Cohesion Radar: Measuring Cohesiveness

Social Cohesion in Germany – a preliminary Review

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Bertelsmann **Stiftung**

Cohesion Radar: Measuring Cohesiveness

Social Cohesion in Germany – a preliminary Review

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Preface

Times of far-reaching social and economic upheaval are always associated with a coinciding change in values and entail the risk of increasing disorientation. Many people are afraid that the process of modernisation may lead to a loss of social cohesion. Some of them are longing for a past when community life was said to be more humane, more stable, more warm-hearted and more ethical. Sometimes the failure of the education system, the anonymity of metropolitan life, the media or the erosion of the nuclear family are identified as causes for this decline in cohesion, sometimes the crisis of the social welfare system, growing inequality, increasing immigration or the individualisation of people's lifestyles. Most recently, globalisation or the new communication technologies have been singled out as segregating forces.

There is no denying that western societies have undergone change: They have become more diverse and more mobile. However, whether these changes have resulted in an actual decline of social cohesion rather than simply changing its structure remains an open question. Similarly, it still remains to be seen what the consequences of changing structures of cohesion will mean for society as a whole and for the individual. Which segments of the population stand to suffer most from weakening structures and which will embrace them as new freedoms and opportunities?

All western societies have experienced great changes in the past decades and must meet the key challenges of the future: Demographic change and restructuring of the social welfare systems, economic and financial crises, immigration and integration, globalisation and international competition. The question is how societies can successfully manage to ensure the necessary degree of shared identity, solidarity, trust and participation in times of crises, rapid social changes and increasing social division.

In heterogeneous societies cohesion always also means creating a sense of unity among very diverse individuals. Being able to deal with diversity – e.g. regarding religion, values or lifestyles – is the most important precondition for successful community life. In an open, democratic and diverse society cohesion can no longer be based solely on similarity and conformity but must promote respect, acknowledge differences, grant freedoms and facilitate cultural as well as personal development. The challenge to be met lies in enabling participation in a fair and just society while at the same time maintaining bonds between people.

With its "Living Values" programme the Bertelsmann Foundation wants to make a positive contribution towards a sustainable development of social cohesion in Germany. In this programme, we will concentrate on the individual as the focal point of our work. We will direct our attention to the ways in which individuals deal with diversity, which new bonding forces emerge and which traditional bonds remain intact. Special attention will be paid to those values which provide orientation for people in their everyday life and influence their behaviour. In particular we will look at value orientations conducive to living together in an open, democratic and diverse society, which

strengthen cohesion and contribute towards shaping a society capable of meeting the challenges of the future.

The present publication may be seen as a first step to answer these questions. It provides an overview of the existing surveys and data available on the topic of social cohesion. In compiling the overview, the authors did not only take the situation in Germany into account, but aimed to present a comparative international perspective.

At the same time this review will provide the starting point for an ambitious project. In a next step we are planning to develop a new reporting instrument which will allow us to collect precise data on the status quo of social cohesion in Germany and other countries and to predict possible future development trends. By this means, risks may be assessed, potential crises identified at an early stage and solutions worked out in order to make our world a somewhat more humane, caring, just and peaceful place.

Liz Mohn
Vice-Chair of the Bertelsmann Stiftung
Executive Board

Introduction

by Stephan Vopel und Kai Unzicker

Social cohesion is an elusive concept triggering positive associations. Over the past few decades, it has become an important political and social goal, and with excellent reason.

On the one hand, social cohesion has been recognised as an indispensable aspect of sustainable, attractive societies and ranks alongside *intergenerational justice, quality of life, and international responsibility* as one of the four elements of the German government's national sustainability strategy (*"Perspectives for Germany. Our Strategy for Sustainable Development"*). Likewise, social cohesion (or rather inclusion and cohesion) is one of the subjects to be considered by the German parliament's select committee *"Growth, Welfare, Quality of Life – Paths to Sustainable Economic Management and Societal Progress in the Social Market Economy"*. Under this or similar headings, social cohesion is in the meantime being measured and analysed in numerous countries (e.g. Canada, the US, Australia, and New Zealand) and by various transnational organisations such as the OECD, the World Bank, and the Council of Europe, as an indicator of prosperity and quality of life.

On the other hand, surveys show that the majority of the population feels that cohesion is under threat, or even in decline. In 2011, 74% of the respondents in a representative survey agreed with the statement "Society is disintegrating more and more", and over 50% agreed that "Cohesion in Germany is in danger". (Zick & Küpper 2012).

Despite the popularity of the issue of social cohesion, there is as yet neither a uniform definition of the term nor a generally accepted set of indicators for cohesion. Political actors both on the national and the transnational levels pursue different approaches and promote competing scientific concepts. As a result, it is difficult to make authoritative statements about the status and the development of social cohesion or to produce meaningful comparisons of developments in different countries.

Put another way, everyone is talking about social cohesion, but no two people agree on what cohesion means – and hardly anyone is in a position to say how well it is doing.

Despite the discrepancies between the different approaches, social cohesion is unquestionably one of the crucial challenges of our time. The swift pace of economic change, growing mobility, and increasing social diversity carry a number of risks – the exclusion of certain sections of the population, conflicts between different groups, declining solidarity, and loss of legitimacy on the part of political institutions.

But what does declining cohesion mean for those who depend on a closely knit informal network of solidarity? For those who need help and support? And what does it mean for the social climate and for the ways in which we interact with each other? These questions are still awaiting answers.

About this study

The present study, *Social Cohesion in Germany*, commissioned by the Bertelsmann Foundation and carried out by David Schiefer, Jolanda van der Noll, Jan Delhey, and Klaus Boehnke represents a preliminary step towards finding an answer to this and other questions. The authors provide an overview of the concepts and approaches that are brought to bear on the issue and define and operationalise social cohesion in such a way that it becomes possible to measure its constituent variables and subject them to international comparisons.

According to their definition, social cohesion is a descriptive, graduated characteristic of societies that involves three dimensions:

- Social relationships,
- Connectedness, and
- Orientation towards the common good.

The dimension of social relationships includes *social networks, participation, trust, and the acceptance of diversity*. Connectedness is determined by feelings of *belonging and identification*. Orientation towards the common good includes *social responsibility, solidarity,* and *respect for the social order*.

This definition of social cohesion automatically excludes aspects such as equality, quality of life, and shared values, although these factors, which are often equated with cohesion, do exercise an important influence. This means, for example, that the extent of equality in society is not in itself a characteristic of social cohesion, but it still has a strong and lasting influence on the quality of social relationships, the feeling of belonging, and practical solidarity.

For this study the authors examined and analysed numerous research findings with the aim of compiling an initial status report on social cohesion in Germany. They report on the current status of research into the various dimensions as well as the chronological development of cohesion, taking into account regional differences within Germany as well as comparisons with other countries.

The results of this review are ambivalent. While an initial assessment of the status quo does not reveal a dramatic decline in social cohesion, the level of cohesion in Germany is no more than average compared to other countries. Similarly, there are structural and qualitative changes in some areas whose impact remains unclear: for example, social relationships have barely changed in

number, but appear to have become more ephemeral in quality. The upper socio-economic classes perform significantly better with respect to numerous indicators, while differences between the east and the west are still evident and trust in institutions continues to decline. At the same time, it is not yet clear whether all forms of cohesion invariably have positive and productive effects. For example, some forms involve a high degree of identification with a racist group or close social relationships within a fundamentalist sect. So there are forms of cohesion that are detrimental to an open, democratic, and diverse society and threaten its capability to master the challenges of the future in a globalised world.

But how does cohesion work in a diverse, democratic, and open society? What are the values and fundamental attitudes required to create cohesion? And what shape does cohesion have to take for a society to be able to meet the challenges of the future, and be innovative and vibrant?

This is the old, though by no means obsolete, dichotomy between *individual liberty and commitment to the community*. If modern societies are to facilitate a fulfilling degree of human and social development, social cohesion needs to be balanced: there should neither be total conformity nor a comprehensive lack of commitment. Free, open, and diverse societies must allow variety and enable individuals to participate and realise their potential, while simultaneously ensuring the requisite degree of social cohesion.

Structure

The study on *Social Cohesion in Germany* is divided into three main sections. Part 1, *Cohesion Research*, explains the current relevance of the topic and describes both the international academic discourse and the socio-political debate. Part 2, *Social Cohesion*, discusses various possibilities for defining cohesion and suggests measurement indicators while at the same time touching on the downsides of cohesion. The empirical results compiled by the authors from numerous studies and data records can be found in Part 3, *The Status of Social Cohesion in Germany*. This section presents and discusses the manifestations of cohesion in terms of three dimensions, *social relationships, connectedness, and orientation towards the common good*, before concluding with an overall evaluation.

Where to go from here

This initial overview of the concepts, research, and data on cohesion shows how many questions still remain unanswered and how significant this topic will become in the years to come – for social diversity is increasing and the processes of social change are gaining momentum.

Methodologically speaking, there is an urgent need for standardised measurement procedures and international comparisons. Additionally, researchers must combine subjective survey data with objective structural data rather than focus exclusively on one or the other. It will also be necessary to determine the level on which social cohesion should be measured: in the personal environment of the individual (family, friends, neighbours), in terms of more abstract entities (trust in institutions), or on the level of the nation state or beyond (e.g. Europe).

On the basis of this exploratory pilot study the Bertelsmann Foundation aims to develop a tool which will first of all allow to measure social cohesion in different countries and in greater detail within Germany; secondly enable researchers to analyse the causes and consequences of changes in cohesion in a systematic way, especially with reference to value orientations and quality of life; and thirdly, provide the potential to identify risks and extrapolate developments.

Stephan Vopel
Director
Living Values

Kai Unzicker
Project Manager
Living Values

1. Cohesion Research

It is interesting to note that, irrespective of the precise reasons that are brought into play in any individual instance, the proposition that social cohesion is on the wane is accepted unanimously and without question. Against this background, the relevance of a systematic social report on cohesion in society is virtually self-evident. Is the general premise of decreasing cohesion in Germany correct? And if so, what are the forces that are driving society apart?

1.1 Relevance[1]

Over the last twenty years, social cohesion has become a subject of increasingly intense discussion both in academia and in political discourse (Beauvais & Jenson 2002; Chan, To, & Chan 2006; Chiesi 2004; Hulse & Stone 2007; Jaschke 2009; Jenson 1998; Jenson 2010). There are a number of reasons for this development, all of which are rooted in the common perception of warning signs for waning social cohesion. The Council of Europe (2005, 31) uses the term negative approach for this perception (see also Jenson 1998, 3). The most frequently referenced factor is the process of globalisation and its concomitant economic restructuring. The effect of these developments on poverty, social division and exclusion, declining local identification, and increasing individualism has been the subject of critical discussion (Chan et al. 2006; Chiesi 2004; Hulse & Stone 2007; Jenson 2010; Mitchell 2000; Jeannotte et al. 2002). Additionally, the impact of global migration movements and growing ethno-cultural diversity on national cohesion have come under scrutiny (Beauvais & Jenson 2002; Chan et al. 2006; Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne, & Solomos 2007; House of Commons 2008; Hulse & Stone 2007; Niessen 2000; Putnam 2000). In some countries, studies of social cohesion were prompted by severe social conflicts and ethnic tension such as those that occurred in Great Britain in 2001 (see Cheong et al. 2007; House of Commons 2004 & 2008; Hulse & Stone 2007). The development of computer-assisted communication and its effects on social relationships have also become a subject of debate (Beauvais & Jenson 2002; Ferlander & Timms 1999; Rheingold 2000). In Europe, the issue found its way onto the political agenda in the course of the enlargement of the European Union. The most urgent aspects of the issue include the disintegration of unified nations and identifications as well as the integration of different national welfare systems (Chan et al. 2006; Hulse & Stone 2007; Hunt 2005; Witte 2004). Often, however, what is discussed in this context is European cohesion on the larger scale, i.e. the cohesion of Europe as a community of states (see Delhey 2004).

1.2 Academic and Policy Discourse

According to Chan et al. (2006), these debates take place in two fields of action which, while distinct from each other, frequently overlap, namely academic and socio-political (policy) discourse. While academic discourse tends to engage in conceptual debate, with occasional forays into empirical testing, policy discourse tends towards specific socio-political agendas and focuses on description and intervention.

1.2.1 Academic Discourse

The three (or, arguably, four) academic disciplines that deal with issues relating to social cohesion are sociology and political science on the one hand and psychology (specifically, social psychology and general psychology) on the other. In the discipline of sociology, the first writers to deal with the issue of social cohesion were Émile Durkheim (1893/1977; see Council of Europe 2005; Jenson 1998; Chiesi 2004) and Ferdinand Tönnies (1887). More recent publications have focused on social integration and disintegration (e.g. Gough & Olofsson 1999; Imbusch & Heitmeyer 2008; Schimank 2000), both of which issues are closely related to social cohesion (Chan et al. 2006; Chiesi 2004). In political science, cohesion is of interest mainly in communitarianism, where it serves as the social cement of democracy (Etzioni). According to Putnam (2000) and Paxton (2002), social capital is an important prerequisite for democratic structures and the problem-solving capacity of communities. In social psychology, cohesion is primarily discussed in connection with the formation, maintenance, and activities of small groups (Bollen & Hoyle 1990; Chan et al. 2006; Moody & White 2003). The work of the social psychologist Erich Fromm is an exception to this rule (Keupp 2010). Classical studies in social psychology examine, on the one hand, factors that cause a group to be perceived as attractive and that prompt people to remain members of it (Friedkin 2004), and, on the other hand, how these factors relate to small-group phenomena such as group performance, interpersonal communication, and pressure to conform (for an overview, see Bollen & Hoyle 1990). Finally, general psychology tends to focus on the individual level (attitudes, perceptions, identifications, and feelings of belonging and well-being).

In the German-speaking world, there are a number of fairly recent publications on social cohesion, including monographs by Heitmeyer (1997), Kistler, Noll, and Priller (2002), Vester, Oertzen, Gieling, Hermann, & Müller (2001), Jaschke (2009), and Becker and Krätschmer-Hahn (2010). These studies tend to concentrate on two main issues, one of which is social capital (cf. Braun 2002) and in particular the themes of civic involvement and civil society (Bornschier 2001; Braun 2005; More-Hollerweger 2008; Kistler et al. 2002). The other main focal point is inter-group relationships and acceptance of cultural difference; the most significant work in this field was done by Wilhelm Heitmeyer (2002-2011).

1.2.2 The Policy Discourse

A number of socio-political institutions all over the world (governments, think tanks, associations) are engaged in studying the development of social cohesion in their own national contexts. These institutions, which may be national or international, have a much tighter focus on specific problems than experts who typically work in academic contexts. One criticism to be made is that the idea of social cohesion is often used very loosely as a catch-all term for a wide variety of social changes (Chan et al. 2006). In this section we will briefly examine some of these institutions.

National level

On the national level, one of the most noteworthy projects in **Canada** is the work of a transdepartmental research network set up by the Canadian government and the Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN) (Jenson 1998; Beauvais & Jenson, 2002; Jackson et al. 2000; Toye 2007; Jeannotte 2000; Stanley 2003). In the **USA**, the term social cohesion is less commonly used than the concept of social capital (cf. Hulse & Stone 2007). This is not least due to the work of Robert Putnam, whose book Bowling Alone (Putnam, 2000) has gained a certain amount of fame (Putnam 2000; Bowling Alone). Active discussions of social cohesion are also taking place in **Australia** (see, for example, Jupp, Nieuwenhuysen, & Dawson 2007; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2005), **New Zealand** (Ministry of Social Development 2004; Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, and O'Neill 2005) and **Great Britain** (Department for Communities and Local Government 2008; Home Office Community Cohesion Unit 2003; Cheong et al. 2007; House of Commons 2004).

Transnational level

On the transnational level, significant work has been done by the Council of **Europe** (1998; 2004; 2005) and the European Commission (Berger-Schmitt 2000; **European Commission**, 1996; 2001; 2007) as well as the **European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions** (1998). Two other transnational actors are the **World Bank** (Ritzen 2001, Easterly, Ritzen, & Woolcock, Grootaert & van Bastelaer 2001) and the Organisation for Economic **Co-Operation and Development** (OECD).

Germany

In **Germany**, social cohesion is addressed in the policy papers and strategy papers of the national government and individual ministries (e.g. the Federal Ministry of the Interior 2008; 2011), in publications by political parties, foundations (e.g. Witte 2004) and associations (Deutsche Rentenversicherung Bund 2008; KfW Bankengruppe 2010a). The concept also features in public speeches (Friedrich 2011; Krüger 2008), editorials (e.g. Schäuble & von der Leyen 2009) and various events (including the Bergedorf Round Table in 1995 and the 2011 Regensburger Gespräche (Regensburg Discussions). The most frequent subjects of discussion are the economic changes resulting

from globalisation, a concomitant decline in the regulatory influence of institutions of the welfare state, and an (alleged) decrease in civic involvement (among others: Boehnke, Baier, Fuß, & Boehnke 2005; Bundesregierung 2002; Castel 2005; Dahrendorf 1996; Jaschke 2009; Münkler & Wassermann 2008; Priller 2006; Rauner 2004; Vögele 1992). Other issues discussed include individualisation and egomania (Bundesregierung 2002; Jaschke 2009; Keupp 2005; Münkler & Wassermann 2008; Rößler 2006; Schäuble & von der Leyen 2009) and immigration and cultural diversity (among others: Akgün 2008; Angenendt 2008; Bundesregierung 2002; Gundelach & Traunmüller 2010). The relationship between religion and social cohesion is discussed both in terms of an increasing plurality of religious faiths and in terms of the declining influence of the Christian churches as promoters of cohesion in society (Berger & Weiße 2010; Friedrich 2011; Görlach 2009; Hervieu-Léger 2007; Jähnichen 2006; Krüger 2008; Losansky 2010). Finally, some studies have been published that examine social cohesion in connection with political extremism and violence (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2011; Jaschke 2009; Krüger 2008).

2. Social Cohesion

2.1 Definitions

While the various academic and political actors may emphasise different aspects of the issue, there are conspicuous areas of overlap permitting us to narrow down the core contents of the cohesion debate to initially six separate aspects: Social relationships, connectedness, orientation towards the common good, shared values, equality/inequality, objective and subjective quality of life.

In our initial review of the relevant literature, we systematically examined the existing definitions of social cohesion. It quickly became clear that no consensual definition exists at this time, despite − or perhaps because of − the large variety of actors (cf. Jenson 1998). This fact is well known and has regularly been criticised in the relevant literature published in the past decades (cf. Bollen & Hoyle 1990; Bernhard 1999; Hulse & Stone 2007; Jenson 2010), but this has not resulted in establishing a real consensus. The definitions still exhibit varying widths of scope and widely diverging degrees of abstraction. Often, too, they involve an unfortunate mixture of determinant, constitutive, and resultant aspects. There is, however, a consensus that social cohesion is an attribute of a group or a society and not a trait of individuals. By general agreement, cohesion is still taken to be a multi-dimensional construct that can be mapped on a micro, meso, and macro level using certain indicators.

Because of this variety, we will refrain from discussing individual definitions at this point and instead present a classification scheme systematising the facets (or aspects) of social cohesion that are frequently mentioned in the definitions.
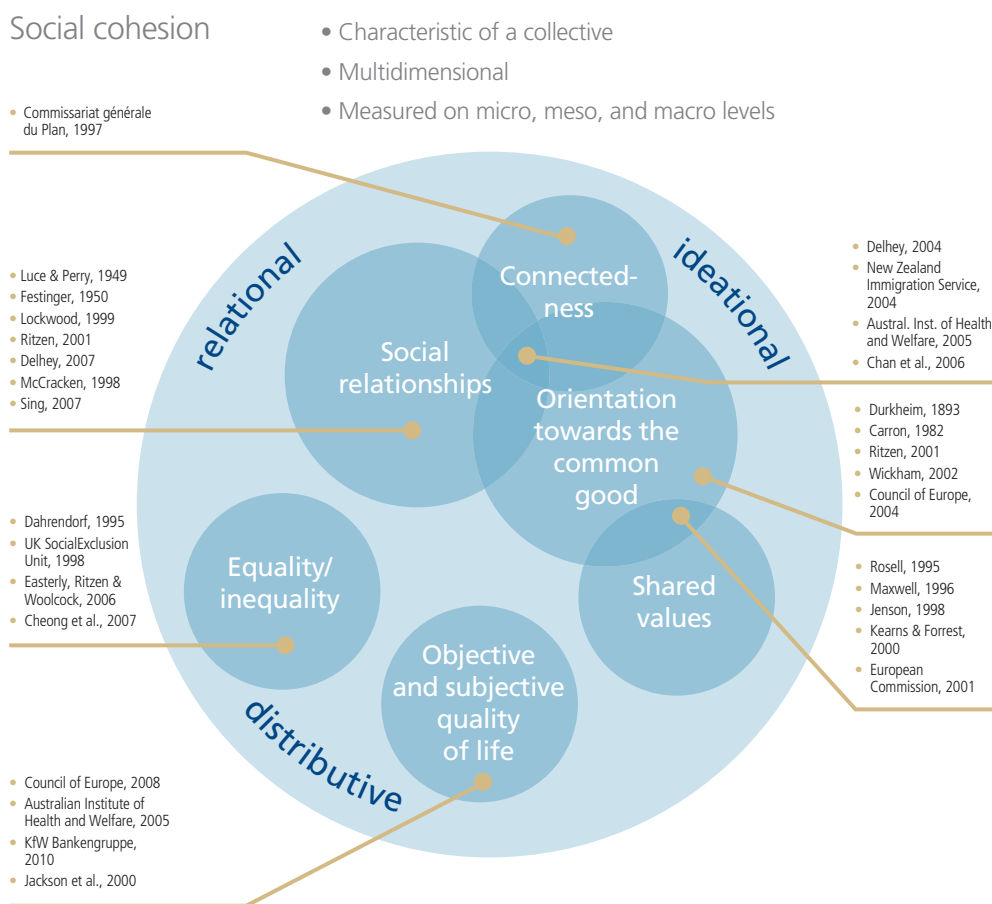
Our overview of the relevant literature yielded six aspects of cohesion that are mentioned with some frequency. These aspects are shown in Figure 1 in the form of six circles. The proximity of the circles to one another indicates the frequency with which the aspects are mentioned, so that overlapping circles offer a visual impression of which of the six aspects represent the core meaning of the term "cohesion".

As the diagram shows, many definitions stress the **social relationships** between groups and/ or members of groups. Here the core factors are the social networks, which also feature in the concept of social capital in Putnam's sense (2000; cf. Council of Europe 2005; Jenson 2010). Other definitions place the emphasis on cooperativeness, solidarity, and social responsibility (**orientation towards the common good**, e.g. Council of Europe 2004; Ritzen 2001). A third group of definitions combines orientation towards the common good with **shared values** that allow members of the community to identify joint goals and objectives (see, for example, Kearns & Forrest 2000; Maxwell 1996). Other studies base their definitions on the sense of belonging to and identifying with society (**connectedness**). Frequently, too, the unequal distribution of resources and the

concomitant social exclusion is defined as a core element of (the lack of) cohesion (**equality/ inequality**; see Easterly et al. 2006). With regard to equality/inequality, however, the definitions also include the aspect of diversity (of cultures, religions, and lifestyles; e.g. House of Commons 2004), which in turn is closely related to the aspects of distribution and social exclusion. Finally, some definitions focus on well-being, welfare, or quality of life (**objective and subjective quality of life**; cf. Council of Europe 2005; Australian Institute for Health and Welfare 2005).

Figure 1: Definitions of social cohesion: aspects, areas of overlap, and selected authors

Social cohesion
- Characteristic of a collective
- Multidimensional
- Measured on micro, meso, and macro levels

- Commissariat générale du Plan, 1997

- Luce & Perry, 1949
- Festinger, 1950
- Lockwood, 1999
- Ritzen, 2001
- Delhey, 2007
- McCracken, 1998
- Sing, 2007

- Delhey, 2004
- New Zealand Immigration Service, 2004
- Austral. Inst. of Health and Welfare, 2005
- Chan et al., 2006

- Durkheim, 1893
- Carron, 1982
- Ritzen, 2001
- Wickham, 2002
- Council of Europe, 2004

- Dahrendorf, 1995
- UK SocialExclusion Unit, 1998
- Easterly, Ritzen & Woolcock, 2006
- Cheong et al., 2007

- Rosell, 1995
- Maxwell, 1996
- Jenson, 1998
- Kearns & Forrest, 2000
- European Commission, 2001

- Council of Europe, 2008
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2005
- KfW Bankengruppe, 2010
- Jackson et al., 2000

relational
ideational
distributive

Connected-ness
Social relationships
Orientation towards the common good
Equality/ inequality
Shared values
Objective and subjective quality of life

Source: Own Diagramm.   Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

The six core topics which we have identified in the definitions can be grouped under three aspects of social cohesion: Values, orientation towards the common good, and connectedness pertain to the **ideational** aspects, i.e. the cognitions and affective orientation of citizens. **Relational** aspects deal with relationships between single members of a society and between social groups. Quality of life and equality/inequality finally relate to the **distributive** aspects i.e. the distribution of opportunities in life and living conditions.[2] This attribution of topics need not be the same at all times, however; thus, the quality of connectedness, e.g. may belong to the ideational as well as the relational aspect of cohesion. The proximity of the six core topics to the triad ideational – relational – distributive has been illustrated in figure 1.

2.2 Dimensions and Measurement Indicators

The suggested **partial dimensions** of social cohesion are just as varied as the definitions themselves. By partial dimensions we mean a more detailed substantiation of the aspects of cohesion identified and defined above (see Figure 1). Below, we will offer a concise overview of those partial dimensions that are frequently discussed in the relevant literature, returning to our previous classification system of ideational, relational, and distributive dimensions and assigning partial dimensions to each group (see Figure 2).

The first two ideational dimensions are related to the aspect of connectedness: the **feeling of belonging** to and **identification** with certain social units (a group, region, country, society, or supranational community such as the EU). Cohesion always refers to social interactions within a group or a specific, circumscribed area, so that a certain degree of identification with the group or the area is of fundamental significance (Chan et al. 2006). Additionally, identification is the expression of shared values, ways of life, and socialisation contexts that convey security and self-esteem and increase the disposition to social networking and participation (Kearns and Forrest 2000). The ideational aspects also include **shared values**, which many studies take to be a constitutive element of cohesion (e.g. Kearns and Forrest 2000; an overview can be found in Council of Europe 2005, 25). One of the core issues relating to this aspect is the **content** of the values, i.e. the question of which values must be shared in order to make cohesion possible (e.g. respect, tolerance, humanity; see Jenson 1998, Federal Ministry of the Interior 2011, Jaschke 2009). In addition to the content of the values, another subject of discussion is the **consensus of values** (cf., for example, Council of Europe 2005), which is assumed to facilitate social interaction as it provides dependable interaction standards. The necessity of a consensus of values, however, is disputed. More recent studies instead tend to regard constructive approaches to dealing with divergent values as a prerequisite for cohesion (e.g. Council of Europe 2004; 2005; Stanley 2003; see also our remarks below). Another ideational dimension is the **sense of social responsibility**

[2] We have adopted the differentiation between ideational and relational aspects from Moody and White (2003) and Janmaat (2011) respectively; they were supplemented by the third aspect, distributive, in order to include all definitions in the classification.

(among others, Chan et al. 2006; Council of Europe 2004; 2005). Cohesion requires both a certain degree of commitment and obligation to society and the willingness to place the common good above one's personal interests. Closely related to this is **solidarity** among the people of a society.[3] Finally, **the recognition of a social order, rules, and standards** is postulated as one of the constitutive dimensions of cohesion. Institutions that regulate and monitor the social order must be granted a certain minimum level of legitimacy (cf. Jenson 1998; Kearns & Forrest 2000).[4] Lack of recognition of the social order and social rules is expressed in the concept of **anomie**, a social condition in which the members' goals (e.g. wealth or success) no longer correspond to the legitimate means for attaining those goals (Merton 1957; see also Bohle, Heitmeyer, Kühnel, & Sander 1997; Claßen 1997).

Relational dimensions are closely related to the concept of social capital (e.g. Putnam 2000). One such dimension is **social networking**, that is, the quality and quantity of social relationships and interactions. Another frequently identified dimension is **participation** (e.g. Berger-Schmitt 2000; Chan et al. 2006; Chiesi 2004; Council of Europe 2004; Easterly et al. 2006; Rajulton, Ravanera, & Beaujot 2007; Ritzen 2001; studies in Germany include Kistler et al. 2002; Braun 2005; Federal Ministry of the Interior 2011; Jaschke 2009). We can distinguish between socio-cultural participation (membership and activity in cultural or sporting associations, volunteer work) and political participation (participating in elections and signature campaigns, strikes, and local councils etc.) The relational aspect of social cohesion also encompasses a minimum of mutual trust (Chan et al. 2006), that is, the expectation that the behaviour of others is predictable and essentially motivated by good intentions (Morrone, Tontoranelli, & Ranuzzi 2009). As a moral resource of solidarity, this factor facilitates social development by fostering economic exchange, improving the effectiveness of public institutions, and creating possibilities for collective action (OECD 2011; Morrone et al. 2009; Delhey 2007). Trust has a horizontal component (trust in one's fellow human beings) and a vertical one (trust in institutions such as governments, courts, administrative bodies). Finally, immigration and increasing cultural diversity have led to a qualitative shift in the conceptualisation of social cohesion. Instead of homogeneity and consensus, it is the **acceptance of** and constructive approaches towards **diversity** (and towards the conflicts that arise from it) that are increasingly regarded as a dimension of social cohesion (e.g. Jeannotte et al. 2002; Council of Europe 2005; Spoonley et al. 2005).

With regard to the distributive aspect of social cohesion, the relevant literature frequently stresses the **(un)equal distribution** of the material and immaterial resources available to specific societies and discusses differences between regions and between social groups in terms of indicators such as unemployment, income, education, health, and access to rights and social services (Berger-Schmitt 2000; Berger-Schmitt & Noll 2000; Council of Europe 2004, 2005; Jackson et al.

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[3] Solidarity can be taken both as an ideational dimension (solidarity as a value or a norm) and as a relational dimension (solidarity as mutually supportive behaviour).
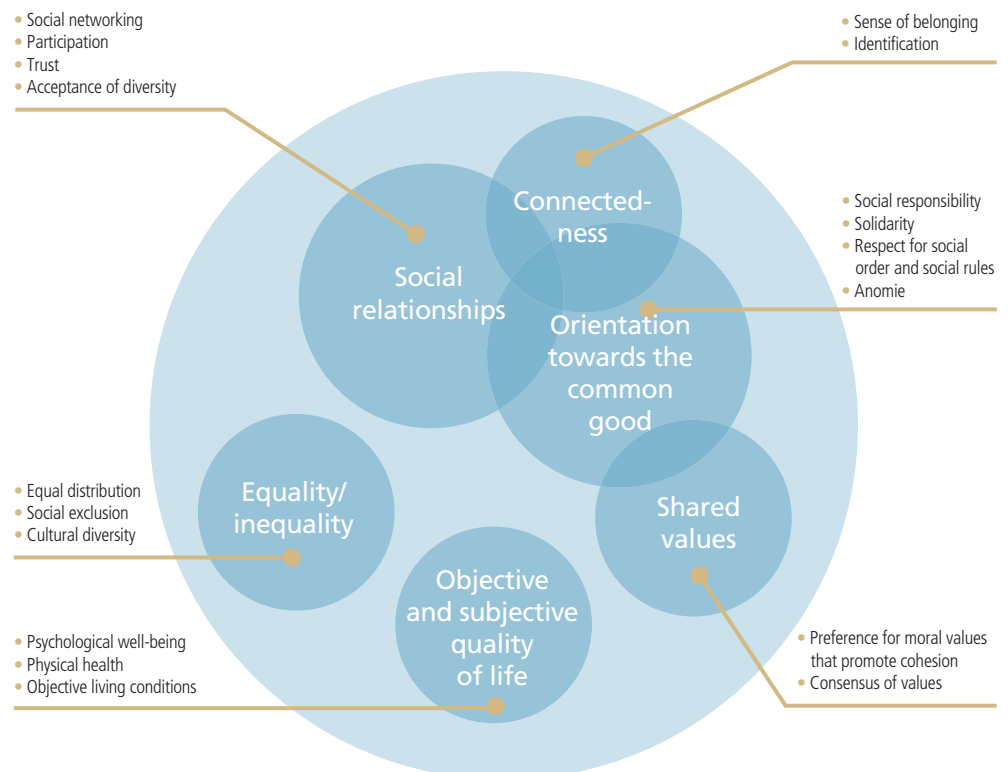
[4] However, the assumption that the social order and social control are prerequisites for social cohesion is not without difficulties. It overlooks the fact that conflicting values and the questioning of the social order are legitimate elements of political and social life in modern pluralist societies (Beauvais & Jenson 2002; Kearns & Forrest 2000).

2000; European Commission 2001). Closely related to these issues is the concept of **social exclusion**, the exclusion of individuals or groups from social life (Berger-Schmitt 2000; Berger-Schmitt & Noll 2000; see also Jenson 2010, Jeannotte et al. 2002). Alongside the distribution of resources, the dimension of **cultural** (or ethnic or religious) **diversity** or **fractionalisation** is the most likely candidate for a distributive dimension (e.g. Easterly et al. 2006). This dimension thus belongs to the aspect of equality/inequality. The second distributive dimension comprises **mental well-being, physical health**, and **objective living conditions**, which some studies categorise as belonging to social cohesion. These studies frequently discuss the (unequal) distribution of well-being (happiness and contentment in life), health, and living conditions among different regions or social groups. Such discussion takes place within the broader contexts of **quality of life** and **welfare**.

Figure 2: Aspects and dimensions of social cohesion

Social cohesion

- Characteristic of a collective
- Multidimensional
- Measured on micro, meso, and macro levels

- Social networking
- Participation
- Trust
- Acceptance of diversity

- Sense of belonging
- Identification

Connected-ness

- Social responsibility
- Solidarity
- Respect for social order and social rules
- Anomie

Social relationships

Orientation towards the common good

- Equal distribution
- Social exclusion
- Cultural diversity

Equality/inequality

Shared values

Objective and subjective quality of life

- Psychological well-being
- Physical health
- Objective living conditions

- Preference for moral values that promote cohesion
- Consensus of values

Source: Own Diagramm.

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2.3 Our Suggestion: Definition and Relevant Dimensions

Based on the results of our analysis of the relevant literature outlined above, we developed our own suggestion for defining and conceptualising cohesion. We advocate a lean approach focusing on the three aspects of social cohesion that display a high degree of overlap, namely social relationships, connectedness, and orientation towards the common good. Our suggestion is as follows:

Cohesion is a descriptive attribute of a collective and expresses the quality of social cooperation. A cohesive society is characterised by close social relationships, intensive emotional connectedness, and a pronounced orientation towards the common good. We define cohesion as a graduated phenomenon, which means that societies may exhibit greater or lesser degrees of cohesion. This degree of cohesion is expressed in the attitudes and the behaviour of the members and social groups within the society. Its character is both ideational and relational.

The approach which we favour is largely identical to that of Chan et al. (2006) and Delhey (2004):

> Social cohesion is a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and horizontal interactions of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioural manifestations.
>
> (Chan et al. 2006, 290)

> [...] social cohesion, can be measured by how positive mutual perceptions and attitudes are, how much sense of community and we-feeling there is, and by the extent such we-feeling translates into supportive action.
>
> (Delhey 2004, 17)

Nevertheless, we believe there are good reasons for formulating our own definition. Firstly, we prefer a definition that proceeds from a more abstract level (i.e. from the aspects of cohesion) to one that merely aggregates partial dimension. Secondly, the definition should be able to sustain a possible future reporting system and must therefore be tailored to an exact fit. For this purpose, the definitions of Chan and Delhey are one size too small, as it were.

Our suggestion takes up three of the six aspects of cohesion that are mentioned in the relevant literature (social relationships, connectedness, orientation towards the common good; see Figure 3). Why these three and not all six? To begin with, sociological definitions cannot be right or wrong; they can only be more or less convincing and more or less useful. In our view, it is convincing to take the dimensions with the greatest degree of overlap social relationships, connectedness, and orientation towards the common good as our focal point. In doing so, we will give the concept analytical clarity and distinguish unambiguously between the conditions, components, and consequences of cohesion. With this aim in mind, we took two strategic decisions to exclude certain aspects.

The first of these decisions leads us to suggest that the two aspects of objective and subjective quality of life and equality/inequality should not be taken as components of social cohesion, but rather as its determinants and/or consequences, since the concept of cohesion would otherwise lose its analytical clarity. From our point of view, for instance, it is more accurate to classify objective living conditions as a possible precondition for cohesion, while subjective well-being is one of its consequences. To give an example, a cohesive society presumably has positive effects on mental well-being and physical health, and therefore improves the overall subjective quality of life. Thus a number of authors view cohesion either as a direct influence variable (well-being and health as outcomes, e.g. Beauvais & Jenson 2002; Jenson 2010; Putnam 2000) or as a moderator (cohesion mitigates the negative effects of stressors such as poverty and unemployment, e.g. Phipps 2003; Upperman & Gauthier 1998). The same applies to the aspect of equality/inequality. It is certainly true that a large gulf between rich and poor weakens social cohesion, e.g. as a result of the direct experience of disadvantage and injustice; the erosive effects of unequal income distribution on trust are well documented (Bjornskov 2008). But here, too, equality in and of itself is not a component of cohesion.

Secondly, we argue that moral values should be distinguished from cohesion, since the relationship between values and cohesion has not yet been explained adequately from an empirical perspective. It is debatable whether a cohesive society really needs homogeneous values or whether this is an outdated, mechanistic concept that does not apply to complex, heterogeneous societies (Wenzel 2001). It also remains unclear which values must be shared in order to enable cohesion (Jenson, 1998). Is consensus as such the only thing that matters? Or must there be consensus about collectivist values that give precedence to society over the individual? Does a society need consensus about certain fundamental values that are considered to be core values (e.g. the dominant culture), or consensus about those values in general that seem to promote cohesion, such as the acceptance of minorities? Until these questions have been empirically answered, we will adopt the concept of shared values as a possible determinant.

From the definition to the partial dimensions

We regard social relationships, connectedness, and orientation towards the common good as clear and consensual components of social cohesion. These core aspects of cohesion can be subdivided into partial dimensions that may be briefly described as follows (see also Figure 3):.

Social Relationships

Dimension 1 – social networking:
Quality and quantity of social relationships and social networks.

Dimension 2 – participation:
Political participation (e.g. voting in elections) and socio-cultural participation (civic involvement in associations, volunteer work).

Dimension 3 – trust:
General trust in one's fellow human beings and in political institutions.

Dimension 4 – acceptance of diversity:
Inter-group attitudes and tolerance towards minorities.

Connectedness

Dimension 5 – feeling of belonging:
Self-perception as member of a group, sense of shared identity.

Dimension 6 – identification:
Identification with a region, federal state, nation, Europe, belonging rated as important aspect of personal identity.

Orientation towards the common good

Dimension 7 – social responsibility:
Defending the interests of society even at the expense of one's own objectives and needs.

Dimension 8 – solidarity:
Cooperation and support for fellow-citizens.

Dimension 9 – recognition of the social order and social rules/anomie:
Respect for social institutions and adherence to the rules of communal life (as well as the rules for changing the social order) vs. disregard and transgression of norms.

Figure 3: Core aspects and dimensions of social cohesion

Social cohesion
- Characteristic of a collective
- Multidimensional
- Measured on micro, meso, and macro levels

- Social networking
- Participation
- Trust
- Acceptance of diversity

Connected-ness

Social relationships

Orientation towards the common good

- Sense of belonging
- Identification

- Social responsibility
- Solidarity
- Respect for social order and social rules
- Anomie
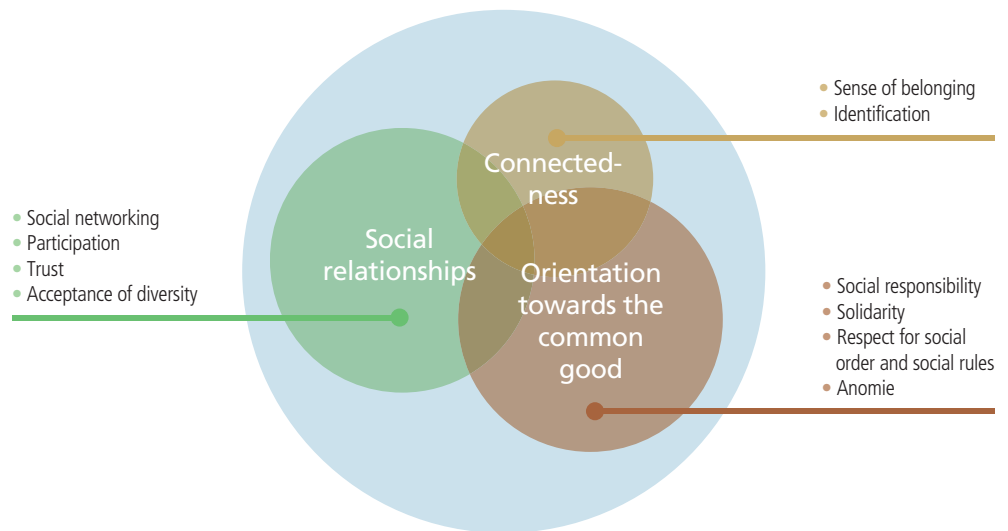
Source: Own Diagramm.

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2.4. The Downside of Cohesion

One question that has not yet been empirically answered concerns the possible negative aspects of social cohesion. In other words, is cohesion unequivocally positive, and is more cohesion invariably better than less?

While some schools of thought, such as the communitarians, do take this view, theorists of modernisation and individualisation also discuss the potential negative consequences of cohesion, namely social control and standardisation. This conflict is the focus of the Social Quality approach, which assumes a dichotomy between self-development and collective identities (Baers, Beck, van der Maesen, Walker, & Herriman 2005; for a similar view see Bernard 1999). But when and under which conditions does cohesion become a straitjacket that limits individual development? Can cohesion even hinder innovation, for example when diversity is undesirable (Chiesi 2004) or when campaigns for reform must bow to the pressure of consensus (Immerfall 2002)? To quote Jenson (1998, 35): "When does cohesion become a threat to cohesion?" Little is known about this empirically. Is there a threshold value above which cohesion becomes too rigid and begins to impact on

individual autonomy? What are the aspects or dimensions of cohesion for which this dichotomy applies, and in which segments of the population (young people, subcultures, etc.) does it apply? Is this negative element inherent even in social cohesion, or only in the rigid cohesion of smaller-scale life contexts (communities, families)?

Another potential downside of cohesion is the relationship between inclusion and exclusion (Philips 2006, ch. 5 & 6). This issue affects, on the one hand, the exterior relationships of societies. Do cohesive societies isolate themselves more strongly from other societies? Or are they more likely than non-cohesive societies to practise solidarity towards the outside? And the question of exclusion also affects relationships within the society itself, as we saw above in our brief evaluation of the empirical findings. Is cohesion inclusive − in other words, does it extend to all social groups? Or is the range within which solidarity applies limited to the majority/minority group, perhaps to an extent that allows internal group cohesion to be achieved only by excluding out-groups (e.g. Jenson 1998)? This question is thematically related to Putnam's concept pair of bridging and bonding social capital as well as to Hall's division of social capital into club good and public good (Hall 1999). The club good aspect of cohesion (the capital of the in-group is defended against members of the out-group) may be described as the downside of cohesion (Chiesi 2004). Consequently, social networking within a society becomes problematic when it limits itself exclusively to bonding social capital and thus engenders social division (and tension) due to high homogeneity within groups and low homogeneity among the different groups (Chiesi 2004). In our view, social cohesion may be described as strong when both forms of social capital (bonding and bridging, or club goods and public goods) are in place.

According to Portes (1998), social capital has at least four potentially negative consequences: the exclusion of outsiders from the social capital of the group (e.g. the exclusivity of social networks; cf. Jenson 1998); excessively high mutual expectations and demands in social networks (put trenchantly, people who win the lottery suddenly find themselves with a lot of friends); and excessively high social control and pressure to conform, along with the possible development of "downward-levelling norms" (Portes 1998, 17), meaning that members of groups with low social status experience negative social sanctions after social advancement. The fourth potential danger is that, in extreme cases, strongly cohesive communities may hush up problems such as violations of human rights and repression of, or violence against, women and minority groups (Reese-Schäfer 2010).

This potential downside of cohesion should be borne in mind and subjected to regular critical reflection in the course of future research activities, especially those dealing with the consequences of cohesion. Empirical analysis is required to establish the correct dosage of cohesion that facilitates well-being and development.

3. The Status of Social Cohesion in Germany

How do people respond when asked about the strength of social cohesion in Germany? In a volunteer survey conducted in 2004 and 2009, a representative number of people were asked: "In your opinion, how good is social cohesion in your neighbourhood?" (Gensicke & Geiss 2010). In 2004, 58% of those polled described cohesion in their neighbourhood as "very good" or "good", while 29% described it as "adequate" and 10% thought it was "poor" or "very poor" (the remainder did not reply to the question). Five years later, the perceived quality of local cohesion had improved slightly (62% "good/very good", 28% "adequate", 8% "poor/very poor"). The sense of cohesion was somewhat higher in rural than in urban areas.

56% believe that cohesion is in danger

In the 2011 Bielefeld survey programme on group-focused enmity, people were asked how strongly they agreed with the statement "Society is disintegrating more and more" (Zick & Küpper 2012). 74% of those polled agreed "somewhat" or "fully" with this statement. 56% agreed with the statement that "Cohesion in Germany is in danger". According to the authors of the survey, these values have improved compared to responses to the same questions in 2005.

The purpose of the findings outlined in the following chapter is to give an idea of how various indicators can be used to make an empirical assessment of cohesion in Germany and what these indicators tell us about cohesion in Germany.

Our survey shows that there is almost no literature that empirically examines the totality of social cohesion in Germany. Instead, most studies focus on a single dimension or a very small number of dimensions. The following chapter, therefore, will briefly summarise the most important empirical findings for each dimension and integrate them into an overall picture. We will rely for the most part on published studies, adding our own analyses of existing data in only a few places.

The material is structured along three guiding questions:

- What is the current status of cohesion and how did it develop over time?
- Are there regional differences and differences between social groups?
- Where does Germany stand compared to other countries?

We must stress that this summary of the findings often reproduces only a small selection of the total research activities on the various topics. In particular, the simultaneous consideration of all three guiding questions must be left for future studies to accomplish.

3.1 Social Relationships

3.1.1 Social Networking

People in Germany are well integrated into circles of friends and acquaintances and can count on help from others in difficult times. The data give no indication that social networks are collapsing. There is a tendency for social networking to be less pronounced in eastern than in western Germany, and the availability of social support continues to depend on the socio-economic status of the individual. Internationally, Germany ranks in mid-field where the strength of social relationships is concerned.

Status and Development

Are people increasingly turning into individualists without fixed relationships to others in their environment? The data do not bear this out. In the late 1990s, about a quarter of the participants in a survey said that they had a stable circle of friends and/or friends with whom to engage in activities (Noelle-Neumann & Köcher 2002). In 2006, 95% of those polled in the European Social Survey (hereafter: ESS) stated that there were people in their environment with whom they could talk about personal and private matters (own calculation). Figure 4 shows data from two surveys about the size of individual persons' circles of friends and acquaintances (Gensicke & Geiss 2010; Noelle-Neumann & Köcher 2002). The circles of friends and acquaintances of German residents increased in size from the late 1950s to the late 1990s, but decreased again in the past ten to fifteen years.

Figure 4: Size of social network
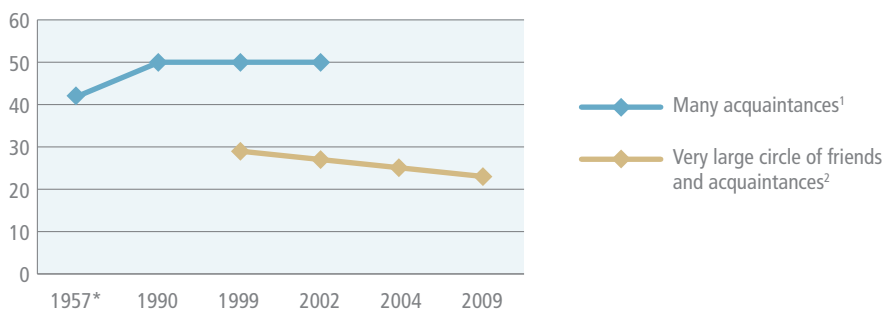
Note: Figures are percentages of persons polled who selected the respective categories. Additional categories for selection were "average" (both studies) and "few" (Noelle-Neumann & Köcher 2002) or "small" (Gensicke & Geiss 2010). *West Germany.

Source: [1]Noelle-Neumann & Köcher, 2002; [2]Gensicke & Geiss, 2010.   Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

Our own calculations based on ESS data between 2002 and 2010 also show that the amount of time spent people in Germany spent with relatives, friends, and acquaintances has neither increased nor decreased in the course of the last decade.

It should be noted that having social contacts is not synonymous with being able to rely on other people's help. However, here too the data show that people still have access to key contacts who will help them in difficult times (Figure 5). According to Noelle-Neumann and Köcher (2002), just under two-thirds of West Germans polled in 1951 (63%) stated that they could rely on other people's support in times of need. In the early 2000s, the figure was approximately 90% (Alscher, Dathe, Priller, & Speth 2009; Noelle-Neumann & Köcher 2002). Between 1999 and 2009, too, the size of the circles supporting people in Germany seems to have remained largely constant or increased slightly (Gensicke & Geiss 2010).

Social relationships today are more voluntary and independently chosen, less binding, and of shorter duration.

Although social networks do not appear to be disintegrating, Giesel (2007), referring to Keupp (2001), observes that a structural change has taken place. As a result, social relationships today are more voluntary and independently chosen, less binding, and less permanent. Relationships are becoming more independent of the individual persons' places of residence and increasingly

Figure 5: Support network

Percentage of those polled who named the respective key contacts

5a[1]:
"If you should find yourself in a difficult situation, do you have someone who would help you? If yes, would you tell me who that person might be?".

5b[2]:
"If you need help occasionally, for running errands, doing small jobs, or looking after children or sick people, are there people outside your household whom you could ask for help without difficulty?"

Family/relatives — Friends/acquaintances/neighbours

Relatives — Friends/acquaintances/neighbours
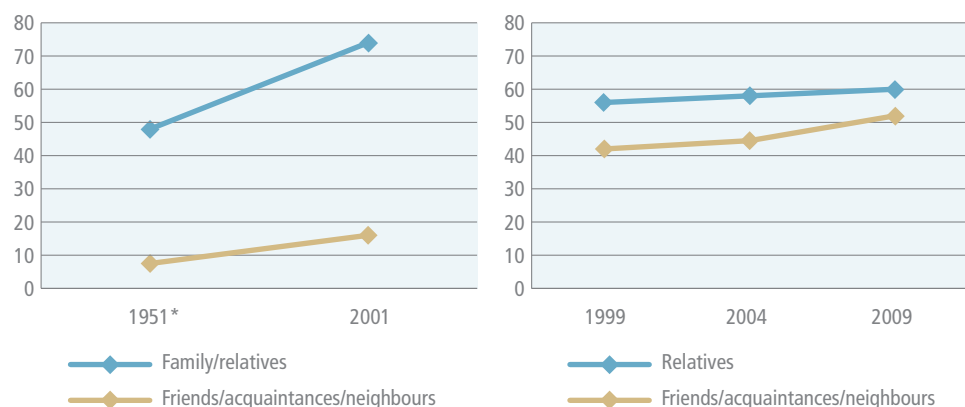
Note: *West Germany

Source: [1]Noelle-Neumann & Köcher (2002); [2]Gensicke & Geiss, 2009.

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pertain only to certain spheres of life which do not overlap. However, Giesel (2007) does not take this development as an indicator of a decline in cohesion. In the course of this chapter, we will see that a similar structural change can be observed in the case of participation as well.

Differences within Germany

Some studies shed light on the differences between eastern and western Germany, but their findings are not consistent. Gesthuizen, Van der Meer, and Scheepers (2009) cite the Eurobarometer to show that people in western Germany socialise with friends and colleagues more often, whilethe number of contacts with neighbours are roughly the same in both parts of the country. An Allensbach Study (Noelle-Neumann & Köcher 2002) finds no differences between east and west with respect to the number of people who would be willing to help in difficult times. The number of those who actually received help from others in recent years is higher in eastern than in western Germany. According to Rippl (1995), however, people in eastern Germany were more firmly embedded in fixed, non-voluntary relationships (family) in the mid-1990s than people in western Germany. People in western Germany considered family to be less important, while freely chosen and looser contacts played a greater role.

On the the principle that "He that has plenty shall have more" (Immerfall 1997, 163), people with higher education and higher income also have greater social resources. Only the number of close confidants was independent of socio-economic status in the mid-1990s (Immerfall 1997). This is borne out by our own analysis of the ESS 2010. The number of people who state that they have access to people with whom they can discuss private and personal matters rises in proportion to income and level of education.

Additionally, women are more likely than men to provide inter-personal assistance (Immerfall 1997); again, this is confirmed by our own analyses (International Social Survey Programme [hereafter: ISSP] 2001).

International Comparison

Figure 6 shows the figures both for the federal states and for Germany as a whole as well as the average value of the 20 European countries that participated in the ESS. The figure for Germany is roughly equal to the European average. According to an older study, in 1986 Germany ranked mid-field on a list of seven countries (Germany, Australia, Great Britain, USA, Austria, Hungary, and Italy; cf. Immerfall 1997) in terms of the number of people individuals could ask for help. In terms of frequency of contact with friends, colleagues, and neighbours, Germany ranks mid-field among the 27 EU countries (Gesthuizen et al. 2009).

**Figure 6:** How often do you meet with friends, relatives, and colleagues (socially)?

State	Value
Rhineland-Palatinate	~5.1
Lower Saxony	~5.1
Berlin	~5.1
North Rhine-Westphalia	~5.0
European average	~5.0
Bavaria	~4.9
Germany overall	~4.9
Hesse	~4.9
Baden-Wuerttemberg	~4.85
Thuringia	~4.7
Schleswig-Holstein	~4.55
Saxony-Anhalt	~4.55
Saxony	~4.45
Brandenburg	~4.4
Mecklenburg-W. Pomerania	~4.4
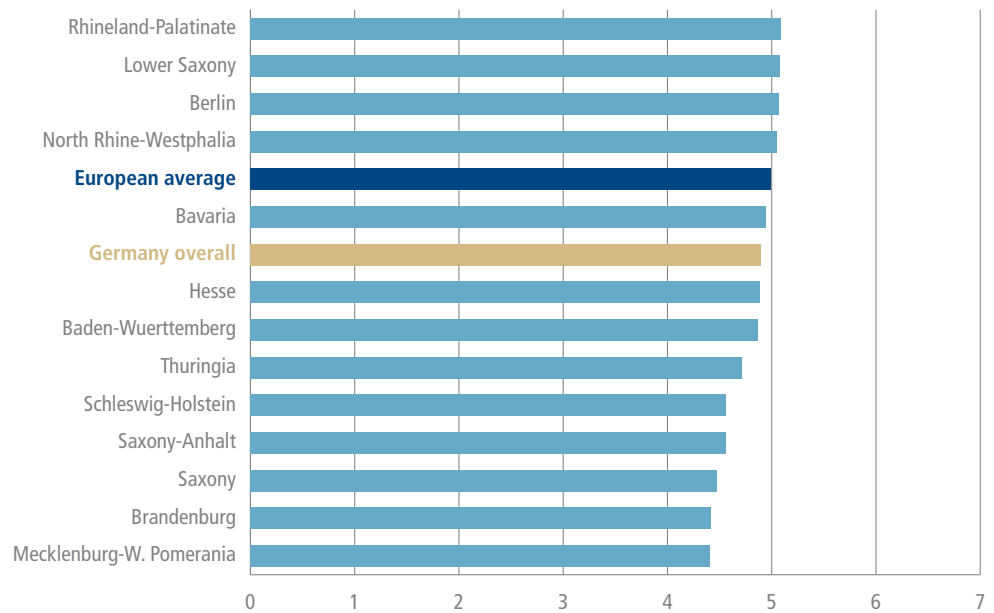
Note: Figures exclude Bremen, Hamburg, and Saarland, as fewer than 50 persons participated in these states. Possible answers: 1 = never; 2 = less than once per month; 3 = once per month; 4 = several times per month; 5= once per week; 6 = several times per week; 7 = every day.

Source: Own Calculations based on the European Social Survey, 2010. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

The degree of social networking can also be illustrated by feelings of loneliness. Figure 7 compares the feelings of loneliness of Germans with those of other Europeans. In 2010, the average German "never or almost never" or "rarely" felt lonely, so that feelings of loneliness were slightly less frequent than in 2006. On a European scale, Germans tend to feel less lonely than the average resident of Europe, especially Southern and Eastern Europeans.

Figure 7: Please tell me how often you felt lonely during the past week
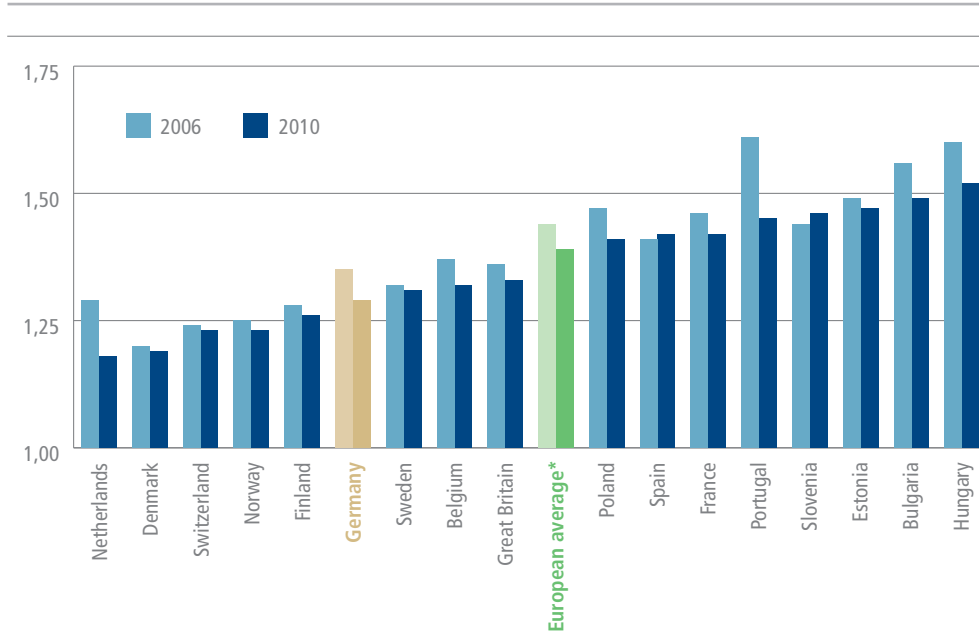
Note: Possible answers: 1 = never or almost never; 2 = sometimes; 3 = usually; 4 = always or almost always. *ESS participating countries: Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, Spain, Slovenia, France, Poland, Estonia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Portugal.

Source: Own calculations based on the European Social Survey, 2010.

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3.1.2 Participation

The extent of social participation has not decreased in the past three decades. Rather, there is an upward trend in membership of associations and in volunteer work. Voter turnout, however, is declining. Germans are most strongly involved in the field of sports, leisure, culture, and social issues, with lower participation levels in environmental and animal welfare issues, political parties, and interest groups. Traditionally large associations are losing members to smaller, informal ones, and participation is becoming more fluid and situative (structural change).

Overall participation is lower in eastern Germany, the same applies to people with lower socio-economic status, women, and migrants. In relation to other European countries, Germany ranks mid-field for almost all participation indicators.

Status and Development

Membership

We will begin with some figures on membership in associations, which were obtained in surveys (voluntary disclosure). Based on various surveys (Institute for Applied Social Sciences [hereafter: INFAS]; BAT Leisure Research Institute, German Welfare Survey; German General Social Survey [hereafter: ALLBUS]), Offe and Fuchs (2001) quote the total number of persons in Germany who were members of a (registered) society between 1953 and 1996. The figures vary from study to study, but remain constant within each study over time and typically range between 50% and 60%.

50-60% are members of associations

Alscher et al (2009) come to a similar conclusion for the period between 1980 and 2008. Here, too, the percentage values differ depending on the data source (Socio-Economic Panel [hereafter: SOEP]; ALLBUS; ESS), but remain remarkably constant over time. How is membership distributed? Sports associations and churches have the largest numbers of members. Social and cultural associations range in mid-field, while political associations, environmental and animal welfare associations and citizens' action groups have relatively few members (Braun 2005; Gensicke & Geiss 2010; Immerfall 1997).

Memberships are also recorded by statistics offices and by the associations themselves. Alscher et al. (2009) analysed the development of membership figures between 1991 and 2007 using the yearbooks of the Federal Office of Statistics. They report a clear decline in membership of trade unions and political parties and a lesser decline in the case of churches and the choral society (Sängerbund). The sports federation (Sportbund) recorded a slight increase in membership numbers. Based on their analysis of the membership statistics of individual associations, Dathe et al. (2010) arrive at similar results.

Involvement

Membership figures do not provide conclusive information about civic involvement, since membership lists include the names of non-active members on the one hand and since, on the other hand, it is possible to engage in voluntary and unpaid services without being a member of an organisation (Gensicke & Geiss 2010, 91).

71% are actively involved

Trend studies show that the proportion of persons engaged in unpaid or voluntary work may vary in the short term, but has risen in the long term from 8% in 1954 to 30% in 2007 (Alscher et al. 2009; Priller 2006; similar conclusions in Heinze and Olk 2002). The volunteer survey (Gensicke & Geiss 2010) found that the involvement rate increased from 66% to 71% between 1999 and 2009 and that the increase applied equally to men and women and to almost all age groups and social strata. Active involvement is highest in the fields of sports and leisure, social services, and religious institutions. Political interest groups and citizens' action groups record fairly low levels of active participation (cf. Gaskin et al. 1996; Gensicke & Geiss 2010; Priller 2006).

There are few indications of an overall decline in participation in Germany (Alscher et al. 2009; Klages 2002; see also von Rosenbladt 2002); however, experts are observing a structural change. There has been a decline in willingness to assume time-intensive duties and to make firm commitments, while willingness to leave an association is increasing. Traditionally large organisations like political parties, welfare associations, trade unions, and churches are losing (active) members, while smaller, more informal associations, initiatives, and networks are on the rise (Alscher et al. 2009; Heinze & Strünk 2001; Klages 2002; Offe & Fuchs 2001; Priller 2002). Volunteer involvement today is more strongly defined by its compatibility with other interests and free time available (Klages 2002). It is driven less by idealism and Christian charity than by a combination of the desire for companionship, personal concern, the desire for political change, and self-actualisation (Heinze & Strünk 2001). The "new volunteers" are more concerned with situative factors, specific issues, and the compatibility of the volunteer work with their own biographies. In terms of content, social participation is more strongly focused on leisure and recreation (Alscher et al. 2009; Offe & Fuchs 2001).

Structural change in participation

Participation focuses on leisure and recreationg

Differences within Germany

Many studies report results for various sub-groups of the population. In terms of demographics, the largest proportion of persons involved in civic activities appears to belong to the middle generations (age range 30−59, with age groups varying from study to study). This pattern has remained stable over time (Alscher et al. 2009; Ehling & Schmidt 2002; Gaskin et al. 1996; Gensicke & Geiss 2010; Heinze & Olk 2002). Additionally, educated and high-earning people have a higher degree of involvement (Alscher et al. 2009; Ehling & Schmidt 2002; Gensicke & Geiss 2010; Immerfall 1997). Men are more active than women and also occupy the more prestigious volunteer positions, for example on boards of directors (Alscher et al. 2009; Ehling & Schmidt 2002; Endres & Back 2002; Gensicke & Geiss 2010; Heinze & Olk 2002; Immerfall 1997). The reason for this is probably that women have more duties in the family and cannot allocate their time as flexibly as men (Endres & Back 2002). The involvement rate is lower in eastern Germany than in western Germany. This has been documented for the 1990s by Ehling and Schmidt (2002) and Priller (2002), and for the first decade of the new millennium by Alscher et al. (2009) and the Volunteer Survey (Gensicke & Geiss 2010). The differences range between 6% and 10%. People from migrant backgrounds, and first-generation immigrants in particular, remain less active in volunteer activities (Akgün 2008; Alscher et al. 2009; Gensicke Picot, & Geiss 2006). The second generation holding German citizenship ranks only slightly lower in volunteer involvement than the average of the majority population and is also more strongly represented in German associations and organisations than the first generation of immigrants. Migrants are most strongly involved in schools and kindergartens as well as sports and exercise (Gensicke et al. 2006). They are under-represented in the volunteer fire brigade, environmental and nature conservation, and in the fields of health and casualty and ambulance services (Akgün 2008; Gensicke et al. 2006). This may be attributable to the conservative structure of German associations and to migrants' fears of being unwelcome in associations (Akgün 2008). For example, Baier (2012) shows that the attitudes of young people in the volunteer fire brigade are more xenophobic than those of young people not involved in the fire brigade.

Greater involvement of the educated and the affluent

Less involvement in the east than in the west

Migrants less active; second generation gaining ground

International Comparison

Germany generally ranks mid-field both for membership numbers and involvement rates. This ranking is reported by Immerfall (1997) for the year 1990 (Eurobarometer); by Green et al. (2009) and Adam (2008) for 1999 (World Values Survey [hereafter: WVS]; and by Alscher et al. (2009, ESS), Gesthuizen et al. (2009, Eurobarometer), and Adam (2008, Eurobarometer) for 2002−2004. However, exact figures are difficult to determine because the countries compared vary (sometimes Europe, sometimes OECD, sometimes worldwide). According to Gaskin et al. (1996), Germany ranks eighth among nine countries. Alscher et al. (2009) report on national comparisons based on three different survey programmes. Germany ranks mid-field according to the 2002/2003 ESS (among 20 participating European countries) and among the leaders according to the 2006 Eurobarometer (fourth place among 25 European countries). A third comparative international survey (Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe 2006) places Germany in mid-field once again (Alscher et al. 2009). The results reported by Adam (2008) are just as inconclusive.

Germany in mid-field

Political Action: Status and Development compared to other countries

Declining participation in elections

Independent of (active) membership in political organisations, political participation is also measured by voter turnout and political activities. Currently (2009), voter turnout in parliamentary and state elections is at 71%. After an initial increase in voter turnout between 1949 (79%) and 1972 (91%), election participation by eligible voters has steadily declined (Eilfort 2009; Jaschke 2009). This is often taken as an indicator for increasing political apathy (Arzheimer, 2002). Comparisons with Europe show that Germany is largely following a wider European trend here (Figure 8).

Germans participate more frequently in signature campaigns and demonstrations

For public involvement in political activities, we analysed data from three survey phases of the European Values Study (hereafter: EVS). Figure 9 shows percentage values for participation in a signature campaign and a peaceful demonstration. For comparison purposes, the figure also shows the average value of 27 EU countries as well as Norway and Switzerland. The number of people participating in one of the two political activities remained largely constant throughout the three survey periods. Germans participated more frequently than other Europeans in signature campaigns and demonstrations.

Figure 8: Voter turnout in parliamentary elections 1945–2011 compared to selected European countries

Figures shown are precentages
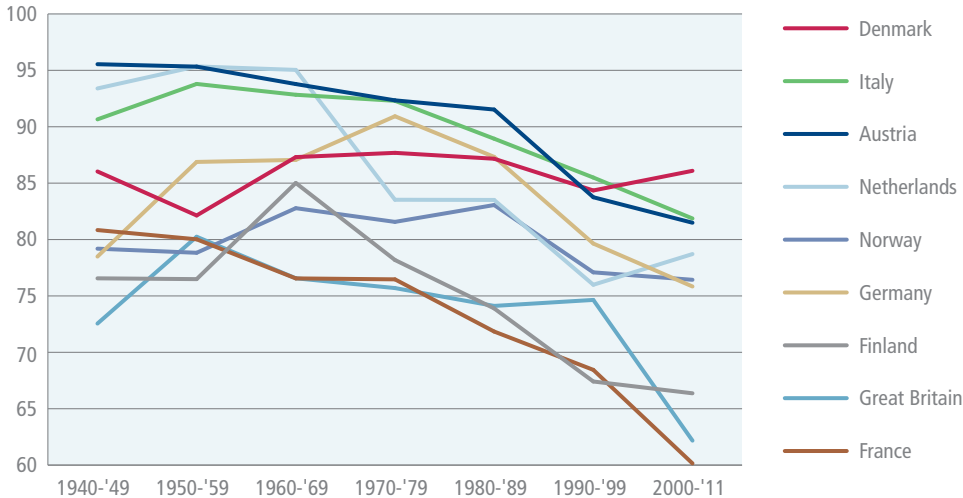
Source: Own calculations based on data from the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

Figure 9: Participation in signature campaigns and peaceful demonstration

Figures are expressed in percentages of participants who stated that they had participated in these political activities at least once before
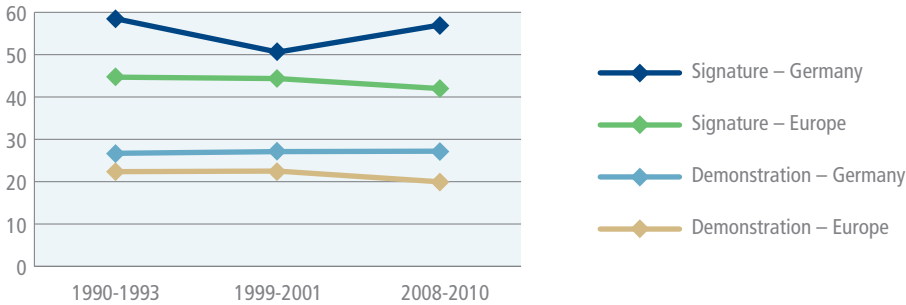
Source: Own Calculations based on the World Value Survey. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

3.1.3 Trust

Trust in one's fellow human beings has increased in Germany since the late 1950s and seems to have remained stable since the 1990s. Compared to other countries, and with some variation depending on the countries it is being compared to, Germany has ranked in the middle third since the 1990s. Social trust is higher in western than in eastern Germany, and Germans have significantly higher trust in regulatory institutions than in political institutions and politicians. Political trust, in fact, has decreased in the medium term. In eastern Germany, trust in almost all institutions has increased since reunification, but is still lower than in western Germany.

Status and Development

Levels of trust represent a standard indicator in national and international surveys. Two types of trust are measured: trust in one's fellow human beings (social trust) and trust in political and social institutions as well as authority figures (institutional or political trust).

Trust in fellow human beings

60% have
no trust in their
fellow human
beings

Currently, just under 40% of Germans generally trust their fellow human beings. In the long term, social trust seems to have increased in Germany as evidenced by a considerable increase after World War II and has remained relatively stable (trendless fluctuation) since approximately 1990. This long refernce period permits only limited comparisons, however. Strictly comparable data indicate an increase in trust at certain periods, such as between 1981 and 1990 (Immerfall 1997) and between 1990 and 2005 (Morrone et al. 2009). Our own analysis of ESS data shows an increase between 2006 and 2008, followed by a decrease in trust until 2010.

Institutional trust

Low trust
in politics

Germans have higher levels of trust in regulatory institutions (the judiciary and police) than in political institutions (Bundestag, federal government) and politicians. While approximately three-quarters of Germans trust the police, only one-third trusts the Bundestag and less than one-fifth trusts politics (see Table 1; see also Gabriel & Zmerli 2006). This pattern can be observed as far back as the 1980s (Zmerli 2004, ALLBUS data) in most of the countries of Europe.

Declining trust
in institutions

Institutional trust appears to be declining over the long term. Trust in political institutions in western Germany has been decreasing since 1984 (Zmerli 2004). Meier (1996), too, reports figures for western Germany that indicate a decline in trust in political institutions during the first half of the 1990s. Krüger (1995) maps the average trust in political and regulatory institutions between 1984 and 1992 and identifies a declining trend. One explanation for this trend, which holds true on the international level as well, is the phenomenon of the "critical citizen" (Norris 1999), who holds political institutions and politicians to high standards.

Table 1: Proportion of persons exhibiting trust in state institutions

	Police			**Courts**			**Parliament**			**Politicians**		
	2002	2004	2008	2002	2004	2008	2002	2004	2008	2002	2004	2008
West	76	71	77	58	54	59	34	29	36	17	14	17
East	62	62	63	43	42	45	21	23	25	12	14	14

Note: Figures represent percentages of those who specify at least one value of 6 on a scale of 0–10.

Source: Data for 2002 and 2004 from Gabriel & Zmerli (2006), data for 2008 from own calculations based on the European Social Survey. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

Differences within Germany

Trust in fellow human beings

Most studies indicate that trust levels are higher in the western states than in the "new" states of eastern Germany, and this is borne out by our own analysis using the latest ESS data (see Figure 10). The same results were yielded by a countrywide survey of German school pupils in Ninth Grade (Baier 2012), which found that young people in the eastern ("new") federal states have lower trust in their neighbourhoods (the scale consists of five statements). Regional differences emerged among the western federal states as well, with school pupils in northern Germany having the highest trust levels, followed by those in the west and those in the south.

Institutional trust

People in eastern Germany take a more sceptical view of institutions than people in the west. According to Gabriel and Zmerli (2006), the reason for this west-east gradient is that, after the political turnaround of 1989, trust in political and regulatory institutions was low in East Germany (and in other post-communist states) after decades of experience with the local regime and required time to grow again. And indeed the differences between eastern and western Germany have decreased since 1990. Between 1994 and 2002, trust levels in all institutions increased in eastern Germany (Zmerli 2004).

Lower trust
in eastern
Germany

Figure 10: Proportion of persons with general trust
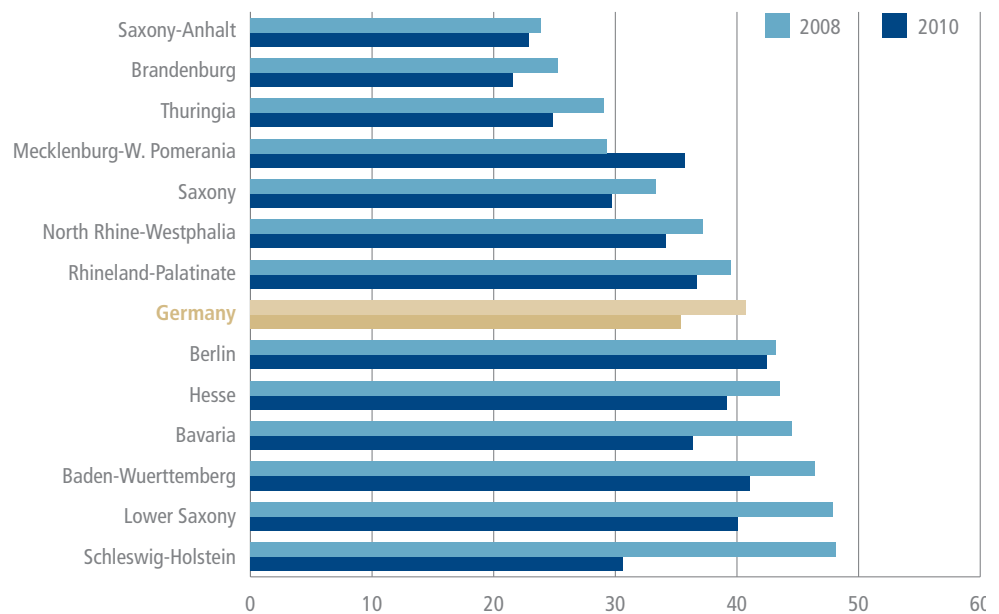
Note: Excluding Saarland, Bremen, and Hamburg, as fewer than 50 participants were interviewed in these federal states. The percentage figures represent the people who specified a minimum value of 6 on a scale of 0 ("it's wiser to be careful") to 10 ("trust").

Source: Own Calculations based on the European Social Survey. | BertelsmannStiftung

International Comparison

Trust in fellow human beings

Germany's ranking varies depending on the context of the comparison. In a broad international comparison (beyond the OECD and Europe), Germany ranks among the trust countries (upper third; cf. Delhey, Newton, & Welzel 2011). In the OECD and Europe, the country ranks in the upper middle range. The Scandinavian countries have the highest trust levels (cf. Delhey & Newton 2002).

Institutional trust

Other European countries too exhibit lower trust in political (compared to regulatory) institutions (Gabriel & Zmerli 2006). But how does Germany rank overall in terms of institutional trust? Dickes, Valentova, and Borsenberger (2009) created an institutional trust index for 33 countries (EVS data for 1999). The index included data about trust in distribution systems (educational system, social security system, etc.), national organisations (parliament, police, trade unions, etc.), and authoritarian

institutions (church, army). Among 33 countries, western Germany ranks tenth and eastern Germany twelfth, so that the country as a whole occupies a place at the bottom of the upper third. In a comparison of 30 democratic states, based on WVS data, Germany ranks lower third (Morrone et al. 2009). Germany scores especially low for trust in parliament and the government, though it ranks higher (in mid-field) for trust in the judicial system. The lower ranking compared to the study by Dickes et al. can probably be explained by the fact that the latter took a larger number of institutions into account.

3.1.4 Acceptance of Diversity

Disparaging statements about specific groups tend to meet with little approval in Germany. However, an appreciable proportion of the population has xenophobic, anti-Semitic, and anti-Islamic leanings. There is a widespread expectation that minority groups should assimilate, while multicultural variety meets with less support. There is strong rejection of socially deviant groups (drug addicts, criminals) as well as left-wing and right-wing extremists. Developments over time do not reveal a clear, overarching trend. Homophobia, sexism, and anti-Semitism are in decline, though attitudes towards immigrants and Muslims remain problematic and prejudices against these groups have gained acceptance in recent years. In eastern Germany, xenophobia is stronger than in the west, while the figures for homophobia, sexism, and anti-Semitism are comparable with those for western Germany. International comparative studies place Germany either in mid-field or, occasionally, in the group of countries with relatively low levels of xenophobia.

Status and Development

We share the view that contrary to what was assumed by older studies, modern social cohesion does not require homogeneity of culture, religion, values, and lifestyles, but rather calls for constructive approaches to heterogeneity. How, then, do Germans deal with heterogeneity? We have collected studies that focus on two aspects, namely direct (negative) attitudes towards other groups on the one hand and social distance on the other.

The extent of negative attitudes (and of social distance) can technically be represented both by scale means and by percentages of persons who agree or disagree with a specific statement.

Blank and Schmidt (2003) analysed data from the year 1996 for a scale recording negative attitudes to out-groups and found that the average value for Germany lay below the neutral scale mean. What this means is that the participants in the survey tended to disagree with disparaging group-focused statements. For the period of 2002–2005, Schmidt-Denter (2011) reports a similar average value below the neutral mean of a xenophobia scale (i.e. a tendency to reject xenophobic statements), as does Braun (2005). The study of the Bielefeld Research Group on Group-Focused Enmity (GMF project website 2011; Heitmeyer 2010) reports scale means for negative attitudes towards a number of social groups: foreigners, Jews, Muslims, people with same-sex attraction,

On average, Germans tend to reject negative stereotypes

homeless people, people with disabilities, and the long-term unemployed. In most cases, the values for 2008 too lay below the neutral scale mean. Only the values for xenophobia in the (new) eastern states of Germany lay above the neutral scale mean (Heitmeyer 2010); the same is true of the values throughout Germany for prejudice against the long-term unemployed (GMF project website 2011). All these findings indicate that the average German is more likely to reject than to endorse negative group-focused statements.

One in three Germans makes remarks hostile to homosexuals or the homeless

Information about the proportion of people who agree with disparaging statements provides a nuanced picture. (In general, the values for "agree" and "agree completely" are combined.) In 2006, 27% of those polled in Germany agreed with statements hostile to foreigners, such as "Foreigners only come here to exploit our social welfare system". Approximately 8% of respondents agreed with anti-Semitic statements (Decker & Brähler 2006). The most nuanced study of group-focused enmity has been conducted by the Bielefeld Research Group led by Heitmeyer. Table 2, which was taken from this research context (Zick, Küpper & Wolf, 2010), shows that individual disparaging statements about immigrants, Jews, and Muslims meet with a comparatively high approval rate of up to 50% of respondents. One in three Germans makes negative remarks about homosexuals or the homeless.

A survey from approximately ten years ago on the acceptance of different forms of cohabitation found that 28% of respondents believed that unmarried couples should have the same rights as married couples. 24% thought that same-sex couples should have the same rights as (heterosexual) married couples (Noelle-Neumann & Köcher 2002). These figures too indicate a certain lack of acceptance for alternative lifestyles. In the past ten years, however, major changes appear to have taken place in this field, given that one-third of the children born in 2010 were born out of wedlock.[5]

Table 2: Percentage of respondents with negative group-focused attitudes

Percentage of agreement

Statement	Percentage of agreement [1]
Too many immigrants live in Germany	50
Jews today try to exploit the fact that they were the victims during the Nazi era	49
Islam is an intolerant religion	53
There is nothing immoral about homosexuality (Percentage of rejection)	38
Homeless people should be removed from pedestrian areas	35

Note: [1]Percentage of people who either "agree somewhat" or "agree completely" with the relevant statement, except in the case of the statement on homosexuality, where the figure represents the percentage of people who reject it.

Source: Zick et al., 2010. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

[5] http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/200794/umfrage/anteil-der-nichtehelich-geborenen-kinder-in-deutschland/

Acceptance of cultural diversity includes the willingness to allow people from different backgrounds to practise their own cultures and lifestyles (multiculturalism) and the willingness to allow them to participate in German culture. According to the Bielefeld Research Group, the latter attitude is shared by the majority. Over 90% agree with the statement "We should allow foreigners living in Germany to participate fully in our lives" (Babka von Gostomski, Küpper, & Heitmeyer 2007); however, the precise definition of "participation in our lives" remains unclear. There was significantly less agreement with the statement "We should let foreigners in Germany live the way they are used to" (69% in 2003, 44% in 2006), suggesting that the German population tends to expect foreigners to become assimilated (the exact opposite of cosmopolitan multiculturalism). Our own analyses of ALLBUS 2006 showed that approximately half the respondents strongly believe that "foreigners living in Germany should make a little more effort to adapt their lifestyles to that of the Germans" (value 7 on a seven-point scale; 80% of respondents lie above the neutral scale mean).

Whether group-focused attitudes in Germany have shifted towards greater openness in the last three decades is a question that has no simple answer. For one thing, it is often impossible to discern a clear trend among the directionless fluctuations; for another, attitudes may change in different ways for different reference groups. The material for a single reference group may even be contradictory, as is the case for foreign nationals. On the one hand, the Eurobarometer indicates that attitudes towards foreigners became more negative in the time between 1988 and 1992 (increasing agreement with the statement that "Too many people from different backgrounds live in Germany"; Fuchs, Gerhards, & Roller 1993). On the other hand, the ALLBUS data show a positive trend in attitudes to guest workers for the period from 1980 to 1994 (Terwey 2000). Our own analyses of the ALLBUS data (comparison of 2006 and 1996), in which we updated existing time series, show a growing expectation of assimilation (agreement with the statement "Foreigners should adapt more to the German lifestyle" increased from roughly 60% to approximately 80%). Decker and Brähler (2006), however, detect no increase in xenophobia (but no decrease either) in the years 2002, 2004, and 2006. The Bielefeld Research Group identifies upward and downward fluctuations (GMF project website, 2011): xenophobia increases between 2002 and 2005, then decreases, and rises again from 2009 onwards. Anti-Islamism has increased in recent years (GMF project website 2011). In contrast, homophobia, sexism, and anti-Semitism have decreased continuously since 2002 (GMF project website 2011; Heitmeyer 2010).

According to Immerfall (1997), social distance increased overall between 1980 and 1990. Respondents were asked about their willingness to have members of certain groups in their neighbourhood (EVS data). The lowest acceptance rate was recorded for socially deviant groups (drug addicts, ex-convicts), followed by left-wing and right-wing extremists and people from migrant backgrounds. To evaluate the trend after 1990, we consulted EVS data from the years 1990, 1999, and 2008 (Figure 11). The ranking of the groups is relatively constant. Between 1990 and 1999 there was a decrease in social distance towards almost all groups, especially towards people with same-sex attraction. In contrast, there was stronger rejection of right-wing extremists. Between

The most important thing Germans expect of migrants is adaptation

1999 and 2008, social distance either remained stable (towards right-wing extremists, homosexuals, immigrants, and Jews) or increased (especially towards Muslims). Only left-wing extremists gained higher acceptance during this period.

Figure 11: Social distance towards various social groups

Proportion of respondents who would not want people from the relevant group to be their neighbours.
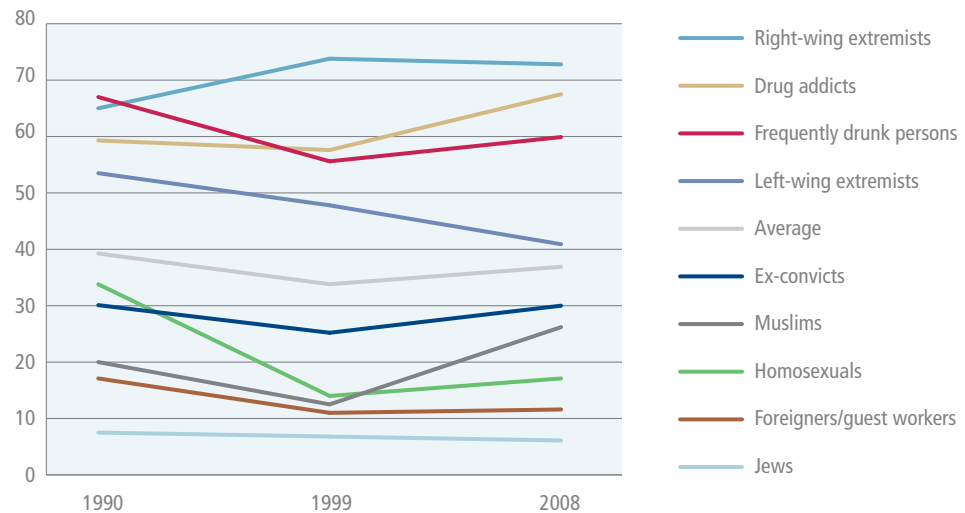

Source: Own calculations based on the European Value Study. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

Differences within Germany

Greater rejection of Muslims, homeless, and the disabled in the east

A comparison between eastern and western Germany consistently shows that negative attitudes to people from migrant backgrounds are more widespread in the eastern federal states than in the west. This was already the case in the 1990s (Blank & Schmidt 2003; Terwey 2000) and has remained unchanged to the present day (Decker & Brähler 2006; Heitmeyer 2008). This is borne out by our own analysis of the 2008 ESS (Figure 12). Heitmeyer (2008) reports that hostility to Islam remains stronger in eastern Germany and that the homeless and people with disabilities also meet with greater rejection there. In contrast, no differences between east and west are reported in the case of anti-Semitism, homophobia, and disparagement of the long-term unemployed. Eastern Germans rank ahead of western Germans only in their acceptance of different forms of cohabitation (Noelle-Neumann & Köcher 2002). In addition to the general differences between east and west, there are other regional peculiarities. For example, xenophobia is higher in Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein than in the other "old" federal states (Babka von Gostomski et al. 2007; Decker & Brähler 2006).

Figure 12: Rejection of immigrants by federal state
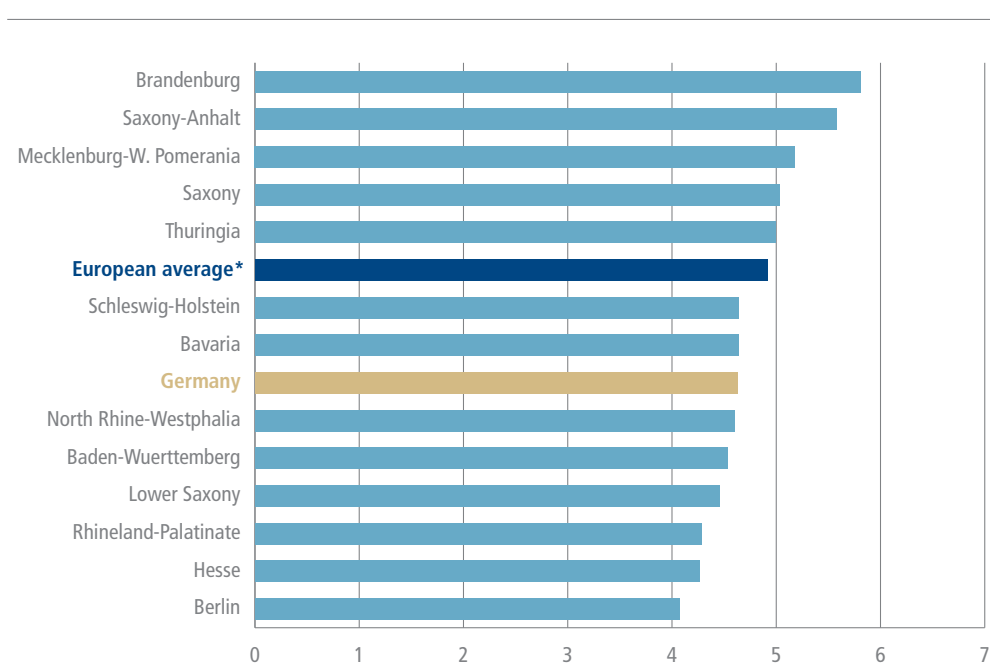
Note: *Mean values on a three-item scale. Answers range from 0 (lowest rejection) to 10 (highest rejection). Not shown are the figures for Bremen, Hamburg, and Saarland, since fewer than 50 people were interviewed in these regions. *Average value for the following participating countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Israel, the Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, Slovenia.

Source: Own calculations based on the European Social Survey, 2010. | Bertelsmann **Stiftung**

We also have some knowledge of individual social structural determinants of negative attitudes to foreigners (Decker & Brähler 2006; Heitmeyer 2010; Terwey 2000). More negative attitudes are displayed by people in rural areas, older people, the less educated classes, and lower income groups. The same profile can be observed in other countries, although Heitmeyer (2010) reports an increase in group-focused enmity (e.g. Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, privileges for the established) mainly in the upper income groups.

Germany in Relation to Other Countries

<div style="float:left">Less xenophobia in Germany</div>

Green et al. (2009) compared 18 countries based on a xenophobia scale compiled from data from the 1995 ISSP. In western Germany they found fairly low levels of xenophobia comparable to those in the USA, the Netherlands, Sweden, Japan, and Spain. According to this study, xenophobia levels lower than those in Germany can be found in Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, and Canada, while higher levels were recorded in countries such as Great Britain, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Norway, the Czech Republic, and Poland.

The study by Schmidt-Denter (2011) found that xenophobia (along with anti-Semitism) among German adolescents was largely at the same level as in the nine reference countries. Significant differences emerged only in relation to Denmark (greater xenophobia among German adolescents) and to Switzerland and Luxembourg (lower xenophobia among German adolescents). In this study, German parents emerged as comparatively low in xenophobia (third-lowest score), and ranked mid-field in terms of anti-Semitism. In terms of group-focused enmity, Germany scores in the medium range for xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and rejection of homeless persons in a group of eight European countries[6] (Zick et al. 2010).

We performed our own analysis to evaluate social distance in Germany in relation to other European countries (acceptance of certain persons in the neighbourhood). Figure 13 shows that Germans are slightly less likely than the European average to disassociate themselves from immigrants, guest workers, and homosexuals, but more likely to stand aloof from right-wing extremists. The pattern is inconclusive with regard to Muslims. Most recently (2008), Germans were less accepting of Muslims than the European average.

[6] Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Hungary.

Figure 13: Social distance – international comparison

Percentage of respondents who would not want people from the relevant group to be their neighbours

13a: Immigrants/guest workers

13b: Right-wing extremists

13c: Muslims

13d: Homosexuals

Germany　　　European average*
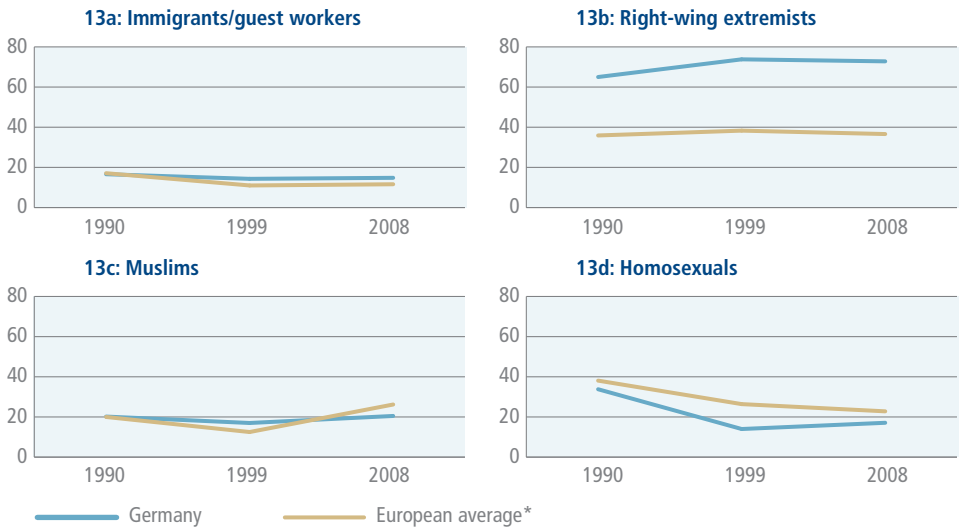
Note: The European average comprises the figures for Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Great Britain. The countries were selected based on the availability of EVS samples for all three testing times.

Source: Own Calculation based on the European Value Study.

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3.2 Connectedness

German citizens identify first of all with their local community, then with their nation, a phenomenon they have in common with the citizens of many other countries. Many Germans feel connected to their country and regard being German as an important component of their own identity. However, national identification and connectedness are not as strongly developed in Germany as in neighbouring countries, and this is particularly true of national pride. There are hardly any differences between east and west, but there are regional differences within western Germany. People who identify more strongly are older, have low levels of education, and live in rural areas.

3.2.1 Identification and Feeling of Belonging

The feeling of belonging to a society (or a region or community) and identification with that society are related constructs. The feeling of belonging encompasses the perception of oneself as the member of a group − a sense of unity. Identification can be more accurately described as the feeling that a certain group is a part of me. Self-concept and personal identity (Who am I, and what defines me?) are defined in terms of membership in specific groups. Although the distinction between the feeling of belonging and identification is cogent in theory (because it draws a distinction between such factors as emotional attachment and cognitive debate), the empirical indicators cannot be unequivocally assigned to any one of these two ideal types. We will therefore deal with identification and the feeling of belonging in a single discussion. The following indicators are commonly used:

- Geographical or social unit with the strongest feeling of belonging (e.g. "Which of the following geographical groups gives you the strongest sense of belonging [place of residence, region, country, continent, world]?")
- Subjective experience of closeness (e.g. "To what extent do you identify with being German?")
- National pride (e.g. "I am proud to be a German.")

Status and Development

The WVS measures the feeling of belonging to different geographical units, i.e. to one's place of residence, one's region or federal state, one's nation, one's continent, and the world. The survey asks respondents to prioritise: "Which of the following geographical groups gives you the strongest [second strongest] sense of belonging?" For this screening study, we analysed the survey's 1997 data for Germany (Figure 14).

Figure 14: To which geographical unit do you feel you primarily belong?

Percentage
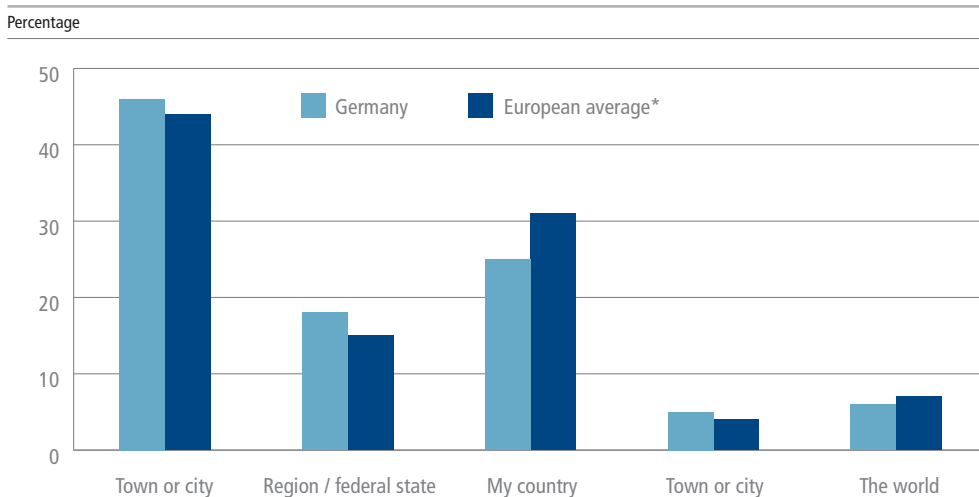
Note: *Average value for European participant countries in the 1997 World Values Survey where this data was gathered: Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

Source: Own calculations based on the European Value Survey, 1997.   │ Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

The highest proportion of respondents (46%) felt their strongest sense of belonging in relation to their place of residence. One-quarter of respondents specified Germany as a whole as their primary unit of reference. Other studies too confirm the primacy of local identification over national identification. According to a 2009 survey by the Identity Foundation, approximately half the respondents agreed with the statement that their home region was more important to them than Germany as a whole. The ISSP conducted a survey in 2003 in which people were asked to select the three groups with which they identified most closely. There were ten possible answers[7] from which the respondents selected a hierarchy of the three most important reference groups. Our own analysis of these data confirms that Germans identify more strongly with their region than with Germany as a whole. More participants named their region as the most important source of identity than Germany in general.

Additional, comparable data are available in more recent studies. The study by Schmidt-Denter (2011) interviewed adolescents and their parents about various aspects of national identity between 2002 and 2005. On a five-point answer scale, identification with the place of residence was strongest (mean c. 2.8[8]), followed by Germany as a whole (c. 2.7) and the region or federal state (c. 2.4). The scale values all lie below the neutral value – in other words, the adolescents stated on average that they do not identify with these geographical units.

Highest identification with place of residence

---

[7] Current occupation, ethnic group, gender, age group, religion, political party, nationality, family status
    (e.g. son/daughter, mother/father, wife/husband) social class, region of place of domicile).
[8] Findings were taken from a diagram and do not represent precise figures.

47% see themselves as Germans and Europeans

The Eurobarometer programme compares Germany as a unit of identification with Europe as an additional and/or alternative unit: "In the near future, will you view yourself as a German, as a German and a European, as a European and a German, or as a European only?" Our own analysis showed that, in 2010, the majority of the respondents (47%) view themselves as German and European. Another 30% view themselves as Germans only (exclusive national identity). Almost no changes were registered in the period from 1992 to 2010. The proportion of those who saw themselves exclusively as Germans or as Germans and Europeans together fluctuated within a narrow band of 80-85% depending on the year the survey was conducted. The dual identity always ranked ahead of the exclusive identity.

The ISSP asked survey participants in 1995 and 2003 how strongly they felt connected to their country. In both years, approximately 80% of German respondents stated that they felt "closely" or "very closely" connected with Germany (see Figure 15 below). The Identity Foundation asked in 2009: "To what extent do you identify with being German?" The majority of the respondents identified strongly or very strongly with being German – 81% selected a value between seven and ten on a ten-point scale.

Additionally, the data from the Identity Foundation (2009) give an indication of the reasons why people identify with Germany. 83% do so primarily for pragmatic reasons: "I feel connected to Germany because I was born in Germany" (7 to 10 on a ten-point scale). The second most frequently given reason (70%) is an emotional one: "...because I'm fond of Germany". Third and fourth places (63% each) are occupied by motives that have more to do with cultural attributes (esteem for German traditions and customs; esteem for German virtues and character traits). For 44% of the respondents, achievements by Germans in sports, politics, and business are reasons to identify strongly or very strongly with the country.

On average, Germans feel connected with their country

Other studies explore the importance of being German for the individual. Blank and Schmidt (2003), for example, measured the degree of agreement with three statements: on the importance of being a resident of Germany; on having German citizenship; and on having an inner connectedness with Germany. The average German man or woman scores above the neutral scale mean for all three statements, meaning that the respondents tended to agree with the statements. This argues in favour of connectedness with their country.

Over time, development appears to be taking divergent courses in eastern and western Germany (Becker, Christ, Wagner, & Schmidt 2009). The following information is based on data from the 1991 and 2000 ALLBUS and on data from the Bielefeld Research Group on group-focused enmity (2002 to 2008). Among respondents in western Germany, the degree of identification both with western Germany and with Germany as a whole remained unchanged between 1991 and 2000. A higher degree of identification can be observed from 2002 onwards. In contrast, respondents in eastern Germany initially showed a (significant) decline in identification with Germany as a whole between 1991 and 2000 and an increase in identification from 2002 onwards. Identification of

eastern Germans with eastern Germany is the mirror image of this trend, with a marked increase after reunification and a subsequent decline.

National pride is a controversial indicator. Some writers take it as a component of affective attachment to the community, while others view it as an expression of nationalism and pretensions to superiority (cf. Blank & Schmidt 2003; Schmidt-Denter 2011, 63; Westle 1995 & 1999). According to a 1996 survey, almost 60% of Germans are "very proud" or "rather proud" of being Germans (Blank & Schmidt 2003). Similar findings (59%) were reported by the Identity Foundation. For comparison purposes, we analysed the 2010 ALLBUS data, which show that 74% of respondents said that they were "rather proud" or "very proud" of being German. National pride appears to have increased among both western and eastern Germans in the past 15 years (Becker et al. 2009).

National pride
on the increase

Differences within Germany

As we noted in our discussion of the trends, chronological developments regarding identification were different in western Germany than in the east of the country. However, in terms of the intensity of identification and connectedness the differences appear to be slight, as the values for connectedness with Germany show (ISSP, see Figure 15).

Figure 15: How connected do you feel with Germany?

Percentage of respondents who feel "closely" or "very closely" connected with Germany
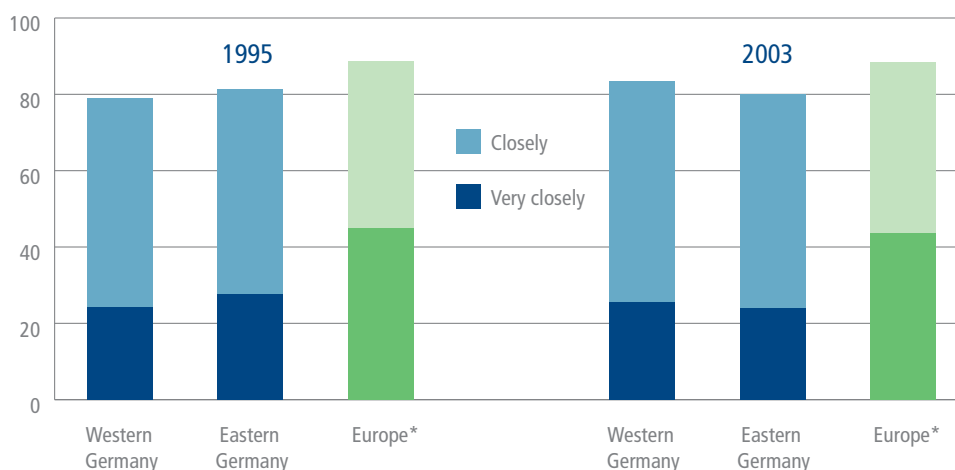
Note: *Average value of European participant countries: Germany, Great Britain, Austria, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland, Bulgaria, Spain, Latvia, Slovak Republic.

Source: Own calculations based on the International Social Survey Programme.　　　　BertelsmannStiftung

According to the study by Blank and Schmidt (2003), respondents in western Germany care more than eastern Germans about their connectedness with Germany; however, the authors point out that this may be because the reference group used in the survey was the Federal Republic of Germany, which many residents of eastern Germany tend to associate with the "old" federal states of West Germany. The two halves of the country do not differ in terms of national pride (east: 59%; west: 57%). Figure 16 shows the sources from which national pride derives. Conspicuously, eastern Germans are less proud than western Germans of the country's democracy and health and welfare system.

Figure 16: Mean values of answers on various reference factors for national pride
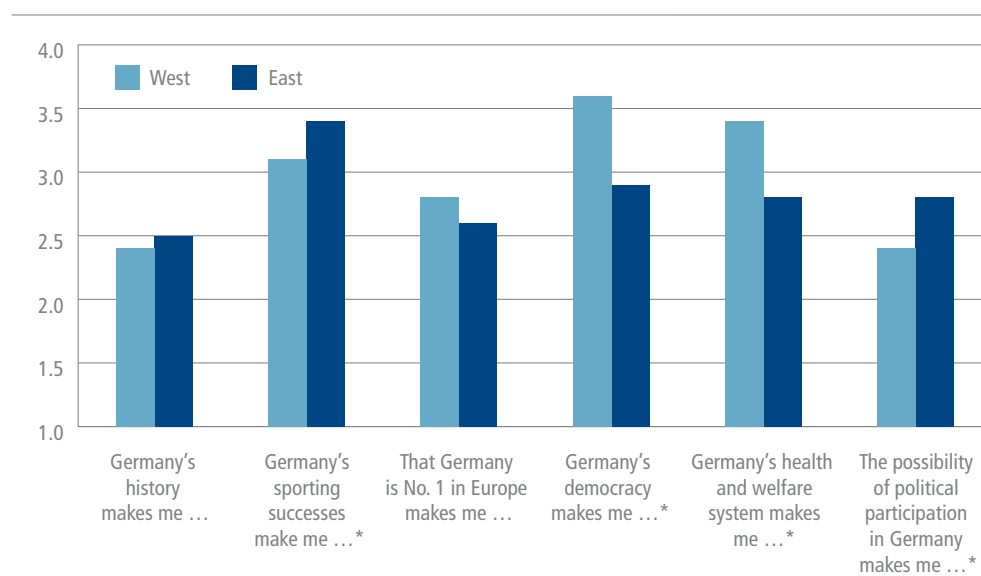
Note: The total scale ranged from 1 ("not proud at all") to 5 ("very proud"). *Statistically significant difference between western and eastern Germany.

Source: Blank & Schmidt (2003). | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

The Identity Foundation (2009) similarly reports very slight differences between east and west in the answers to the question "To what extent do you feel you are a German?" Rather, the detectable difference is one between the north and the south, with southern Germans having a higher degree of connectedness. There are also differences related to age (highest connectedness in those over 70), place of residence (higher connectedness in rural areas), and education (higher connectedness in those with less education) (see Figure 17). The effect of income remains somewhat unclear, but is probably non-linear.

Figure 17: Emotional connectedness to German identity: Group comparisons

"To what extent do you identify as German?" Percentage of respondents with "very strong agreement"

Total		51.8
Gender	Women	52.1
	Men	51.6
Age	> 70	65.9
	20-29	42.9
Family size	1 person	55.5
	4 or more	46.7
Marital status	Widowed/separated	54.4
	Single	49.1
Secondary school qualifications	Secondary modern / elementary school	55.1
	High-school diploma ("Abitur")	41.2
Occupation	Civil servants	56.7
	White-collar worker	45.7
Size of place of domicile	< 5,000	58.6
	> 100,000	44.2
Net income	2,500-3,000	35.1
	3,000-3,500	59.0
Federal state	Schleswig-Holstein	67.7
	Rhineland-Palatinate / Saarland	33.3
Region	North	57.5
	West	49.6[2]

Note: Information based on data of the identity Foundation (2009, 57). Illustration of the respective categories with the highest and lowest proportion of respondents reporting "very strong agreement" (minimum value of 9 on a 10-point scale). [1]North: Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Bremen, Berlin (West); West: North Rhine-Westphalia, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland. [2]According to the authors of the study, the values of the "old" and "new" federal states are much more similar than the values of northwest and southern Germany.

Source: Identity Foundation, 2009: 57. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

According to a recently published study on the integration of second-generation immigrants (Sürig & Wilmes 2011), 50% of the second-generation Turkish immigrants interviewed for the study feel "rather strongly" connected to Germany. Among second-generation immigrants from Yugoslavia, 70% of the respondents gave this answer, and the figure for the control group with no migrant background was 80%. Similar results emerge from own data in a study of the values of adolescents with no migrant background and with Turkish/Russian-speaking origins: Turkish adolescents have the lowest degree of identification with Germany, followed by Russian-speaking and German adolescents (Schiefer, Möllering, & Daniel; forthcoming). These findings show that Germans from migrant backgrounds and foreigners living in Germany feel less connected with the

country than Germans with no migrant background. There are many causes for this, which include the tendency of certain migrant groups to disassociate themselves from the wider culture as well as discrimination and lack of acceptance from the autochthonous population, as well as the correlative effects of these two phenomena. The complexity of these correlative effects becomes clear in a recent study by Frindte, Boehnke, Kreikenbom, and Wagner (forthcoming) in which migrants were asked how much of their culture of origin they wanted to preserve and to what extent they wanted to adopt German culture. They were also asked about their perception of what Germans expected from them. A control group with no migrant background was asked what they expected of migrants and what they thought migrants wanted. While we cannot discuss the results in detail here, the data show that people's own objectives and expectations do not always coincide with the perceived objectives and expectations of the other group. The study additionally shows that migrants with German citizenship are more strongly oriented towards German culture than migrants who do not have citizenship.

International Comparison

Germans identify less with their country than other Europeans

Our own analyses of the preferred sources of identity of Germans (1997 WVS data) show that, compared to other Europeans, Germans feel more connected to their region or place of domicile and less to their country as a whole (see Figure 14 above). On average, 30% of European respondents ranked their country first as a place evoking a feeling of belonging, while the German average was 25%. According to the ISSP, Germans are less likely than other Europeans to state that they feel closely connected with their country (European average: 89%; German average: 80%).

It is consistent with this impression of a lower degree of identification that, according to Eurobarometer data, fewer Germans profess an exclusive national identity (European average: 46%, Germany: 39%, according to our own analysis). The youth study by Schmidt-Denter (2011) found that, compared to adolescents in neighbouring countries,[9] German adolescents exhibit the lowest degree of identification with all geographic and social units: their town, their region, their federal state, and their country. A parallel study of parents found that German parents felt a certain discomfort when "talking about 'us' with respect to their own country" (Schmidt-Denter 2011, 163).

International comparisons at different points in time also unanimously show that Germans feel less national pride than other Europeans. Noelle-Neumann and Köcher (1987) found that this was the case in 1970 and 1981, when 40% and 20% respectively said that they were "very proud" of their country (in reference countries, the figure was 50% and 38% respectively). Only in the Netherlands national pride was equally low in the 1980s. Schmidt-Denter (2011) too finds that national pride in Germany is lower than in neighbouring countries.

[9] Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Poland.

This special situation in Germany is undoubtedly the result of the country's recent history (holocaust, war of extermination), which suggests a broken national consciousness. In the self-perception of the German population, national identification remains an ambivalent concept and connectedness with one's country continues to be a complex issue.

3.3 Orientation towards the Common Good

3.3.1 – Social Responsibility and Solidarity

The majority of Germans wants the state to care for those who are weaker. However, they concede less state support to foreigners. According to surveys, Germans feel that there is a shortage of social solidarity, but not one of local solidarity. The respondents' perception of their personal obligation towards the common good varies between self-interest and social responsibility. However, making contributions to the good of the community is an important motivator for social involvement and has tended to gain significance in the past ten years. The volume of donations as an active expression of solidarity has remained constant, and international (mostly European) comparisons of donation volumes place Germany in the top 33%.

Social responsibility includes commitment and obligation to society as well as the willingness to place the common good above one's own interests, if necessary (Kohl 2010). Solidarity with the needs and living conditions of other members of the society in which one lives is primarily focused on social relationships, but nevertheless reflects a sense of responsibility towards the community. A glance at the empirical literature shows that the thematic overlap of social responsibility and solidarity is reflected in commonly used survey methods. We will therefore document empirical findings for both dimensions together in this section.

The studies and analyses (performed by ourselves) which we are going to present below refer to six groups of indicators:

- Responsibility of the state to provide social security (unemployment etc.)
- Social support granted to selected social groups
- Individual expressions of solidarity and empathy
- Motivations and reasons for volunteer involvement
- Perceived solidarity in the social environment
- Donations as active expressions of solidarity

Status and Development

Expectation of state support has declined

To begin with, it should be noted that the German population expects the state and government care systems to shoulder a high degree of responsibility for ensuring the welfare of its citizens. In 1984, between 80% and 90% of respondents said that the state was responsible for social welfare (e.g. in case of unemployment, old age, and illness); a much smaller part of the population believed that this responsibility lay with social groups or the citizens themselves (German Welfare Survey, cf. Kohl 2010, 223). Similar results are reported by the ALLBUS for the period from 1991 to 2004 (Kohl 2010). This is not surprising, given that the state welfare systems are so highly de-

veloped in Germany that the population tends to regard state responsibility for public welfare as the norm. However, Kohl (2010) also shows that these expectations decreased between 1991 and 2004. In deciding who is entitled to benefit from the social welfare system, Germans make a distinction between in-groups and out-groups.

In 2010, 53% of respondents were in favour of increasing support for the unemployed, and 44% thought that support for recipients of "Hartz IV" long-term unemployment benefits could be increased. However, only 26% saw a need to increase support for foreign citizens living in Germany, and only 12% for Muslims (Zick & Hövermann 2010). In this context it is interesting to note that solidarity with people in need was higher among the lower income groups, while solidarity with foreigners was equal (and equally low) among all income groups (GMF project website 2011).

<div style="float:right">Low solidarity with foreigners</div>

To what extent are Germans willing to assume responsibility themselves? According to a (somewhat contentious[10]) study by the Identity Foundation (2009), approximately 25% of respondents feel obliged to do something for "the country", for example by being involved in volunteer work. 36% "gladly do something for their native country"[11](to quote the wording of the study). One in four respondents simultaneously agrees with the statement "I don't know why I should make a sacrifice for other Germans whom I don't even know". 39% agreed with the statement "I pay taxes, that's enough".

Social responsibility and solidarity is reflected in the motivations for volunteer involvement. The data of the volunteer survey show that the idea of making a contribution to the good of society is an important motivator for personal involvement. In 2004 and 2006, over 60% of respondents in the volunteer survey chose the statement "I want to help to shape society through my involvement, at least on a small scale" as their most important motivation (Gensicke et al. 2006; Gensicke & Geiss 2010). With regard to the expected results of volunteer activities, the answers "Being able to help other people" and "Being able to do something for the common good" have consistently ranked between second and fourth place (depending on the survey year) out of a total of ten possible options since 1999. The answer patterns of the respondents were analysed using statistical methods (cluster analysis) to identify three independent motivation types, which focus respectively on the common good, on sociability, and on interests (cf. Gensicke et al. 2006).[12] The proportion of peo-

<div style="float:right">More people motivated by orientation towards the common good</div>

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[10] While the study by the Identity Foundation provides important results, it does occasionally create the impression that the issue of national consciousness was not given sufficiently careful consideration. For example, it seems to us that leading questions such as "I like to do something for my native country" are unsuitable for obtaining valid results about social responsibility in Germany. Additionally, both the title of the study, which translates as "Being German – New Pride in the Nation in Harmony with the Heart" ("Deutsch-Sein - Ein neuer Stolz auf die Nation im Einklang mit dem Herzen") and passages such as "We are Germany (sic) and proud of it" and "The German soul is at home in our native land" attest to a certain lack of sensitivity to the problem of national pride that is reflected in relevant academic discussions (see our remarks above on the concept of national pride as a component of National Socialism).

[11] Statements could be rated on an answer scale of 1 (strong disagreement) to 10 (strong agreement). Percentages refer to scores of 7 to 10.

[12] Those who are focused on the common good believe that the collective ("we") is more important than the individual ("I"), indicating the sense of responsibility for society that is the focus of this discussion. Those who are focused on sociability are driven by the motivation to meet other people, while those who are focused on interests have their own (professional or personal) development at heart.

ple who engage in volunteer work for the sake of the common good has risen since 1999 (1999: 30%; 2009: 36%).

In the mid-1990s, approximately half the population of eastern and western Germany felt solidarity towards the other half of the country (Noelle-Neumann & Köcher 2002). In 1993, 50% of western Germans and 43% of eastern Germans gave an affirmative answer to the question "Do you feel solidarity towards the [people from the other half of the country]? Do you feel that both you and they are German?" Almost exactly the same results emerged in 1998 (west: 52%; east: 44%). From 1991 to 2006, however, between 20% and 30% of eastern and western Germans felt that the people in the other half of the country were more foreign to them in many respects than citizens of other countries (ALLBUS data, documented in Heitmeyer 2008). This value exhibited only very small fluctuations during this period.

"Culture of giving" – donations on the increase

In addition to volunteer work for society, donations too can be seen as an expression of solidarity. Alscher et al. (2009), based on the Emnid Donation Monitor, report a constant donor quota of approximately 40% of respondents between 1995 and 2008. The average nominal donated sum rose during this period. Anheier (2002) reports a similar figure for 1991/92, as does Priller (2002) for 1996. Based on this data, Alscher et al. (2009) speak of a "culture of giving" in Germany (p. 42). The umbrella organisation of non-profit organisations in Germany, Deutsche Spendenrat e.V. (2011), reports that donations increased between 2008 and 2010. Other data too, generated from donations recorded on income tax declarations, show that the donation volume remained constant between 2001 and 2004 (approx. four billion euro; Buschle 2008). Approximately one-third of income tax payers deducted donations from their taxes during these years (Buschle 2008). Thus the willingness of Germans to donate to charitable causes seems to have remained constant since the early 1990s.

73% would like a stronger sense of unity

How do people in Germany perceive solidarity within their country? According to the 2006 ESS, 54% of German respondents feel that the people in their residential area help one another (4 or higher on a scale of 0 to 6; our own analyses). The study by the Identity Foundation (2009) contains figures on perceived solidarity in Germany as a whole. According to this study, 73% agree with the statement "I would like a stronger sense of unity among us Germans", while 65% thought that "In Germany, everyone fights for their own interests and no longer feels like a part of a greater whole". This verdict may be interpreted as a sceptical attitude to solidarity within Germany. At the same time, however, it is conceivable that a significant proportion of those who reject such statements have a broader definition of solidarity. According to the study by Noelle-Neumann and Köcher (2002), a decreasing proportion of eastern and western Germans believed between 1997 and 2000 that people in the "old" federal states showed solidarity with the "new" states of former East Germany, despite the fact that declarations of solidarity by eastern and western Germans appear to have remained constant during a comparable period of time (see above for the findings of Noelle-Neumann & Köcher 2002 and Heitmeyer 2008).
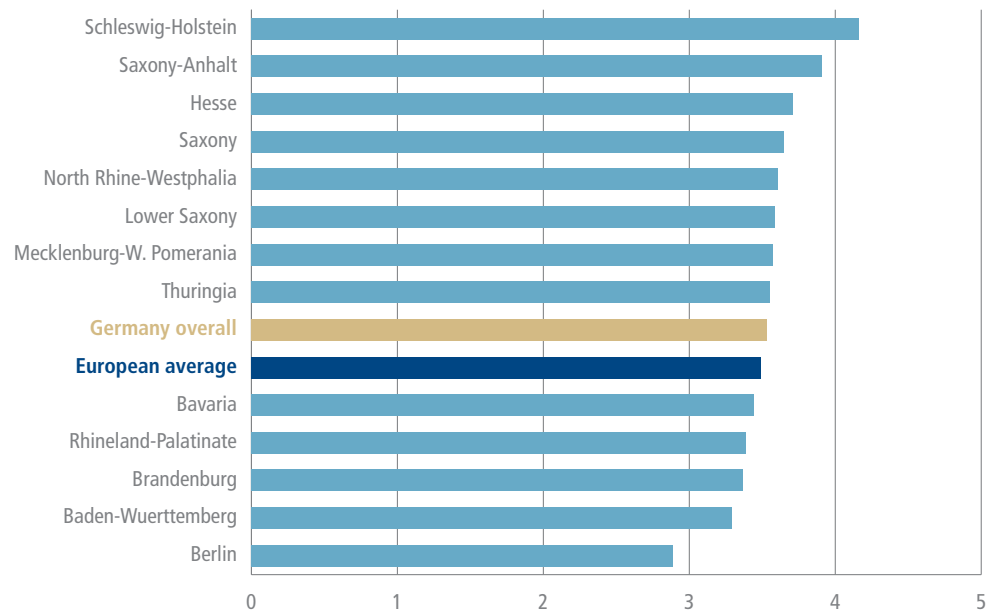
Differences within Germany

Studies into the differences between east and west produce non-uniform results. Some report better figures for eastern Germany, some for western Germany, while others report no differences. For example, Meier (1996) cites data from the Institut für Eignungsprüfung (a proficiency testing organisation) which indicates that more adolescents in western Germany than in eastern Germany think that volunteer involvement for society is important. According to Gesthuizen et al. (2009), western Germans make more nominal donations for non-profit causes than eastern Germans (Eurobarometer data for 2003/2004). Additionally, the motivations for volunteer activity have shifted more strongly towards social responsibility in western Germany than in eastern Germany over the last decade (Gensicke & Geiss 2010). However, Gaskin et al. (1996) show that, based on the 1995 Eurovol Study, the statement "Everyone has a moral obligation to do unpaid work at some point in their lives" meets with less approval in western Germany than in eastern Germany (33% vs. 50%). Dickes et al. (2009) cite an index for measuring solidarity based on data from the 1999/2000 European Values Study. This index encompasses various questions that measure the degree to which Germans care about the people in their environment and their willingness to help them. Here, too, eastern Germans outperform western Germans.

Solidarity in Germany appears to be less good in the eyes of eastern Germans than of western Germans. Eastern Germans express a greater desire for a sense of unity and believe more strongly that everyone is only fighting for their own interests (Identity Foundation 2009). On the local level, however, eastern Germans do not perceive greater deficits than western Germans. On the subject of solidarity in the residential environment (ESS 2006), there is no across-the-board difference between east and west. For example, Saxony-Anhalt is one of the federal states where perceived local solidarity is highest, while Baden-Wuerttemberg is in the group with the lowest levels perceived (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Perceived solidarity in the residential environment

Schleswig-Holstein	
Saxony-Anhalt	
Hesse	
Saxony	
North Rhine-Westphalia	
Lower Saxony	
Mecklenburg-W. Pomerania	
Thuringia	
Germany overall	
European average	
Bavaria	
Rhineland-Palatinate	
Brandenburg	
Baden-Wuerttemberg	
Berlin	

Notes: Answers from 0 ("never") to 6 ("very often") to the question: "Please tell me how often you feel that people in your residential area help one another." *Participant countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine.

Source: Own calculations based on the European Social Survey, 2006. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

International Comparison

International comparisons place Germany in the middle to upper third of the respective scales, depending on the indicator. Dickes et al. (2009) compare 33 countries in the 1999/2000 EVS with their solidarity index (see above), placing Germany in the upper third (eastern Germany: 2nd; western Germany, 11th). Our own analyses of more recent EVS data show that Germans today have more concern for their fellow-human beings than the average of the 33 reference countries. This was not the case ten years earlier (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Solidarity with fellow-human beings
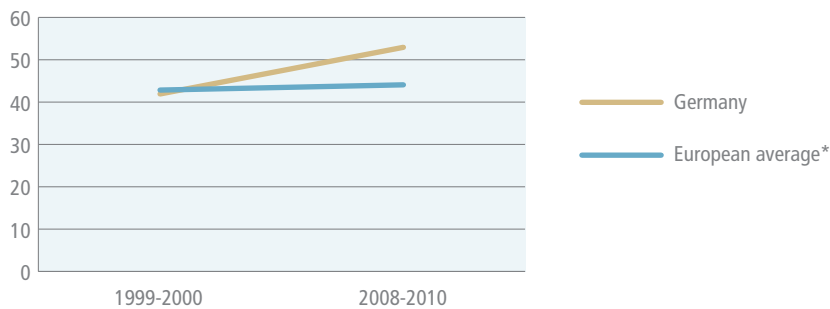
Note: Reference groups assessed for the overall value: "compatriots", "older people", "foreigners", "unemployed people", and "sick and disabled people". The reference groups "family", "neighbours", and "people from the region" were excluded (the first group causes an upward distortion of the value because of personal attachment, while data for the last group is available only for 1999/2000). *Germany, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, Great Britain, Northern Ireland.

Source: Own calculations based on the European Value Study. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

The EVS also examines the reasons why people would be willing to do something for older people or foreigners in Germany. One of the reasons given was "Because it's in the interest of society for me to help them." Figure 20 shows that Germany scores below the average of the reference countries here.

In terms of willingness to donate, Gesthuizen et al. (2009) place western Germany in the upper third and eastern Germany in the middle third of the 27 European reference countries. According to Immerfall, Priller, and Delhey (2010), Germany as a whole ranks in the upper third among European countries. The data of the 1995 Eurovol Study suggest that eastern Germans rank slightly above the average of the polled countries[13] and western Germany ranks significantly below the average for agreement to the statement "Everyone has a moral obligation to do unpaid work at some point in their lives" (cf. Gaskin et al. 1996).

[13] Belgium (francophone part), Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Republic of Ireland, Slovak Republic, and Sweden.

Figure 20: Percentage of persons who would do something for older people or foreigners in their country "because it's in the interests of society".
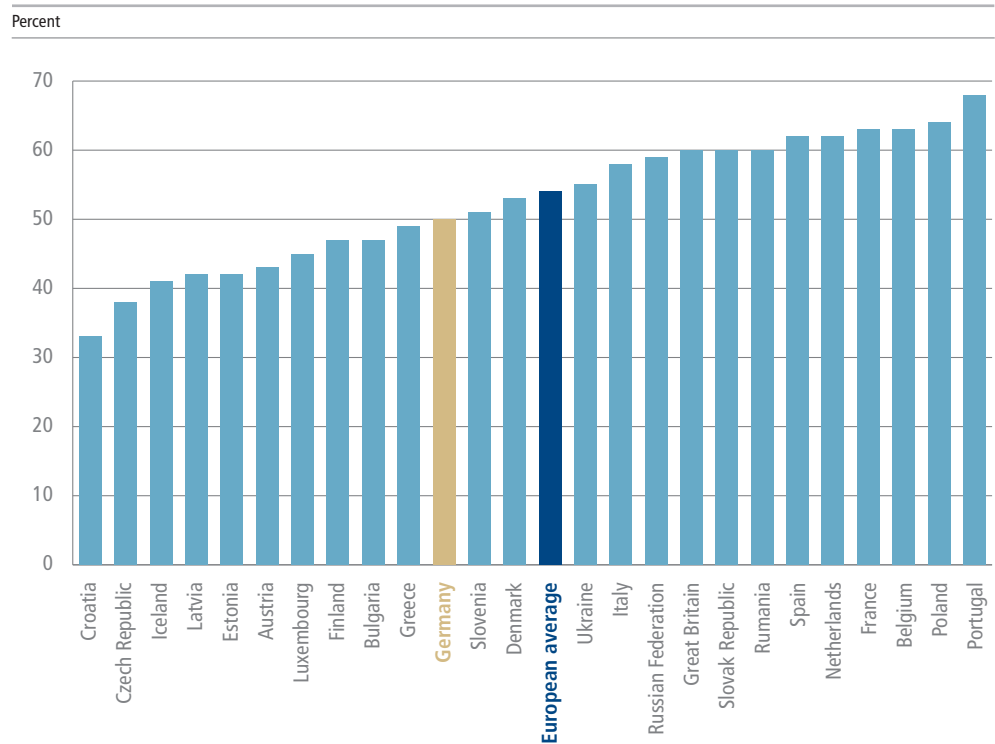
Percent

Note: Percentage of respondents who agree "strongly" or "very strongly" with the statement. Other possible answers were "to a limited degree", "not too strongly", and "not at all".

Source: Own Calculations based on the European Value Study. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

3.3.2 Respect for Social Order

Crime rates in Germany are dropping across the board. Anomie, measured against the acceptance of rule-breaking behaviour, is consistently low. Large cities and urban areas have higher crime rates, and crime is higher in the northern federal states than in the south. Germany's international ranking varies depending on crime type, but ranges in mid-field or upper mid-field overall (which is synonymous with low anomie).

Status and Development

Cooperative coexistence requires a minimum level of respect for the social order and social rules. When this is absent, we speak of anomie on the social level. In the following section, we will use four frequently used indicators that measure the extent of respect for order and of anomie.

- Crime
- Statements about the legitimacy of norm violations (e.g. use of public transport without a ticket)
- Information about respondent's own delinquency
- Corruption Perception Index (expert survey)

Between the 1960s and the early 1990s, the crime rate (number of offences per 100,000 residents regis- **Overall decline in**
tered by the police) rose steadily in West Germany, reaching its peak in 1993 (Entorf & Spengler 2000b; **crime rate**
Meier 1996). It has declined since then (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2010; cf. Figure 21). The murder
rate too exhibits a declining trend (Federal Criminal Police Office 2011) The EUROSTAT data for overall
crime and for various categories of crime show similar declines (Tavares & Thomas 2007; 2010; 2012).

Other indicators that can be used to assess the level of anomie in society are personal statements
about the acceptance of norm-violating behaviours. In its survey phases of 1990, 1999, and 2006,
the WVS asked respondents for such statements. Some of the results, based on our own analyses,
are as follows: A clear majority of respondents in 2006 did not consider it justifiable to accept state
benefits to which they were not entitled (61%), to use buses or trains without a valid ticket (58%),
commit tax fraud (57%), or take bribes (70%). The mean value of the answers for all the offences
specified was 2 on a scale of 10.[14] The values remained constant between 1990 and 2006.

Figure 21: Overall crime rate since 1993 – cases per 100,000 residents
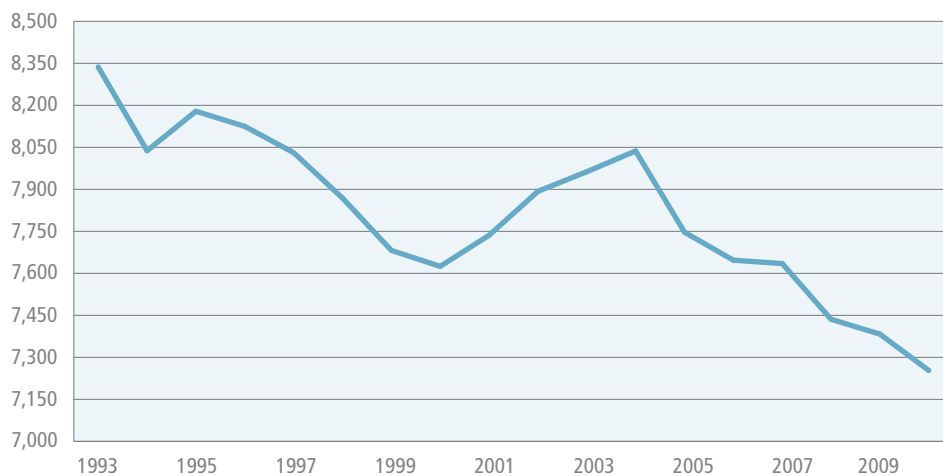
Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2010. | Bertelsmann **Stiftung**

[14] Answer scale from 1 ("not OK under any circumstances") to 10 ("always OK").

Differences within Germany

German and international crime research regularly finds a higher propensity to deviance and more frequent offences in younger people and in people of lower socio-economic status (employment, income, education: Entorf & Spengler 2000b; Knack & Keefer 1997; Krebs 1995; Lochner & Moretti 2004). Furthermore, crime rates are higher in more densely populated areas (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2010; Entorf & Spengler 2000a; 2000b). Figure 22 shows the crime rates for cities of different sizes (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2010). As a general trend, it can be seen that crime rates rise in direct proportion to the number of residents.

Germany also exhibits a north-south crime gradient. According to Entorf and Spengler (2000b), crime rates in the south of western Germany (Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate) are lower than in the north (North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein). Recent data from the Police Crime Statistics (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2010, 16)

Figure 22: Crime rates in cities of 200,000 or more residents (cases per 100,000 residents)
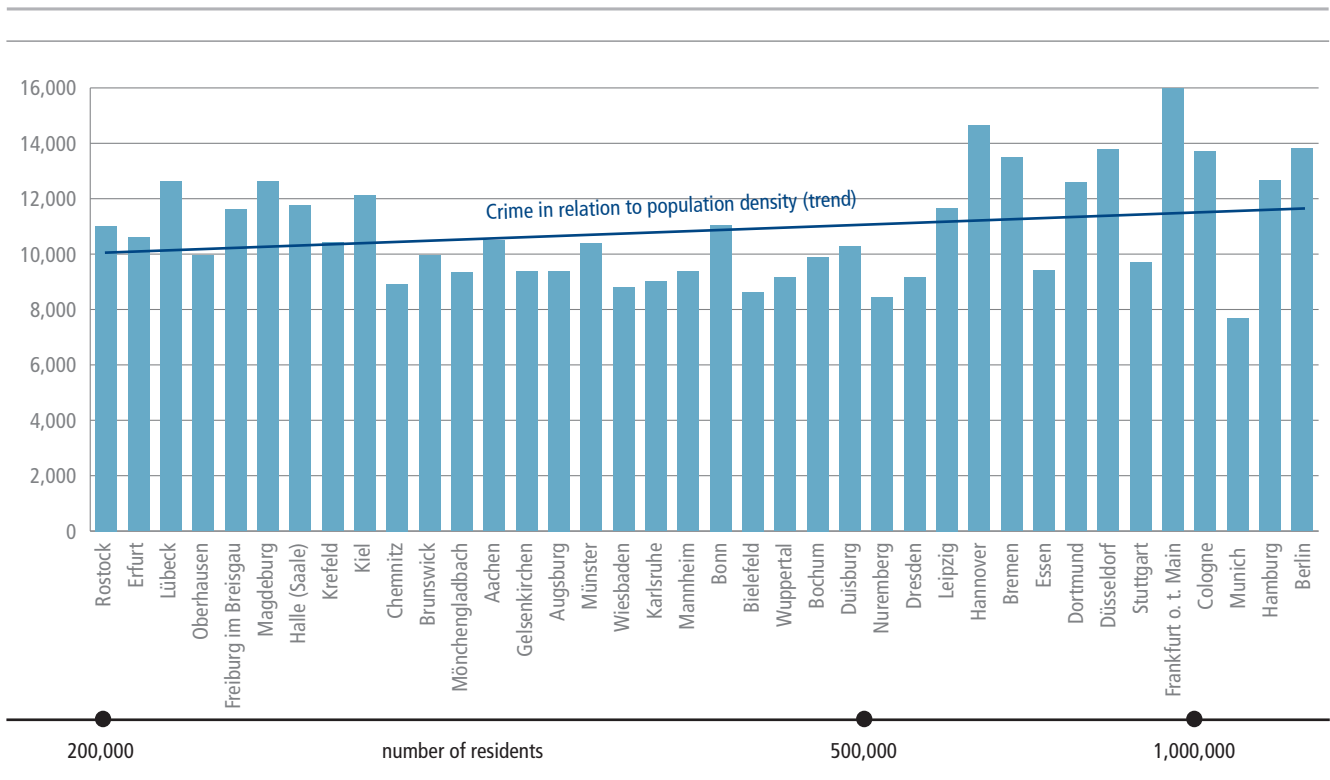
Note: Cities are given in ascending order (left to right) of population size.

Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2010.

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confirm this analysis (Figure 23), though it also shows that, in addition to the difference between north and south, there is a significant difference between the city states (Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg) and the territorial states. There is no discernible gradient from east to west.

Figure 23: Overall crime rates by federal state (cases per 100,000 residents)
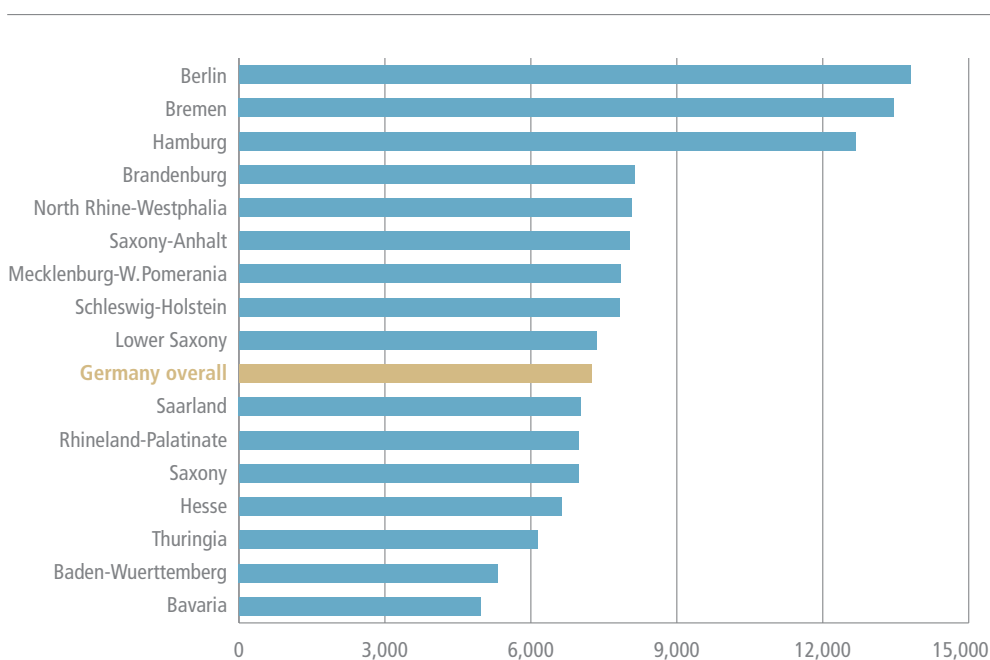
Source: Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2010. | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

Respondents' information on anomie is documented by Krebs (1995) and others. Adolescents and young adults in eastern Germany reported a slightly higher propensity to deviance in 1992 than their western German counterparts, but the differences are slight (32% in the west and 38% in the east reported a "high" propensity).[15] The 2010 ESS data on the acceptance of norm-violating behaviour present a nuanced picture. While federal states with high crime rates also score high for the acceptance of norm violations (e.g. Brandenburg, North Rhine-Westphalia), not all the states of former East Germany rank near the top of the list (Figure 24).

[14] Answer scale from 1 ("not OK under any circumstances") to 10 ("always OK").
[14] For example, the scale included the statement "It's OK to circumvent laws as long as you don't actually break them". People with a "high" propensity gave a value of at least three on a four-point answer scale.

Figure 24: Acceptance of norm-violating behaviour in the federal states
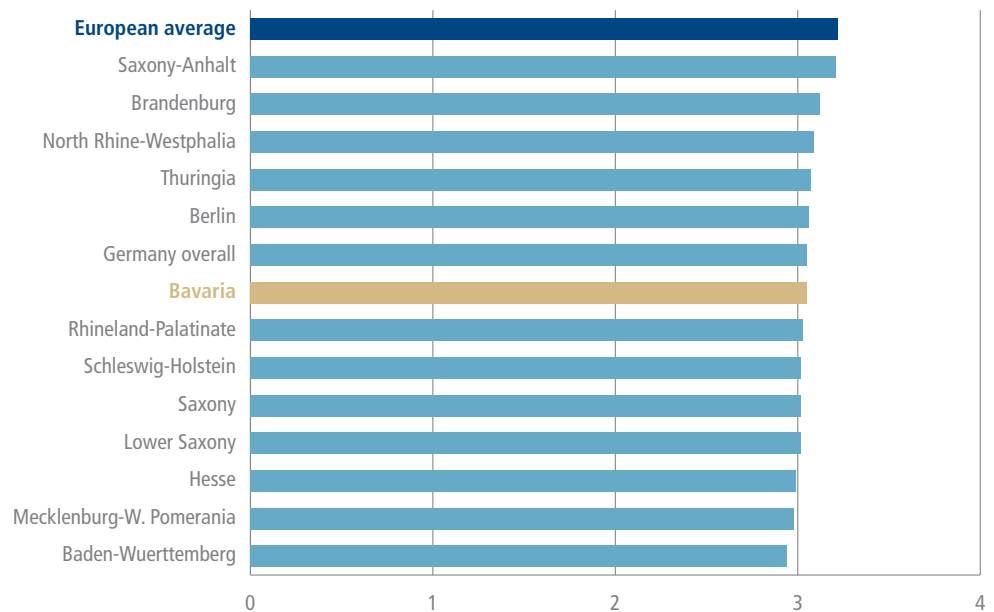
Notes: Respondents were asked how bad they felt it would be to make an excessively high or unjustified insurance claim, to buy something that was probably stolen, and to commit a traffic offence. Possible answers ranged from 1 ("not at all bad") to 4 ("very bad").

Source: Own calculations based on the European Social Survey, 2010.   │ Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

International Comparison

Due to differences in the recording mechanisms for crimes and other factors, it is difficult to compare the crime rates of different countries. As Figure 25 shows, Germany scores very differently for different types of crime. The murder rate is low, but the theft rate is high (see also Green et al. 2009), making it difficult to give an overall assessment. Entorf and Spengler (2000b) state a medium crime rate for Germany . A report by the European Crime and Safety Survey (van Dijk, Manchin, van Kesteren, Nevala, & Hideg 2005) places Germany in a slightly better position for various crime indicators than the European average. A study of respondents' information about their own delinquency places Germany among the countries with higher crime rates: Enzmann et al. (2010) conducted a survey of urban adolescents in 31 countries from which Germany emerged with comparatively high delinquency rates. In terms of development over time, Germany's crime rate has been declining for the last 15 years (see Figure 21), which conforms to the general European trend (cf. Tavares & Thomas 2007; 2010; 2012).

Figure 25a: Thefts and murders per 100,000 residents

25a: Thefts
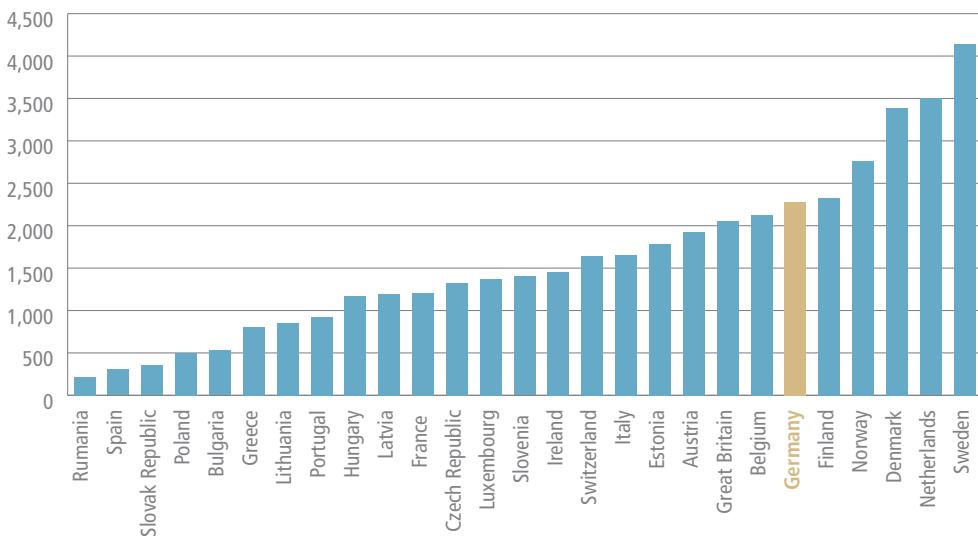
25b: Murders
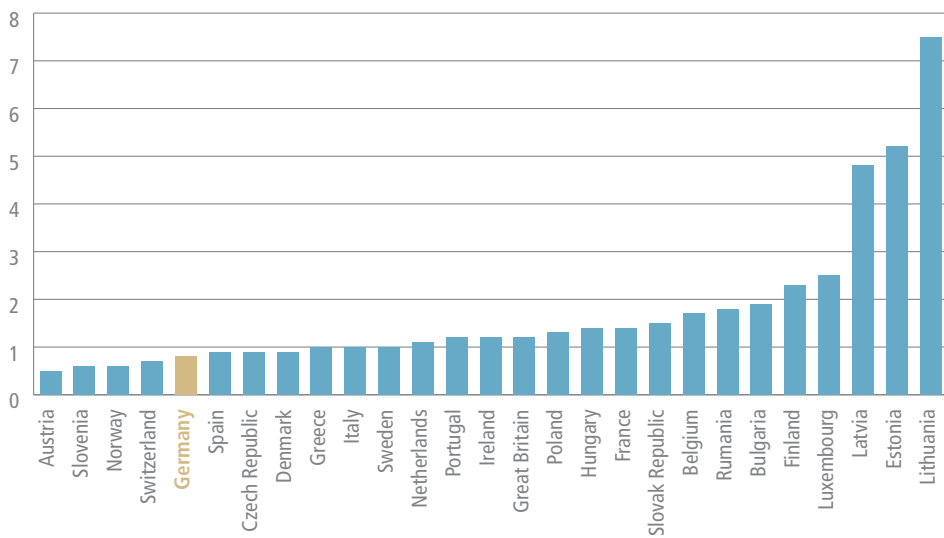
Note: year varies depending on the country (2006-2010)

Source: United Nations, www.unodc.org/unodc/index.html.

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The NGO Transparency International publishes the annual Corruption Perception Index, which is based on expert opinions (businesspeople, country analysts). In 2011, Germany ranked fourteenth on a list of 182 countries and thus ranks among the countries with a low corruption rate. Measured against other European countries, the country ranks in the upper middle range (cf. Figure 26).

Figure 26: 2011 Corruption Perception Index for selected countries
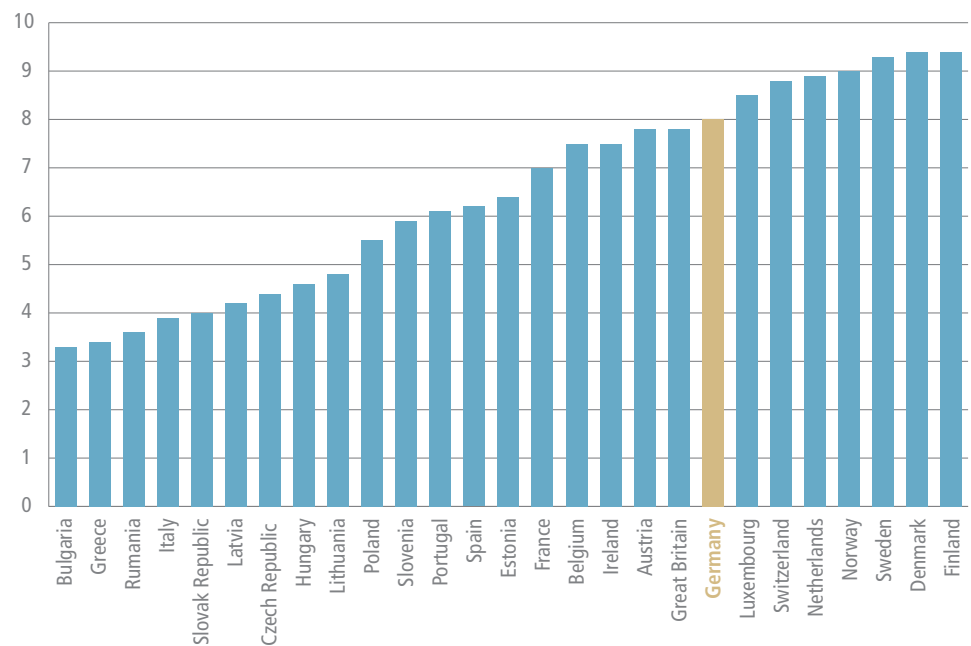
Note: The score of 10 represents the lowest perceived rate of corruption. Values are available for a total of 182 countries.

Source: Transparency International (http://www.transparency.de/Tabellarisches-Ranking.2021.0.html). | Bertelsmann**Stiftung**

Knack and Keefer (1997) examined anomie in the form of acceptance of norm-violating behaviour for sixteen European countries (WVS data from the 1980s, measuring tool as described above). Germany ranked seventh. Similarly, our own analyses of WVS data from the survey periods of 1990, 1999, and 2006 place Germany in an unobtrusive mid-field position in terms of obedience to norms. The same picture emerges from the 2010 ESS, which includes very similar questions on anomie (own analyses, see Figure 24 above).

3.4 Final Evaluation

For the present screening study, we examined and interpreted existing studies and data on social cohesion in Germany in terms of nine different dimensions.

Our point of departure was the core question: "Is social cohesion declining in Germany?" The overall picture that emerges is that social cohesion in Germany has not decreased in the last 30 years or at least that it has not suffered a dramatic decline. Social networks, social involvement, interpersonal trust, identification, responsibility for fellow human beings, and acceptance of social rules are not declining; in fact, they are increasing in certain areas. Compared to other countries, too, cohesion in Germany is not conspicuously low. Germany's ranking in Europe is average (in a positive sense).

Do we, therefore, not need to worry about the cohesiveness of society in our country? On closer examination, it becomes clear that there is no blanket answer. In what follows, we will touch upon a few of the core aspects and their possible implications:

1. **The structural change of social relationships.** Social relationships are not disappearing, but they are undergoing change. Involvement in associations and organisations has become more informal, more situative, and more fluid. Social relationships today are more often established by choice and less obligatory; this change is manifested in the new social media (e.g. Facebook). Whether this change will weaken social cohesion in the long term remains an open question which should neither be ignored nor left to media-driven everyday narratives.

2. **Cohesion elites.** In many cohesion dimensions, the upper socio-economic classes perform better – in a sense, those who can afford it close ranks. These levels of society have better access to social support networks, exhibit greater civic involvement, spontaneously accept a variety of different cultures and lifestyles, and deviate less from social rules. This social gradient deserves to receive more attention. What are the conditions and measures that foster the integration of the lower classes into the network of social cohesion.

3. **Dangers of exclusion.** Social cohesion always contains the risk of excluding those social groups that are not perceived as belonging ("We stick together, but without you.") Our screening study has shown that people of foreign extraction and adherents of non-Christian faiths are not perceived as naturally belonging to society in Germany. However, social cohesion as we (and others, cf. Council of Europe 2005) understand it ought to be inclusive cohesion. This is one of the issues that merits intense, continual attention, since the ethno-cultural diversity of society is more likely to increase than to decrease. Methodologically, cohesion research faces the challenge of examining its stock of indicators to identify those indicators that measure truly inclusive cohesion and distinguish them from those that do not.

4. **Differences between east and west.** Social cohesion is weaker in many respects in the "new" federal states than in former West Germany. An empirical explanation of the background conditions for this west-east gradient would go beyond the scope of this screening study and must be left for future studies to address. Factors that contribute to the difference include socialisation in a surveillance state with "dictated" social cohesion and ideologically governed solidarity. Another factor is that the economy is still weaker in the "new" states, so that unemployment and lack of prospects create feelings of disintegration (on this see Heitmeyer 2010; Klein & Heitmeyer 2009).

5. **Pan-German identity.** Closely related to the differences between east and west is a question that we were only able to mention in passing in this screening study: Does German society function as a unit twenty years after reunification? Have east and west grown together? In the 1990s, (only) about half of eastern and western Germans felt solidarity with people in the other half of the country. Whether social cohesion in Germany has become pan-German cohesion is a question that remains in need of special examination.

6. **Declining institutional trust.** Both Germans and other Europeans have a rather critical attitude towards political institutions and their representatives, while voter turnout is decreasing. This is an indication that cohesion between citizens and the elites is declining. Does this represent a weakening of democracy as well?

7. **Identification as a weak spot?** Germans continue to have difficulty with their nation. But is this necessarily a weak spot? It may be that people are more motivated to contribute towards the common good if they feel strongly connected to the community. The question is whether their sense of unity extends to people with a different mother tongue or a non-western religious faith. Expert findings on the connection between national identity and the disparagement of foreigners (see, for example, Becker, Wagner, & Christ 2007; Wagner, Van Dick, & Zick 2001) show that the dimensions of cohesion may have a downside as well. Is it possible, then, that a self-critical approach to one's own national identity may be beneficial for social cohesion because it causes others to be included? These intriguing questions still await an empirical answer.

8. **Is more better?** similar ambivalence became evident for other cohesion indicators as well. We illustrated the acceptance of diversity by means of such factors as social distance. But can the tolerance of social proximity to a group be seen as proof of cohesion even if that group rejects diversity and threatens democracy, as right-wing extremists do? Or is this a situation where social cohesion is manifested by systematically maintaining social distance from right-wing extremists? A similar question is posed by civic involvement. Membership of political organisations is held to be an indicator for cohesion. But what about membership in the far-right National Democratic Party? Is membership as such good for social cohesion, or is it good only in the case of certain associations – and, if so, which ones? As we were able to show, most civic in-

volvement takes the form of volunteer work in the fields of sports and leisure activities. Here, the question is whether involvement in a sports association is equally constitutive for cohesion as, for instance, involvement in a charitable organisation. Is it enough to be involved, or does it matter where one is involved (cf. Immerfall 2002)?

Methodological deficits

In addition to the thematic aspects discussed above, cohesion research has a large amount of methodological homework still to do if it is to increase its traction both in the public perception and as a research subject.

- **Standardised measurements.** Cohesion research is in need of greater standardisation, not only with regard to the definition and the dimensions of cohesion, but also with regard to the indicators that are used to illustrate cohesion. A set of indicators (neither too large nor too small) must be developed for performing useful chronological and international comparisons.

- **Clearly defined reference countries.** To be useful, international comparisons must be made using a fixed set of reference countries. In our view, these countries should be either the EU member states or the OECD countries. In contrast, it is not particularly useful (and, considering the problem of data availability, not very easy) to compare cohesion in Germany with that of countries in Africa or on the Indian subcontinent.

- **More non-reactive (objective) indicators for cohesion.** The majority of the studies is based on survey data. While surveys can yield important information, it seems to us that insufficient use has been made of non-reactive (objective) indicators. It is well known that subjective evaluations do not always accurately reflect the objective situation (e.g. rising fear of crime despite declining crime rates).

- **Levels of social cohesion.** To date, insufficient attention has been given to the fact that the different indicators for social cohesion pertain to very different levels of society. Some reflect people's personal surroundings (e.g. friends and support networks), while others are abstract in nature (institutional trust). Connectedness can be measured on the local, regional, national, and even transnational levels. These different levels should be productively integrated into a model of social cohesion, and this task still awaits attention.

- **Overall index of social cohesion.** Eine offene Frage ist, inwieweit die Erstellung eines zusammenfassenden Kohäsionsindex möglich ist, und ob dieser eher reflexiver oder formativer Natur sein sollte. Neben einem Gesamtindex ist hier auch zu überlegen, inwieweit für einzelne Aspekte von Zusammenhalt je eigene Indizes gebildet werden könnten und sollten. Dies würde auch die öffentliche Kommunikation über den Stand des Zusammenhalts erheblich vereinfachen.

Conclusion: According to the findings of our screening study, social cohesion in Germany is not in decline. However, it requires ongoing, nuanced analysis and observation. This applies both to the current weak spots of cohesion in Germany that we outlined above and to the methodology of empirical cohesion research, which is in need of further development.

Glossary of Survey Programmes

European Social Survey (ESS)

The academic European Social Survey is conducted in 32 countries inside and outside Europe to measure long-term changes in the attitudes and behaviours of people in Europe. The survey was initiated in 2001 by the European Science Foundation and is conducted every two years. It covers the perceptions, attitudes, and self-definitions of the European population on a wide range of topics that are relevant and important for Europe today (e.g. immigration, trust, political orientation, values, subjective well-being, and health). More information and data for the ESS can be found on the following website: http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/

European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS)

The European Quality of Life Survey is conducted by Eurofound and examines a wide variety of aspects of life, including income, education, family, health, contentment in life, and the perceived quality of society. The survey was first carried out in 2003, when 28 countries were covered. It was repeated in 2007. More information on the EQLS can be found on the following website: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/qualityoflife/eqls/

European Values Study (EVS)

The European Values Study is a research programme run by the foundation of the same name and focuses on human values (ideas, religious faith, preferences, attitudes, and opinions). Launched in 1981, it is conducted every nine years in a steadily increasing number of European countries. The fourth round of the survey took place in 2008 and covered 48 countries and regions. More information and data for the EVS can be found on the following website: http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/

Eurobarometer

Launched in 1973, the Eurobarometer Surveys are conducted by the European Commission to study developments in public opinion. Residents of the EU member states are interviewed on questions such as the enlargement of the EU, health, culture, information technologies, the environment, the euro, and defence. More information and data for the Eurobarometer can be found on the following website: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

German General Social Survey (ALLBUS)

The German General Social Survey, conducted by the Leibnitz Institute for Social Sciences (GESIS), was launched in 1980 as a bi-annual survey gathering data on attitudes, behaviours, and the social structure in Germany. A representative cross-section of the population is polled using a programme of questions consisting of a constant and a variable section. More information and data for ALLBUS can be found on the following website: http://www.gesis.org/allbus

German Welfare Survey

The German Welfare Survey is a joint project by the Social Science Research Centre Berlin (Research Unit for Social Structure and Social Reporting) and the Centre for Survey Research and Methodology (Social Indicators Research Centre). It is a representative survey on individual well-being and quality of life. The first such survey was conducted in 1978. More information on the German Welfare Survey can be found on the following website: http://www.gesis.org/unser-ange¬bot/daten-analysieren/soziale-indikatoren/wohlfahrtssurvey/

International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)

The International Social Survey Programme is a collaborative effort by various institutions conducting surveys in the field of social science research. It is an annual programme which, by coordinating different research projects in 48 countries worldwide, adds an international and intercultural dimension to the individual national surveys. The ISSP was formed through the cooperation of the German Centre for Survey Research and Methodology (ZUMA) in Mannheim and the National Opinion Research Centre of the University of Chicago. More information and data for the ISSP can be found on the following website: http://www.issp.org/

Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP)

The data of the Socio-Economic Panel Study is gathered by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW). Launched in 1984, the survey takes place every year and deals with questions about income, employment, education, and health. Additionally, its thematic focus on social participation and time use allows it to record both general social trends and civic involvement in Germany. As the same people are interviewed each year, it is possible to document these trends with particular accuracy. More information and data for the SOEP can be found on the following website: http://www.diw.de/deutsch/soep/29004.html

Volunteer Survey

The volunteer survey of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is a countrywide survey on volunteer involvement. It has been conducted three times to date (1999, 2004, and 2009) and provides information on trends and changes in the field of volunteer work. The main report of the most recent volunteer survey is available from the following website: http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/Publikationen/publikationen,did=165004.html

World Values Survey (WVS)

The World Values Survey is a worldwide network of social scientists and focuses on values and their impact on social and political life. The World Values Survey is an offshoot of the European Values Study. Cooperating with the EVS, the WVS has so far conducted five surveys between 1981 and 2007 covering 95 countries all over the world. More information and data for the WVS can be found on the following website: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

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Imprint

Bertelsmann Foundation
Carl-Bertelsmann-Straße 256
33311 Gütersloh
Germany
www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Responsible
Stephan Vopel, Dr. Kai Unzicker

Translation
Eva-Raphaela Jaksch, Ingrid Hagmeister

Design
Markus Diekmann, Bielefeld

Photo
Title: Digital Vision / Getty Images
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