, 37–9, 41, 51, 67–73, 98–9, 104–10, 112–13, 257
 - dimensions 104–5
 - historical consciousness 65
 - model 3–5, 7, 14, 36, 67–8, 70–2, 101, 104–5, 110, 117
 - multidimensional model 2, 37, 40, 67, 101, 104, 212
 - structure of historical consciousness 70, 110
- panel 125, 129–31
- participants 81, 93–4, 124, 126–7, 132, 135, 138–9, 141–3, 151–2, 154, 156–7, 163–4, 178–9, 181–2, 202–3
- participation 91, 119, 129, 131, 136–7
- particles 55–6
 - historical 56
- passion 83, 147, 156–7, 160–1, 166, 168, 193, 212
- peace 2–4, 9–10, 15–16, 19, 23–4, 28, 39, 104, 136, 143, 205–6, 210–12, 214, 216, 227–8
- peers 83, 142, 170, 195, 197, 199
- persecution 157–8, 184–7, 203, 219, 224
- personal experiences 31, 35, 54, 142, 194–6, 199
- personalization 76–7, 79–80
- perspectives 10, 12–13, 22–3, 25, 36, 38, 47, 58–62, 74, 98, 104, 156
 - axiomatic historical 10
 - knowledge-as-elements 61
 - knowledge-as-theory 59–60
- Phase Model of Action Consciousness and Political Action 117
- Pianist, The* 82, 140, 173–4, 221, 257
- poems 220–1, 225, 258
- police state, repressive 38, 188–9, 202, 223
- political action 7, 15, 38, 62, 99–101, 108, 117–19, 132, 149, 167, 201–2, 204–6, 210, 212
 - concrete 118, 201, 204–5, 212
- political consciousness 3, 62, 65–7, 71–2, 108, 110, 112, 135
- political interest 63–4
- political prisoners 184–7, 203, 224
- politics 16, 63, 65–6, 94, 108, 205, 250, 258
- Politisches Bewusstsein 2, 37, 71, 108
- population 46, 48, 126–8, 135, 259
- Posner, George J. 59–60, 257
- power 1, 10, 12, 14, 71–2, 76, 89, 103, 108–9, 116, 120–1, 133, 193, 253
- predisposition 20, 39, 102, 105–6, 108, 110–11, 115, 117, 119, 160, 167, 173, 204
- Priestland, David 12–14, 257
- privacy 130, 144, 206–7, 228–9
- proofs 1, 202
- prosecution 140, 188–9, 202, 224
- protest movement 6, 18, 136, 139, 143, 193, 201, 204–5, 227
 - participants in 136, 201–5, 207
- protests 15, 19, 119, 122, 136–7, 139, 143–4, 146–7, 168, 193, 205, 207, 209, 216–17, 226–8
- public remembrance 140, 159–60, 170, 195, 197, 219–21, 225–6
- pyramid of historical consciousness 49–51
- questionnaire 7, 77, 94, 123, 132, 135, 139–40, 142–3, 146, 178, 194, 215, 232

- ratings 156–7, 159–60, 170, 184,
 186–7, 202–3, 205–6, 208–9
 reality consciousness 3, 68–9, 106,
 110, 112
 Reeken, Dietmar von 38, 74, 99, 102
 regime, repressive 42, 120
 regimes 6, 10–12, 14–16, 18–20,
 22–4, 40–2, 44–6, 74–6, 84–6,
 94–6, 98–100, 102–4, 140–4,
 182–4, 211–12
 region 36, 54–6, 124, 127, 134, 152,
 181, 185–6, 213
 relative impact, on 6, 115, 171–3,
 175, 177, 195–7, 199–200, 212
 remembrance 17, 32, 35
 communities 14, 22–3, 32, 35,
 43–4, 47–8, 112
 historical 32–3
 representations 2–3, 5–6, 42, 44–6,
 59, 77, 80–1, 83, 90, 96
 representative sample 91, 134,
 136–7
 research
 methodology 123, 125, 127, 129,
 131, 133, 135, 137, 139, 141,
 143, 145, 147
 project 16, 29–30, 62, 65, 74–5,
 78, 85, 92–3, 95–6, 123, 146
 results 149, 151, 153, 157, 159,
 161, 163, 167, 169, 171, 175,
 177, 179, 187, 189
 subject 4–5, 7, 125, 139
 resistance 144, 168, 193, 207, 228
 resisters 135–6, 202–4
 respondents 63–4, 126–7, 134–44,
 151–7, 159–61, 163, 165–8, 170,
 172–4, 177–9, 181–2, 184–5,
 187–9, 191–8, 206–9
 responsibility, special 161–3, 219
 restrictions 144, 204–5, 207–8, 227
 reunification 83, 142, 178, 185–7,
 203, 224
 revolutions 11–14, 16, 109, 119
 Rodenhause, Thomas 129–30
 Rosenthal, Gabriele 77–8
 R-sample 151, 153, 155, 158–60,
 166, 168, 170, 174–5, 179, 181,
 186, 188–9, 195, 197–8, 206–8
 Rummel, Rudolph J. 11, 120
 Rösen, Jörn 27, 31–4, 36, 37–9, 41,
 51, 53–4, 56, 98, 111, 251,
 257–8
 theory 33, 37
 Russia 13, 15, 41, 43, 81
 sample 50, 64, 96, 124, 126, 134–7,
 153, 201
 sizes 77, 80, 124–5, 133–5
Schindler's List 82, 140, 173–4, 221,
 259
 Schönemann, Bernd 27, 34–5, 37,
 39, 73, 84–5, 98, 258
 schools 21, 26, 35–6, 63–4, 91, 93–4,
 96, 140, 142, 169–72, 194–7,
 200, 212–13, 220–1, 225
 Schroeder, Klaus 21, 91, 95–6, 259
 scope 4–5, 27, 29, 59, 62, 90, 93,
 95, 99, 123–4, 151, 167, 169,
 185–6, 207
 SED 3, 5–6, 44, 87, 192–3, 196
 dictatorship 5–6, 29, 95–6, 104,
 131, 149, 177–8, 183, 187, 189,
 194, 197, 212
 regime 3–4, 6, 40–1, 90–1, 95–6,
 139, 141, 177, 183–4, 187–9,
 191–4, 196–200, 202, 204, 212
 state 5, 124, 132, 141, 178–9, 184,
 187, 193, 199, 201–2, 206–7
 segments, high knowledge 182
 self-image 44–7
 historical 22, 35
 Shell Deutschland Holding 94–6
 sig (significance) 155, 160, 163, 166,
 170, 175, 181, 186, 189, 195,
 202–3
 socialist 87–9
 personalities 21–2, 86
 regimes 12, 15, 89–90
 Socialist Unity Party of Germany *see*
 SED
 socialization 172, 213
 historical-cultural 169, 194
 society 3, 9–12, 19–20, 24, 26, 30–2,
 36, 38, 42–5, 89, 102–4, 108–10,
 113, 214, 252
 Sonntag, Kurt 75–6, 259
 speech 2, 69, 104, 144, 228–9
 free 206–7

- SPSS 124–5, 166, 259
- Stasi 18, 45, 108, 141, 185–6, 188–9, 193, 196, 202–3, 223, 251
 members of 142, 188–9, 202, 224
- State Security 17, 178–9, 188–9, 222–3
- statement 10, 17–18, 136, 147, 156–9, 161, 163, 166, 184–5, 187–8, 204, 209, 211, 216
- Statistical Package of the Social Sciences *see* SPSS
- strength 12, 36, 116–17, 161, 166–7, 171, 177, 191–2
 of attitudes and action
 consciousness 167, 192
 attitudinal 166–7, 187, 191–2
- subcategories 38–40, 52, 91
- subject 21, 24–5, 29–30, 38, 40, 42, 45, 93–4, 124–5, 140, 142, 146–51, 173, 176, 211
- suppress opposition 184, 192, 202–3, 224
- survey participants 79, 123, 131, 139, 146, 149, 156, 163, 167, 192, 194, 205–6, 212
- survey questionnaire 132, 135, 138–9
- Szalai, Wendelin 85–6
- target group 124, 128, 131–3, 135, 151, 213–14
- teachers 21, 27, 59, 80–1, 86, 88, 92–3, 96, 121, 173
- television 46, 64, 169, 208, 229, 231
- Temporalbewusstsein 2, 37, 68, 105–6
- textbooks 27, 83, 169–70, 172, 177, 194–7, 200, 220–1, 225
- Theresienstadt 140, 151–2, 218
- Third Reich 3, 5, 18, 29, 32, 43–4, 47, 75, 78–80, 90, 96, 157–8, 160, 170, 178
- Tonidandel, Scott 171–3, 196–7, 260
- topic 29–30, 39–40, 46–8, 74–5, 78–80, 89, 91, 93, 96, 139–40, 146–8, 154–61, 166, 170, 181–2
 historical 46
- transformations 12, 36, 40, 53, 70, 72, 90, 98, 107, 109, 111
- TV documentaries 6, 169–70, 172–3, 177, 194–7, 199, 212, 220–1, 225
- unification 18, 22, 257
- university 75, 83, 140, 142, 150, 170, 172–3, 195, 197, 200, 220–1, 225, 251–2, 255–7, 260
- uprising 124, 141, 178–9, 201, 222
- victims 45, 77–9, 254
- viewers 82, 141–2, 173–4, 197–8
- viewpoints 45–7, 59
- Voss, Marc T. 76–7, 79–81, 83, 110, 112, 123, 125–7, 129–33, 138, 140, 150–1, 153, 155, 166, 169
- Wandelbewusstsein 69, 106
- Wannsee Conference 139, 150–2, 218
- Warner, Rebecca M. 145, 166, 171
- Warsaw Ghetto 139, 151–2, 217
- we-group 71
- welcome 144, 168, 193, 207, 228
- Wende 22, 30, 85, 87, 92
- Wermes, Hans 88–9
- West 5–6, 18, 22–3, 30, 84, 95, 124, 158–60, 163, 186, 189, 251
- West German students 91–3
- West Germans 4–7, 30, 84, 94, 96, 150, 152, 156–7, 159–61, 164, 178–9, 181, 183–5, 187, 189
- West Germany 77, 131–2, 139, 160, 178, 184–6, 215, 224
- Wirklichkeitsbewusstsein 2, 37, 69
- witnesses 17, 32, 48
- World War II 1–2, 11, 20, 41, 43, 48, 75, 124, 139, 149–53, 155–6, 178, 211, 217
- x-axis 174, 176
- y-axis 176
- younger generations 26, 32, 77–8, 95, 100, 121, 131, 155, 161, 165, 174, 178, 182–3, 187, 191
- youth 21–2, 76–7, 91, 94–6, 250
- Zülsdorf-Kersting, Meik 31–3, 35–6, 38–41, 55–8, 79–80, 98, 111–13, 260