

# INTRODUCTION



The imminent demise of all those who personally witnessed Nazism raises the urgent question of how the Nazi past should be transmitted to future generations. Indeed, it is often “when actors die that we worry about salvaging their memory” (Noiriel 1989: 1,453). In Germany, therefore, the presence of the Nazi past in the media and in publishing, as well as in school textbooks and teaching practices, has steadily increased in recent decades.

A quantitative analysis of articles from *Der Spiegel* between 1969 and 2000<sup>1</sup> shows an increase in publications on Nazism in the most widely sold weekly newspaper in Germany (see Figure 0.1).

In each edition of *Der Spiegel* since 1969, there have been on average 1.7 articles that cover the period between 1933 and 1945. This number more than doubled in the space of a few years after 1977. The year 1979, in which the US television series *Holocaust* was shown in Germany, marked the beginning of the media interest in this theme (Lüdtke 1993b), which reflects the growing importance of the subject in debates in the political arena. The 1980s, which saw the second peak in interest, were also marked by “memory debates” that led to what was then called the “strange epidemic of memory” or the “fanaticism of history” (Assmann and Frevert 1999). The end of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first confirm the explosion of publications on this subject: more than one book per day was published on the Third Reich and more than one book every three days<sup>2</sup> on the National Socialist extermination policy.<sup>3</sup> Supposing that these publications respond to



**Figure 0.1** Articles on the Nazi past in the weekly newspaper *Der Spiegel*, 1969–2000. Total articles covering the period 1933–1945. Figure created by the author.

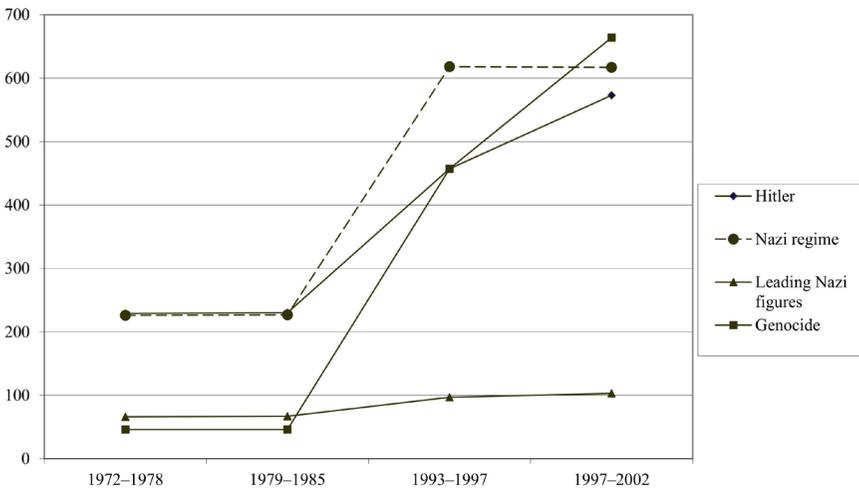
a certain demand, and taking into account the structural subordination of the media field to the political field (Benson and Neveu 2005; Darras 1995), we can surmise that there was an increase in the German public’s interest in this theme over the last years of the twentieth century. Publications on Nazism have quadrupled between 1972 and 2002; those on the National Socialist policy of extermination were multiplied twelvefold, as we can clearly see in Figure 0.2 opposite.

Television coverage on the subject is still abundant in daily programs like television news or talk shows, as we can see in this example of the ARD,<sup>4</sup> one of the three German public television channels.

On the ARD channel alone, National Socialism was mentioned in various programs 1.6 times per week on average, with fluctuations around the main commemorative dates. The Nazi extermination policy represents nearly half of the themes covered with an average of forty programs per year.

What does this overwhelming presence of the Nazi past in German media and publishing mean? And why has it not managed to appease the fears of forgetting the past? What links can we establish between the controversies arising in the political and media fields and the perspectives of the “younger generations” on this “past in the present”?

The debates about the transmission of the Nazi past are marked by a deep fear of collective amnesia, particularly for “future generations.” The media often deliberately describe young people as ignorant or blasé. From youth depicted as under or badly informed to youth described as “saturated” (*über-sättigt*), these generalizing accusations dominate any understanding of the

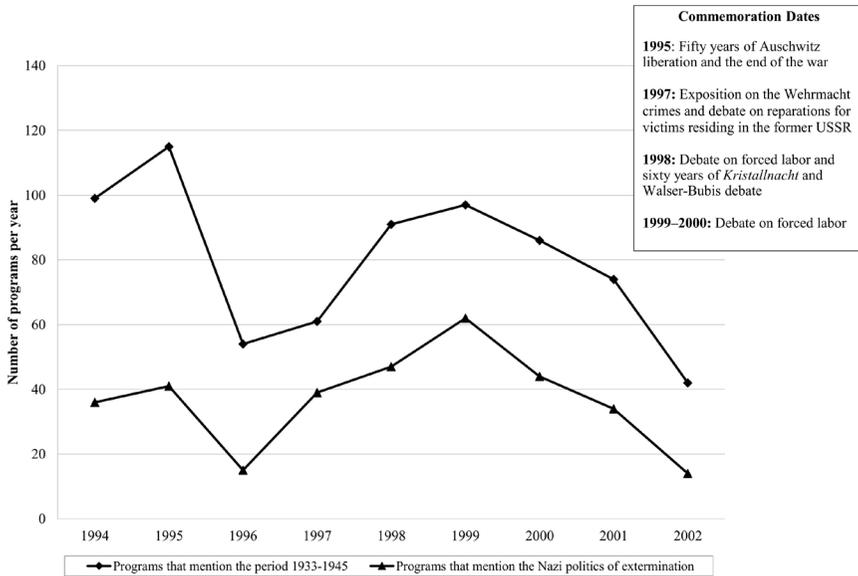


**Figure 0.2** Number of publications on National Socialism in Germany between 1972 and 2002, by theme and by five-year period. Figure created by the author.

significations or usages of the past for today's adolescents born just before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Several factors seem to be behind the inability of scientific analysis to see the sociological stakes articulating the transmission of the Nazi past. First, the question that drives these studies is often poorly constructed. Asking how the Nazi past should be transmitted "to the young," leads to a homogenization of "the young" as a uniform category, in opposition to "their parents' generation." We forget that "youth is just a word" (Bourdieu [1980] 1995). Second, this question leads to a confusion between issues to do with knowledge and those to do with politics and morality. We need to untangle these two kinds of issues in order to understand their interaction, while refusing a binary opposition between rationality and emotion, and we need to take seriously the effects of the latter on the course of history (Burke 2005; Prochasson 2008). Third, the lack of empirical research leads to this question being treated on a theoretical level only, as a matter of principle, which prevents differentiated analysis.

Some German researchers, who base their analysis on quantitative studies measuring students' mastery of historical facts, claim that "the young" are incompetent and that they "lack knowledge." (Neumann and Noelle-Neumann 1993; Silberman and Stoffers 2000). Even though their conclusions have in fact been mitigated by comparative studies (Borries, Pandel, and Rösen 1991), they seem to persist. For others, the responsibility of this "hostile" attitude lies with an "overflow of (suffocating) memory."<sup>5</sup>

To escape from this analytical dead end, this book aims to analyze the "contextualized" uses of the Nazi past by German adolescents between



**Figure 0.3** Number of television programs on the ARD mentioning the Nazi past between 1994 and 2002. Figure created by the author.

fourteen and eighteen years old. To do this, it takes into account their origins and social trajectories, their gender, age, family and peer groups, as well as their interests and political engagements. It also looks at their daily activities, both inside and outside of school, with their families and friends.

### For a Sociology of the Reappropriation of History

In recent years, the historiographic debates about the relationship between history and memory have led to the development of a new subfield within history. In France, this has occurred in particular around the *Realms of Memory Project*, run by Pierre Nora ([1984–1993] 1997). This new field studies “memory” as “second degree history” (Nora 2002) and questions the “political uses of the past” (Hartog and Revel 2001). Gérard Noiriel (1989: 1,425) has emphasized the potential of this historiographic shift, no longer investigating the past itself but rather the ways in which the past is constructed, shaped, institutionalized, and transmitted. This could bring historical studies closer to comprehensive sociology (from Max Weber to the present day Anglo-Saxon interactionists) in analyzing “representations” of the past as well as the role of lived experience (*Erlebnis*), which are at the heart of questions about “memory.”

Over the course of the last twenty years, memory has become a field of study in its own right; to the point that American historian Alon Confino declared that “memory” was “perhaps *the* leading term, in cultural history” (Confino 1997: 1,386; 2004, 2005). Yet the concept remains vague, which is why it is used in a plethora of different studies without much theoretical or methodological coherence between them (Lavabre 1994, 2000, 2001). The confusion between what has been called “memory policy,” “memory from above,” or “official memory” (Lavabre 1994; Confino 1997, 2004, 2006), and collective memories, which are seen as an ersatz “public opinion” for the historian, contributes to the lack of analysis of the concept. Ubiquitous canonical references to Maurice Halbwachs have thus meant that the existence of “collective memories” has been postulated rather than studied.

In the political field, there are complex processes of “memory construction,” which are initiated and conducted by “memory entrepreneurs” (Pollak 1993; Strauss [1959] 1997) who compete to produce legitimate definitions of a given past. Marie-Claire Lavabre has analyzed these “politics of memory” (1991, 1994, 2000, and 2001) that take shape in political discourses, institutions, monuments, or “sites of memory,” as well as through media and school textbooks. Yet the mere existence of these sites or realms of memory is by no means sufficient for the analysis of the collective nature of memory. As the sociology of reception has shown, professional and intellectual reasoning is not the same as profane reasoning. Readings are social, they depend on the habitus of the readers; they are therefore plural and sometimes contradictory, and they are always complex (Bourdieu, Darbel, and Schnapper [1969] 1991; Chartier [1985] 2003; S. Hall [1973] 1994). In 1939, Halbwachs used a musical analogy to illustrate this fact: “there are two ways to learn to remember sounds, one is highbrow, the other lowbrow, and there is no relationship between the two” (Halbwachs [1939] 1997: 33). A musician who understands music theory will not remember a symphony in the same way as someone who never learned to read music and will remember the rhythm of a melody, rather than the orchestral production as a whole. In the same way, the professional historian who reads a history book (or analyzes a memorial or visits a museum) will not do so in the same way as a non-historian. The former will read the book thinking about the other historians who have written on the subject, observing agreements and disagreements within the discipline. The layman will think about something else completely: the events they learn about in the book, perhaps also the interpretation of the historian, but not necessarily in the terms of historiographic debate. It therefore seems possible to say, with Halbwachs, that there are (at least) three different ways of learning (i.e., giving meaning to) history. One is erudite (by history professionals), another is specific to the

political field, and at least one is mainstream or based on common sense.<sup>6</sup> Above all, these three categories of actors do not obey the same social rules, nor belong to the same groups.

However, we still have to take into account the interactions between these different readings of history—given that historians, like musicians, are sometimes not able to completely isolate themselves from general society. It is these logics of interaction that must be understood in order to analyze the mobilization and appropriations of the Nazi past by adolescents today. This is, indeed, what Halbwachs does when he explains how collective memory functions, taking opposition to his doctoral supervisor Henri Bergson ([1896] 1911) in a famous demonstration.

It's that in reality, we are never alone. . . . because we always carry with us, and inside us a quantity of people who are distinct from ourselves. . . . I arrive in London for the first time . . . Passing in front of Westminster I think about what my historian friend told me (or about what I read in a history book, which comes to the same thing,). Crossing the bridge, I consider the effect of the perspective that my painter friend had pointed out to me (or which had struck me in a painting, or an engraving). I guide myself through my mental map. . . . Impressions [of the town] remind me of Dickens' novels read during my childhood: I therefore walk with Dickens. In all these moments, all these circumstances I cannot say I am alone, that I think alone, because I place myself mentally in such or such a group, with that architect, and beyond him with those whom he merely interpreted for me, or with that painter (and his group) . . ., with a novelist. Other people have shared these memories with me. Moreover, they help me to recall them: to remember I turn toward them, momentarily adopt their point of view, enter into their group, of which I continue to be a member. (Halbwachs [1939] 1997: 52–53)<sup>7</sup>

If we apply it to World War II and the Nazi past, Halbwachs's observation helps to analyze the collective nature of recollection.<sup>8</sup> This is not simply a matter of focusing on the memory itself, to use Halbwachs's example, on stories or history books, written, read, or retold. This is about examining the (collective) experience that actualizes these memories, for example, in a walk around London (or in our case a classroom, playground, conversations with friends or family, visits to historical sites or museums and so forth).

The memory of the Nazi past, like all recollections, is thus constructed collectively. For those who participated in the war, it can evoke these experiences, and the groups with whom they shared them (soldiers, police, colleagues, the administration, neighbors, friends, children, or parents, etc.). Adolescents born just before the fall of the Berlin Wall do not belong to these same groups: they did not live through the Nazi past themselves. They have read books, heard about it in the media and in their families, just like their

parents. They learn about this past in the pacified surroundings of the everyday: in the classroom, at the family dinner table, in the street, or in the playground with their friends.

We live in complex societies that obey the principle of organic solidarity in the division of social labor. Each individual thus occupies a specific role in different institutions, which are increasingly numerous and composite, particularly because of the acceleration in changes to social morphology (Durkheim [1893] 2014). In this book we will look at themes covering families, children of immigrants, the redefinition of gender roles, different urban contexts, national reunification, and others. These social frames redirect memories of Nazism—both inside and outside the school context.

However, given the excesses that often accompany the use of the term, I will not refer to “collective memory” in this book, although I continue to construct my approach following Halbwachs. The question of the collective nature and the collective frameworks of reappropriations will be posed throughout this study, which focuses on the uses of history in the school context, and students’ daily appropriations and reappropriations of the history of Nazism.

## **The School as the Social Framework for Adolescents’ Reappropriations**

*Field Notes: June 2003*

I walk into the eighth-grade class that I will follow and observe over the next year. During the first weeks I accompany the students every day in all subjects to get to know them, and after that I only attend history classes. They are now in class with Ms Baltig.<sup>9</sup> As she enters, she is a little disturbed by my presence (the teachers were informed of my presence by the principal, Mr Schulze). “Ah,” she says, “you should have come to another class. This is the worst time slot of them all.”

Ms Baltig explains the Napoleonic wars. Two students, seated in front, participate actively in the class. There is permanent background noise, students talking together. Kai, who is repeating the year, has put himself in the back row. He brought a friend from another school. They talk together and complain about school. Elisabeth exchanges notes with her two neighbors. Alexandra and Maren also write notes, but between themselves. Kai, at the back of the class, is reading the newspaper, ostensibly bored, in spite of the presence of his friend. When he raises his head to ask a question, Ms Baltig ignores him, which provokes an ironic “thanks a lot” from Kai. Isabelle intervenes, “Ms Baltig, Kai asked a question.” No longer able to ignore Kai, Ms Baltig asks him to repeat the question. Apparently Kai, in spite of his

behavior, is following the class. His question is aimed not only to interrogate but also to destabilize his teacher: “and who was worse, Napoleon or Hitler?” Ms Baltig is evasive, uncertain; she gets upset and mutters incomprehensibly, which makes Maren laugh. Thomas begins to roll little bits of paper to throw at his classmates. Ms Baltig realizes, which makes Kerstin laugh, making fun of Thomas’s inability to conceal his naughtiness from the teacher.

This kind of scene reveals the ordinary issues of everyday schooling. We can see the inherent difficulty in wanting to measure the role and effects of the school on the historical knowledge and political conscience of students. Teachers and students are also occupied in practices other than the simple “transmission of knowledge,” practices that must also be analyzed in order to understand their relationship to the knowledge that is transmitted. This classroom scene raises several of the key questions that are behind this research.

First, Kai’s question is symptomatic of the attitude that the students have toward the Nazi past. “Hitler” is present, in their heads and their discourses, well before he is covered in class. What meaning does the evocation of the Nazi past have for the students? In what respect is it linked, not only to the social and educative path of the student, but also their age, gender, generation, and family? How are practices inscribed in relations between students? The fact that Kai is repeating the year, for example, has a strong impact on his place in the class. His blatant boredom demonstrates a desire to set himself apart from the other younger students (during breaks he meets up with his older friends, who constitute a reference group for him). This is a way of reminding both others and himself that he has already covered this subject last year and affirms a—rather typically masculine—“anti-school” stance (Connell 1989).

This interaction also raises a series of questions about the processes of appropriation. How can we understand what happens at school and in the classroom? What place and what function does the Nazi past occupy here? To what extent can we talk about the transmission of knowledge, or rather, as Pierre Ansart (1981) suggests, of the “inculcation with an affective relationship to history”? How do students appropriate the past? From these questions emerge the theoretical frameworks and interrogations behind this research.

For more than a century, the school system has fed debates and hopes about its effects in terms of “citizenship, equality and wealth” (Baudelot and Leclercq 2005: 10). It has raised questions about the school’s contribution to making “good citizens,” to reducing social inequalities through education for the most disadvantaged, and increasing the gross domestic product (GDP) by increasing the global level of education. All of these themes remain present, implicitly or explicitly, in the vast majority of research on school as an institution.

On one hand, there is what can be called, for want of a better term, the “production of knowledge,” which refers to its legitimate definition by political institutions, such as ministers, or commissions established to define the curriculum and textbooks. This production has been studied in detail since the beginning of the century, but especially closely since the 1950s, by historians of didactics,<sup>10</sup> who analyze the “knowledge” content of school materials. Thus, along with research by American historians such as Eva and Martin Kolinsky (1974, 1992), it was the researchers of the Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) who constantly worked at decrypting the programs, texts, or images in history textbooks, in order to reveal their “weaknesses” or “historical inaccuracies” with the constant goal of improving their quality. Nazism is today, without a doubt, the subject that is the most closely analyzed in the area of school materials. German school texts and the historians of the GEI even serve as an example for experts in other countries, such as Rwanda, to “better deal with the painful past” through school curricula and history texts.

On the other hand, there is what is habitually called the “reception” of this knowledge by the students. Both sociologists and researchers in education sciences, as well as a few historians, have attempted to quantitatively identify the cognitive skills of students. The study that has had the most impact on the political and media fields in recent times, in spite of serious criticism about its research design, and because of its “alarming” conclusions (about lack of knowledge) is PISA, the Program for International Student Assessment (OECD 2005). Researchers working with the historian of didactics Jörn Rüsen (until recently director of the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut of Essen) or those at the University of Hamburg with Bodo von Borries (1995) have come to very different conclusions, providing a detailed analysis of the historical knowledge of German adolescents since the end of the 1980s. Contrary to popular thought, they have demonstrated that knowledge is much more detailed for the Nazi period than for any other period of history (Borries, Pantel, and Rüsen 1991; Mierow 1991). Finally, the concrete role of teachers and the autonomy of interpretation relative to the history to be transmitted have only been dealt with more recently, particularly from a sociological, generational, and biographic perspective. A number of studies were conducted (especially in education sciences) on teachers in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) and their adaptation to the new teaching system after reunification, based on analysis of interviews with the teachers (Benrath 2005; Fabel-Lamla 2006).

The concepts of production, reception and transmission (borrowed from theories of culture and communication) treat the cultural as if it were material; suggesting that it is possible to transmit culture or knowledge (cultural capital) in the same way as we hand over an object. Nevertheless, this metaphor rapidly reaches its limits. Conceptualizing knowledge as capital (human

or cultural), different from economic capital, as Pierre Bourdieu did—either alone ([1979] 2010, 1989) or with Jean-Claude Passeron ([1964] 1985)—opened the way for quantification and differentiation that allowed considerable progress in studies on education (Baudelot and Leclercq 2005). But the use of the economic metaphor specifically makes it difficult to conceive of the process of appropriation (Lahire 1995). Therefore, adolescents will not simply receive, rather they will interpret what they learn; they will transform it through processes of appropriation. The German historian Alf Lüdtke reminds us that

In the process of perception and evacuation, articulation and silence (or mutism), people (*Menschen*) do not only follow the codes of discourses and representations that they find in place. More exactly: they rely on these images, words and grammars, even as they recompose them for each new use. In their practices . . . actors transform the realities of things and circumstances that are apparently so stable, . . . at the same time, they vary and rewrite (*überschreiben*) the ways of perceiving the world and history in their heads.<sup>11</sup> (Lüdtke 1994: 146)

In German, these processes of permanent rewriting and transformation are referred to by the term *Aneignung* (Lüdtke 1995b). Here we need to identify several different levels: first, perception, an act of the senses; then interpretation and reinterpretation, which are acts of consciousness; and finally appropriation, which involves a third level (Bourdieu [1979] 2010). *Aneignung*, as defined above, refers to the whole process.<sup>12</sup> We can translate this concept by “reappropriation” in order to emphasize its transformative dimension without forgetting the social dimensions that influence these practices or the dimension that is constitutive of individual personality (which is contained in the term “appropriation” and even more in the term “incorporation”).

These processes of reappropriation are neither permanent nor stable; instead we must consider them interactive social processes. A classroom is a specific place that obeys specific rules particular to an institution of which the goal is to transmit knowledge, and perhaps also civic behavior. But the functioning of the class and the pedagogic relationship is also dependent on relations between professors and students and between students. These relationships are not merely functional. Professors have their own personal and family lives, they have their own life histories, their own reappropriations of the past. The students have theirs. Therefore we must identify the factors that are decisive here. Depending on how these factors interact, the (Nazi) past can be a resource, a burden, or have no effect at all. Parallel to this, these reappropriations of the Nazi past confront each other in a specific place, the classroom. Here power relations are played out, between the teacher and the students, but also between students themselves.

The use of this concept of reappropriation also allows us to study what the students do with the past transmitted to them at school; how they give meaning to it in their everyday school lives. The students' multiple appropriations of the past are articulated through social frames, such as social origin, trajectory, generational belonging, gender, etc. Classroom observation, such as it is practiced by sociologists of education in the United States, and particularly those who attempt to identify the role of gender in the transmission of knowledge (Canada and Pringle 1995; Smith 1990; Tidball 1980),<sup>13</sup> therefore constitutes a useful approach for studying these reappropriations.

### **School Experience: Between *Eigensinn*, Social Frames, and Reappropriations**

Three concepts, often seen as contradictory, have been helpful to me in understanding how references to the Nazi past are used in the school context. Two have already been mentioned: reappropriation and social frameworks. Before we look at the ways in which they have been useful in my fieldwork and how they work together, it is important to look closely at the third concept, *Eigensinn*, developed by Alf Lüdtke (1993a, 1994, 1995a, 1996), discussed intensively by other researchers such as Thomas Lindenberger (2015) or myself (Oeser 2017a, 2017b).

Lüdtke refers to *Eigensinn* as “denoting willfulness, spontaneous self-will, a kind of self-affirmation, an act of (re)appropriating alienated social relations on and off the shop floor by self-assertive prankishness, demarcating a space of one’s own” (Lüdtke 1995d: 313). For a long time it was difficult for me to grasp the plurality, the ambiguity, and the contradictions in the students’ uses and reappropriations of the Nazi past; it was even more difficult to describe their own logics and the meaning(s) that they gave to their uses of this past. It was the very principle of the students’ *Eigensinn* in their uses and reappropriations of the Nazi past that seemed key, and yet continued to escape me. However, this concept enabled me to escape the “dead end” of only focusing on the “effects” of teaching the Nazi past on the students.

Lüdtke developed this concept in the 1980s in the context of his research on industrial workers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He sought to distance himself from the Marxist reading that consisted—in its more populist versions—in the search for “class consciousness” in the form of a specifically proletarian “desire to resist” or in “revolutionary energy” that would prove the existence of the “working class.” Lüdtke therefore proposed an alternative to this binary between populism and pity (see also Grignon and Passeron 1989; Hoggart [1957] 2006; Revel 1986).

Lüdtke described the workers' forms of sociability at work, creating space and time for the self, and for the workers as a group, which allowed for moments of escape from the hierarchical relations with superiors. These forms of sociability are created by workers operating as a group and according to their own rules. *Eigensinn* thus refers to the parallel and paradoxical existence of resistance and distance from resistance, "being oneself" and "being with others," but especially the commitment (*Hingabe*), at once joyful, uncalculating, and self-interested, to regaining one's integrity. *Eigensinn* is thus, for Lüdtke, an example of the *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*, a notion borrowed from the philosopher Ernst Bloch ([1935] 1977), the simultaneity of opposites, or literally the synchrony of asynchrony, translated by Ritter as nonsynchronism. Bloch uses this term to describe the coexistence of "modernity" and "traditions" in the everyday thought of the 1920s. *Eigensinn* thus enables a conceptualization of elements considered antagonistic or contradictory, in particular the "objective" socio-economic conditions and the "subjective" meanings given to them by agents.

The concept of *Eigensinn* has also allowed German historians to describe the plurality, the ambiguities, and contradictions of the representations and practices of people living under dictatorial regimes; under German fascism (Lüdtke 1995c), or under the East German Communist Party (Socialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) (Lindberger 1999). The term was more generally used to describe individuals' everyday appropriations and uses of the structures of domination (*Herrschaftsstrukturen*). Lüdtke thus emphasizes that "following an order mechanically is impossible. Only permanent reinterpretations ensure the success [and the effectiveness of an order]" (Lüdtke 1991a: 14). Lüdtke evokes Weber's famous definition of *Herrschaft*, by using the German word *Befehl*, in order to better mark his opposition to it. Yet the concept of *Eigensinn* allows us to move beyond the binary opposition between the dominant and the dominated, in order to conceptualize intersections and multiple interpretations. It allows us to perceive the reciprocity of power relations that contribute to the conservation and functioning of the social order (*Ordnung*) by adaptation, reinterpretation, and appropriation of the commands (*Befehl*) that maintain order.<sup>14</sup>

*Eigensinn* has often been confused with "resistance," a confusion that is perhaps linked to the etymological origin of the term and its literal meaning of "stubbornness." Instead it designates a range of possible appropriations of a specific situation or frame. These forms of appropriation run, for example, from fervent participation in a political ideology (such as Nazism), to apparent loyalty concealing an inner distance or resistant practices, to passive avoidance or openly demonstrated opposition. Conversely, it is not necessary to ideologically adhere to the regime in order to participate in its

functioning. Multiple uses of the(se) frame(s) can coexist in the same person, always in relation to a (or several) primary group(s).

Moreover, *Eigensinn* also serves to underline the gap between the objectives of a policy and its social uses. Thus, the desire for (total) mastery over the functioning of society (by a dictatorial regime, for example) is never able to dictate the plural, ambiguous, and contradictory uses (and effects) of these policies.

Applying this concept to the forms of reappropriations of the Nazi past enables us to grasp their plurality and accommodate the students' inventiveness, moving away from the binary alternative between refusal and acceptance in order to describe these reappropriations in all their complexity. What is true for an order is most certainly equally true for less explicit attempts to homogenize representations. The desire(s) to homogenize representations of the Nazi past most certainly exist, such as the one to impose a single (or several) specific affective reaction(s) to this past. But the concept of *Eigensinn*, applied to this context, allows us to shift our interrogation toward an approach in terms of multiple appropriations and uses.

This first shift in our questioning raises the issue of the social frames in which these multiple and contradictory uses become meaningful. Although it is certain that the uses of the past cannot be reduced to an alternative between acceptance or rejection of school and what is transmitted there, I observed certain consistencies and noted that these appropriations were not infinitely variable. Multiple sources in sociology were useful here to analyze the social frames of these appropriations.

The differences between the East and the West for example—which were highly visible for teachers interviewed in Hamburg and Leipzig—disappeared almost completely for the students. But other kinds of differences were visible. Girls and boys talked about the Nazi past in different ways, for example. Do we see these gender differences, which are so clear in the classroom and are extensively analyzed in the sociology of education (see Baudelot and Establet 1992; Belotti [1973] 1975; Duru-Bellat 2002; Thorne 1993), between brothers and sisters, or between mothers and fathers? How do these family frames interact with those of the school in perceptions of the Nazi past?

A second ensemble of differences, more difficult to grasp, can be found between students from different social backgrounds, and particularly among those from migrant backgrounds (Creet and Kitzmann 2011; Georgi 2003). We know that there are complicated links between family migratory histories and success at school (Beaud [2002], 2003; Delcroix 2001; Sayad 1991, 1999) and these studies have been used to ask whether there are links between the uses of the past and success at school. Political sociology has shown that there is also a link between political or militant engagement and cultural capital (Gaxie 1978; Gaxie, Hubé, and Rowell 2013). These analyses

have been useful in understanding the students' appropriations and uses of the Nazi past.

Urban sociology and the sociology of social relegation (Foote-Whyte [1943] 1993), but also the studies on the *Eigensinn* of factory workers (Certeau [1980] 1988; Lüdtke 1992b, 1995a, 2016), have allowed us to move beyond an analysis that is overly formatted by the study of school mechanisms. Certain students may demonstrate indifference, or even open opposition to me and my study, but this does not prevent them developing their own uses of this past—from playing with model tanks to daily jokes about Hitler and “the Jews” in the playground. In order to understand what is at stake in these extracurricular usages of Nazism, it was necessary to take into account the importance of peer groups—both inside and outside the classroom, in the playground, in the street, and at home. The multiple and complex operations of entangled appropriations and their social frames thus constitute the heart of this research. A research framework based on interviews, observations, and archival study was set up to explore them.

## Corpus and Method

The goal of a twofold comparison—both social and territorial—justified the choice of four very different schools as the key sites for the fieldwork. The tripartite division of the German secondary school system leads to strong social segregation among students from an early age. The *Gymnasium* only accepts students (from age ten) who are considered “capable” of continuing on to the *Abitur* (high school diploma), which advantages children from privileged backgrounds. The *Hauptschule* (nine years of school, until students are fifteen years old) and *Realschule* (ten years of school, until students are sixteen years old), both of which are generally followed by an apprenticeship, provide less academic, more vocational education, accepting all the children who cannot go to the *Gymnasium*. Their student bodies are fairly homogenous in social terms and relatively low in the social hierarchy. The *Gesamtschule* is a hybrid form of school that combines the three other forms in a single institution. It was invented in the 1970s in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in order to address the problem of social segregation. We will see that that this option was not overly successful: the *Gesamtschulen* failed to create either social diversity or equitable regroupings of the other three forms of school. Moreover, social segregation is paralleled by ethnic segregation: students from families who have recently immigrated are most often placed in the *Haupt* and *Realschulen* or in the *Gesamtschule* but only very rarely in the *Gymnasien*.<sup>15</sup>

## The Choice of the Fieldwork Sites: Four German Schools

Before dealing with the problems raised by a comparative approach or the interview and observation techniques used, a presentation of the schools and student populations will provide an initial perspective on the fieldwork.<sup>16</sup> Two major towns—one in the east (Leipzig), the other in the west (Hamburg)—were chosen particularly because of their size. Leipzig is one of the few very large cities in the east, given that Berlin was excluded from the outset because of its unique situation. Faced with the complexity of the German education system, which the sixteen federal *Länder* are responsible for, I looked for a local government and educational policies that were stable, in order to simplify the study in terms of public policies of the different *Länder*. The town of Hamburg (which is also a *Land* in its own right) had been governed by the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democrat Party, SPD, later associated with the Greens) for more than forty years, up until the end of the study. The *Land* of Saxe had been governed by the Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian-Democrat Union, CDU) since reunification. Moreover, having lived for sixteen years in Hamburg myself, my familiarity with the town and its institutions enabled me to reduce entry difficulties in two of these four field sites.<sup>17</sup> Two schools were chosen in each of these two towns. Because “young people” are not a homogenous social category, it was necessary to analyze the ways in which the students’ uses and appropriations of the Nazi past were inscribed in social practices determined notably by class differences. In each town, the schools were therefore chosen in contrasting urban environments, from two extremes of the social hierarchy (within the public school system), including a bourgeois neighborhood (where the two *Gymnasien* are located) and a disadvantaged neighborhood (where the *Gesamtschule* in Hamburg and the *Mittelschule*<sup>18</sup> in Leipzig are located).

### *Weinberg in Hamburg*

Weinberg is a wealthy neighborhood in Hamburg, far from the center but accessible by subway. It is close to the forests and fields that surround the town. The neighborhood forms a kind of village, with a small center of shops, cafés, a library, a cinema, bars, and a large market. The old brick building of the Weinberg *Gymnasium* is classified as a historic monument. It is a two-story building, built around a courtyard with sunken gardens at the level of the basements. A series of bay windows lets sun and light into the classrooms. The site of the building is situated on a small hillside in the middle of a wood beside a lake: a “perfectly charming” place. The streets of

the neighborhood are calm and bordered by large individual houses with gardens and garages, often for expensive cars. The external courtyard of the school is equipped to receive hundreds of bicycles. A gym is attached to the school, a little way down the hill. Ms Heide, a young history teacher who recently arrived in Hamburg considered herself “lucky” to have been appointed to this school.

Yes, of course, it’s a very good school. On all levels: the colleagues, the students, the building, the site. Well, yes, the neighborhood, you can say a lot about it, it’s perhaps a little too posh (*gutbürgerlich*), on one hand. But on the other, these are students with whom we can really work. And the parents are so involved. I was afraid, coming to Hamburg, to find myself in a social hotspot (*sozialer Brennpunkt*). But here it’s very calm. I was lucky.<sup>19</sup>

Ms Heide was not wrong in her “feeling” of social homogeneity among the students’ parents, as we can see in Table 0.1 below, which shows the professions of the parents who participated in the study.

Almost all of the parents of the students interviewed were employed; only three mothers out of thirty-eight were at home, and no one was unemployed. More than half of the parents were managers or in intellectual professions (nineteen were teachers), the others were predominantly doctors and legal practitioners (lawyers or magistrates), and a few were in political positions. Just under a quarter of them were business owners and a few were retail traders. Almost all of the fathers (thirty-three out of thirty-eight) were therefore in the categories of senior management or business owners. One-quarter of the parents were in intermediary professions or were employees, and these were mostly mothers, in particular the wives of business owners who worked in their husbands’ companies. Among these women there were also primary school teachers and a few nurses. There were no agricultural professions among the parents, and only one manual worker. This professional distribution is confirmed by the parents’ educational qualifications (Table 0.2).

**Table 0.1** Socio-professional categories (SPC) of the parents of students interviewed at Weinberg.

SPC	Craftsmen, retail traders, business owners	Senior executives, intellectual professions (including teachers)	Intermediate professions	Employees, service personnel	Workers	Home-makers	Unemployed	Total
Mother	1	15(9)	8	11	0	3	0	38
Father	8	25(10)	4	0	1	0	0	38
Total	9	40(19)	12	11	1	3	0	76

**Table 0.2** Educational qualifications of parents of the students interviewed at Weinberg.

Parents' education	Primary education	Secondary education/ apprenticeship	High school diploma	University studies	PhD
Mother	0	4	13	21	0
Father	0	3	7	24	4
Total	0	7	20	45	4

Almost two-thirds of the parents had access to higher education (four with PhDs), and nearly all had passed the *Abitur* exams. Although these figures might not be strictly representative (in the statistical sense) of the student body as a whole, they nevertheless give a perspective of the social milieu in which the students are growing up. It is important to bear in mind that I spoke to a whole class of students in this school and there is no reason to think that this class is particularly different from the others from a social perspective.

### *The Gesamtschule Wiesi in Hamburg*

Wiesenbergshafen is an outlying suburb of Hamburg with no real center. To get there, one has to cross the motorway that encircles the town and against which the neighborhood is built. It is made up of dilapidated gray concrete high-rise housing estates from the 1970s, some of which are empty. There are no shops, no cafés, and no cinema in the neighborhood. The inhabitants use an affectionate pet name for the area and its school (Wiesi). Across from the Wiesenbergshafen *Gesamtschule* is an abandoned ten-story parking structure. The gray concrete building is open-sided and covered in graffiti, and the wind whistles through it. The school across the road is a metallic orange block with blue waves painted over it. The entry, on the side of the building and a little difficult to find, leads into a large hall, very clean and bright due to the numerous windows and light coming in from above. The space is calm. On one side, in front of the windows, is an oversized map of the world, centered on Africa and South America. To the left of the map is a sign with an inscription, combining fundamental law, human rights, and school rules.

Human dignity is untouchable,  
 Freedom is always the freedom of our fellow citizens as well  
 The value of a person does not depend on their origin, their religion,  
 their gender or their sexuality.  
 All people must be respected and treated as having equal rights.  
 Each member of the school community has the right  
 to freely express their opinions in the form they wish.  
 In our school, violence is not acceptable,

against neither people nor things,  
neither physically, nor verbally.  
These rules are compulsory.

To the right of this sign is a notice board with the flags of the following thirty-three countries—the nationalities of the students at the school—aligned vertically in German alphabetical order: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Bosnia, China, Denmark, Germany, Ecuador, Ivory Coast, England, Ghana, Greece, India, Italy, Iran, Japan, Yugoslavia, Cape Verde, Kazakhstan, Croatia, Libya, Macedonia, Niger, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Turkey, Tunisia, Ukraine, Vietnam.

These details provide a good perspective on what is so particular about Wiesi. Founded in 1972 as one of the first *Gesamtschulen* of the FRG (today there are thirty-eight in Hamburg), it was a “pilot school.” The creation of the *Gesamtschulen* was an initiative of the social-democrat governments, who, from 1969, attempted to overcome the educational and social segregation of students set up by the tripartite system. Theoretically, in seventh grade, when students enter secondary school, the *Gesamtschule* was supposed to be comprised of 30 percent of students at *Hauptschule* level (ninth grade), 30 percent of students with *Realschule* level (tenth grade), and 30 percent of students considered “capable” of taking the *Abitur* exams (*Gymnasium* students). This was not the case at Wiesi however, and it was not exceptional in this respect. Only 3–7 percent of the students continued school after the *Realschulabschluss* exams at age sixteen, because the parents who wanted their children to pursue longer studies had sent them to *Gymnasium* from the beginning of secondary school. Situated in one of the more difficult areas of Hamburg, Wiesi is one of the few *Ganztagsschulen* (full-time schools) with classes until five o’clock in the afternoon. As such it also offers many activities: the public library is in the same building, there are communal areas such as a billiard room, pinball machines, internet rooms, and a large cafeteria where students pay for meals according to their parents’ income (some therefore eat almost for free). As a “pilot school,” Wiesi attracts “committed” teachers.

I absolutely wanted to be able to accompany children from disadvantaged backgrounds to higher education. And so, I applied for one of the two *Ganztags-Gesamtschulen*—at the time there were eight *Gesamtschulen* in Hamburg. And I absolutely wanted to be in one of the two *Ganztags-Gesamtschulen*. And nowhere else. And as a *Gymnasium* teacher!<sup>20</sup>

The teachers at Wiesi defend a “left-wing” vision of pedagogy and a large number of them—in fact all those who arrived in the 1970s and who are nearing retirement age—declare themselves “Marxists.” Even today they are members of a political party (SPD/Socialist Party or die Grünen/the Greens).<sup>21</sup>

**Table 0.3** Socio-professional categories of the parents of students interviewed at Wiesi.

SPC	Craftsmen, retail traders, business owners	Senior executives, intellectual professions (including teachers)	Intermediate professions	Employees, service personnel	Workers	Home-makers	Unem- ployed	Total
Mother	0	0	4	6	3	8	1	22
Father	5	1	2	1	11	0	2	22
Total	5	1	6	7	14	8	3	44

Two had been card-holding members of the Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (Communist Party/DKP) until its dissolution in 1989. By comparison, in Weinberg, only two teachers had been members of a party—the SPD—and only for a few years in the 1970s. The teachers at Wiesi are also sufficiently convinced of the virtues of the *Gesamtschule* system to send their own children there.

The student body at Wiesi is clearly less privileged than that of Weinberg (see Table 0.3).

Nearly a quarter of the students' parents are workers (fourteen of forty-four). A little over a third of mothers are at home (eight of twenty-two), and among the others five are employed as cleaners; but there are also several intermediary professions, often in the areas of health and social work. Among fathers, there are a few who are self-employed and have their own shops. The trade category should not be misinterpreted here: the fathers work in their shops alone (they are sausage merchants [*Würstchenbudenbesitzer*] or kebab sellers) or as craftsmen, quite unlike the major businesses of the parents at the *Gymnasium* in Weinberg. One of the fathers is a doctor but he lives in the United Kingdom and his daughter has never met him. Unemployment is underreported by the students in the interviews. In fact, the vice principal and several teachers affirm that 30 percent of parents at the school do not work at all and live on social assistance.<sup>22</sup>

It is interesting to note that the educational qualifications of the parents only partially correspond to their professional activity (see Table 0.4):

The relatively large number of parents with university degrees, or who have passed the *Abitur* university entrance exams (fifteen of forty-four) can be explained by the German immigration policies of the 1980s and 1990s. These are Afghan or Iranian immigrants who opposed the Taliban or the Islamic revolution, or they are families who fled the war in the former Yugoslavia (see Table 0.5). These populations are from intellectual groups,

**Table 0.4** Educational qualifications of the parents of students interviewed at Wiesi.

Parents' education	None	Primary education	Secondary education/ Apprenticeship	Abitur/ High school diploma	University education	PhD	Don't know	Total
Mother	2	3	9	4	3	0	1	22
Father	0	2	11	4	4	0	1	22
Total	2	5	20	8	7	0	2	44

**Table 0.5** Nationality of the parents of students interviewed at Wiesi. This is the only school in which the nationality of the parents is relevant. In the other schools, a large majority of students have German parents and grandparents.

Nationality	German born in Germany	German born elsewhere	Afghanistan	Iran	Former Yugoslavia	Russia/ USSR	Turkey	Total
Mother	8	0	5	2	2	3	2	22
Father	6	2	4	3	2	3	2	22
Total	14	2	9	5	4	6	4	44

managers, and elites in their countries of origin, but their degrees and qualifications were not recognized in Germany. They therefore often perform manual work or are employees or shopkeepers, professions that do not match their levels of education.

This table is not representative of the total student body at Wiesi (we have already seen the thirty-three nationalities that are present at the school). However, it does show just how over-qualified the parents are for their current professions. Moreover, it reflects the large proportion of students with either one or both parents who have a nationality other than German. Of the twenty-two students interviewed, only five were born to two German parents. This corresponds to the estimation of Herbert Weise, a teacher at the school: “I only have two students out of twenty-two who are from two generations of German-Germans, with German grandmothers and grandfathers on both sides. More or less all the others have family histories involving migration.”<sup>23</sup> This specificity initially seemed to be an inconvenience, to the point where I was ready to begin looking for a less “atypical” school. However, upon investigation, it became clear that in Hamburg, the schools in so-called “difficult” areas also tend to have students with non-German parents. So Wiesi was not that atypical after all for a disadvantaged neighborhood in Hamburg, a town in which the non-German population is high (17 percent).<sup>24</sup> The research at Wiesi also allowed me to take into account the way these young, so-called “foreign,” Germans relate to German history, which considerably enriched the analysis.

**Table 0.6** Socio-professional categories of the parents of students interviewed at Monnet. One of the students does not know his father.

SPC	Craftsmen, retail traders, business owners	Senior executives, intellectual professions (including teachers)	Intermediate professions	Employees, service personnel	Workers	Home-makers	Unemployed	Total
Mother	1	11(3)	5	3	0	0	1	21
Father	4	11(4)	2	2	1	0	0	20
Total	5	22(7)	7	5	1	0	1	41

### *Gymnasium Monnet in Leipzig*

The *Gymnasium* Monnet in Leipzig looks like a castle. It is situated within a residential neighborhood, quite close to the center of town, surrounded by carefully restored early twentieth-century buildings. The wrought iron gate leads the visitor into a grand entryway in front of the majestic stairs leading into the Renaissance-era building. Although the inside does not look much like a castle, the high ceilings and large rooms nevertheless make it a comfortable place to work. It is not the most famous *Gymnasium* in Leipzig (that title goes to the *Thomasschule*<sup>25</sup>) but its reputation in the town is well established.

My welcome at the *Gymnasium* Monnet was warm, but the principal Mr Wolff insisted that I obtain prior agreement from the Leipzig school district (*Regionalschulamt*) before I could begin the study in his school. This was the first major difference with Hamburg, where entry into the schools and access to students and parents was characterized by a lack of formal institutional barriers. Three weeks of negotiation (including an interview at the *Regionalschulamt*) and several administrative forms later, I was able to begin my fieldwork.

The students at Monnet come from families that are as well-off as the students in Weinberg (see Table 0.6). More than half of parents are managers or in intellectual professions, are self-employed or own businesses, and there are also a few retail traders. Among the intellectual professions, there are fewer teachers than at Weinberg but there are more artists and cultural workers. Another noteworthy difference is that the mothers have the same levels of qualification as the fathers (with an exception made for the two PhDs). None of them work in their husbands' businesses or are homemakers by choice. Only one had been unemployed for a few months at the time of the interview.

**Table 0.7** Educational qualifications of the parents of students interviewed at Monnet.

Parents' education	Secondary education	High school diploma	University studies	PhD	Total
Mother	7	4	10	0	21
Father	6	2	10	2	20
Total	13	6	20	2	41

The level of educational qualifications reflects this professional distribution, as we can see in Table 0.7.

One particularity consists in the fact that many parents took up their studies again after reunification (nearly a third). This was the case for four people who had not been able to pursue their studies for political reasons (their parents were clergymen or businessmen<sup>26</sup>), but also for others who had chosen not to continue their schooling or who lost their jobs because of economic restructuring after reunification. Another interesting characteristic lies in the fact that people who had only obtained the *Polytechnische Oberschule* degree (POS, a vocational qualification),<sup>27</sup> found work as technicians or in self-employment.

### *The 100th Mittelschule in Leipzig*

The 100th *Mittelschule* is a little outside of town in a Leipzig suburb. The neighborhood is made up of high-rise housing blocks and the school is in a rundown building, painted pale yellow, and covered in graffiti. A four-lane motorway runs alongside it. The 100th is completely closed to the outside; you have to ring the bell to enter. “Security measures,” explained the (female) principal, “you never know . . .” The doors only open onto the courtyard during break times. The neighborhood is known for its “occasional violence” among “extreme-right groups.” “But they’ve left our school,” said one teacher, “they were among our students, a few years ago, but they’re working now. Among the younger ones, it’s finished.” The students interviewed from this school come from disadvantaged backgrounds. What sets their parents apart is the high percentage of long-term unemployment, particularly among the mothers, some of whom lost their jobs during reunification (*Wende*) and were never reemployed.

These are mostly children of employees with a few shopkeepers. The general profile of students overall is hardly more favorable. The parents’ qualifications correspond to their SPC.

Most of these parents obtained a diploma from the *Polytechnische Oberschule* (POS); very few only have a primary school certificate, which is perhaps

**Table 0.8** Socio-professional categories of the parents of students interviewed at the 100th. Three students do not know their father.

SPC	Craftsmen, retail traders, business owners	Senior executives, intellectual professions (including teachers)	Intermediate professions	Employees, service personnel	Workers	Home-makers	Unemployed (for more than 4 years)	Total
Mother	1	0	1	2	0	1	6	11
Father	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	8
Total	3	0	1	3	5	0	8	19

**Table 0.9** Educational qualifications of parents of students interviewed at the 100th.

Parents' education	Primary school	Polytechnische Oberschule	High school diploma	University studies	PhD	Total
Mother	0	10	1	0	0	11
Father	1	5	2	0	0	8
Total	1	15	3	0	0	19

linked to the fact that they are younger than the parents in Hamburg. Instead of three generations since the war, here there are often four. In the east, there are more generations because parents had their children at a younger age. These parents were of the generation born in the 1960s.

Although there was massive immigration in the FRG after the 1960s, immigration in the GDR was much more limited, with a specific geographical focus on Southeast Asia, in particular Vietnam and Laos, which is absent from this particular suburb.<sup>28</sup>

## A “Post-Wall” Generation

Born between 1984 and 1989, the students interviewed in this study are in a shared generational location,<sup>29</sup> even though difference between old and new *Länder* have far from disappeared. One essential difference consists in the smaller generation gaps in the east. Thus, among the students interviewed in Leipzig (and for whom I have this information), twenty belong to the fourth generation since the war (their four grandparents were born between 1935 and 1950). Five students have two grandparents born before 1931, and some have great-grandparents still living.

The students in Hamburg and Leipzig are quite similar in terms of their political concerns. Indeed, the events that they refer to—especially international

events—are the same: the war in Iraq, US policy. In terms of domestic policy, unemployment is their primary concern and is still more of a sensitive subject in the east than in the west. Xenophobia is also a recurring theme. They are too young to have experienced the fall of the Berlin Wall and unified Germany constitutes their central political reference point. Their knowledge about the former division of the country remains very vague, although effective divisions continue to exist. We can see this in the phenomenon of *Ostalgie* (nostalgia for East Germany) incarnated by certain products and cultural practices, such as the German films *Sonnenallee* (Sun Alley), directed by Leander Haußmann in 1999,<sup>30</sup> or the 2003 film *Good Bye Lenin!* by Wolfgang Becker.<sup>31</sup> These films mobilize objects considered representative of the former GDR such as Trabant miniature cars, “walking signal” key rings (nicknamed *Ampelmännchen*, little man with a big hat), or indeed the expressions *Ossi/Wessi* themselves, which all became “endangered species” after the reunification.

Like most citizens in pluralist regimes, and particularly the youngest among them (Percheron 1978), most of the respondents, aged between fourteen and eighteen, show little interest in politics. Their opinions are not well reasoned, and they do not consider themselves socially or technically competent in this area. For example, they are not able to identify the main political parties, nor feel themselves socially authorized to express their opinions because of their age (see Bourdieu 1979; Gaxie 1978; Memmi 1985).

### A Micro-Comparative Approach

These social differences and specificities constitute the primary material and interest of this study, which applies a comparative monographical approach (Beaud 1996), using four case studies—four school monographs—in order to observe differences and similarities. The micro-level analysis is inspired by Italian micro-history (Ginzburg [1976] 1980, [1979] 1980, 1993), oral history (Perks and Thompson 1998), and *Alltagsgeschichte* or history of the everyday (Lüdtke 1995a, 1998, and 2006). In particular, it follows the founding studies by German historians Lutz Niethammer and Alexander von Plato, who studied the forms of appropriation of the Nazi past in the 1980s in the Ruhr (Niethammer and von Plato 1983–1985). The comparative approach reduces the risk of over or under interpretation of processes that might be explicable only in a local context. The objective of this analysis is to develop a more general argument, beyond the singularity that can be observed in a particular case. Comparison helps us to achieve this, “with the belief that these minuscule lives also participate, in their way, in ‘grand’ history, which they give a different, discrete, complex vision of” (Passeron and Revel 2005).

We therefore seek to document “massive phenomena,” in this case the forms of appropriation of the Nazi past, by “perceiving individual strategies, individual or familial biographic trajectories, of the men [women and children], who have been confronted with them” (Revel 1996: 12). These individual strategies provide clues about the importance of political facts that are outside the direct control of individuals, who are living history on a daily basis (Levi [1985] 1989: 14).

### The Different Methods of the Study

The observational approach, combined with interviews, allows us to identify the classroom interactions between students and teachers, but also between students. Here we must remember that German classes are run slightly differently than they are elsewhere. For example, the traditional lecture-style class has almost entirely disappeared in Germany, replaced by work on documents, research projects, and group discussions. This process of the disappearance of traditional lecture-style class is in itself a collective moral lesson of the authoritarian regime. This is facilitated by the freedom that teachers have in choosing the way they teach history—the ministerial and *Länder* curriculum is only specified in general terms—and by the importance of classroom assessment in the evaluation of students. It is therefore possible to observe the student interaction in class relatively easily. Conversely, these interactions can only be understood in light of the sociological biography of the protagonists (see Beaud 1996). Interviews open up the possibility of analyzing representations of the past, both with teachers and students, and provide additional information about their trajectories, their social origins, and even the roles of their grandparents during the war. After these interviews I was in a better position to understand their interactions in class—particularly with regard to the students—and to interpret them in light of this information. Between February 2002, when I started my first preliminary interviews, and September 2004, at the end of the fieldwork, 137 interviews were conducted (including thirty-two with teachers), between one and ten hours long and two hours long on average. In addition to this, I performed approximately two hundred hours of observation in history classes.<sup>32</sup>

I began the interviews with a question about German history, asking the students to tell me if there was an event, a moment, or a period in the history of their country that they found particularly interesting. This was an open question, which was intended to gauge the importance of Nazism in their lives.<sup>33</sup> Although the older adolescents and those from more privileged backgrounds were able to speak freely at length about this, the interview protocol<sup>34</sup> turned out to be essential (although insufficient) for younger

respondents or those from less privileged backgrounds with whom the interviews were also shorter. The specific difficulties encountered during interviews on “history” with students from working-class families were therefore compensated for by the observations carried out in class and during break times.

I concluded the interviews with a questionnaire in order to associate their discourses with key sociological information concerning them individually. This made the analysis easier and provides a summary document.<sup>35</sup> This questionnaire contains a problematic but nevertheless important question. I asked the interviewees to rank their parents and grandparents in four categories, according to their relationship to Nazism: member/supporter, *Mitläufer* (follower),<sup>36</sup> resister, and persecuted. Almost all the teachers, as well as a large number of students asked that I add an extra category: “passive resister-fighter” (*passive Widerstandskämpfer*), which is an oxymoron that seems devoid of sense. This expression reveals a certain uneasiness among the interviewees to categorize their family members, which is certainly provoked by the simplistic nature of such categorization—obliging them to judge their parents and grandparents before an outsider (the interviewer).<sup>37</sup> This request therefore does not automatically mean that the interviewees see their parents and grandparents as “heroes.” However, it does demonstrate the limitations of the questionnaire approach for this kind of research. Indeed, the range of possible responses was specifically designed to oblige the respondents to judge their grandparents without explaining their choice: categorizing them as “collaborators” corresponds to a moral condemnation of one’s grandparents before the interviewer; categorizing them as “resister” when it is not entirely justified is akin to “glorification.” This therefore provokes them to refuse this conflictual situation. This “exit strategy” (Hirschman 1970) is expressed through the embarrassment of the respondents and their desire to add an additional category that does not oblige them to choose. The focus groups and individual in-depth repeated interviews provide better insight into the ambiguity and complexity of the relations between generations.

The distribution of the interviews is not perfectly balanced. Given that I had the possibility to follow a class at Weinberg for a whole year (once a week for their history class), I interviewed all the students in that ninth grade class. This was the opportunity to access students with low grades, or those who see themselves as struggling, in a “good school.” Unfortunately, due to lack of time, this intensive approach was not possible in the other schools. An in-depth case study in Weinberg and a relatively in-depth case study in Wiesi are thus compared with less in-depth studies at the *Gymnasium* Monnet and the *Mittelschule* in Leipzig (Oeser 2007a).

## Co-constructing Discourses through Interviews

It is now standard practice to be attentive to the role of the interviewer in both observation and interviews, and to be aware of their possible contribution to the production of the interview material, in particular in the construction of biographical coherence after the fact (Bertaux 1980, 1981; Bourdieu 1986; Peneff 1990; Pudal 1989). The biographical approach, but also all social science analysis more generally, constructs a kind of artificial coherence that otherwise may have remained fragmented and incoherent. Moreover, the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee involves a certain amount of retrospective reconstruction, because it obliges the interviewer to create a coherent discourse where the interviewee does not necessarily see any. Attempting to reconstruct the meaning that social actors give to their own actions can only ever be a provisional result, and the analysis must take into account the situation in which this construction of meaning was collectively created. However, it is important to try to identify the social logics at work in these temporary reconstitutions, as much as in the social trajectories of the interviewees.

The theme of the Nazi past presents specific interview challenges. Although it is relatively easy to get respondents talking about the school, family history is another matter entirely. The emotional weight of this subject is sometimes so strong that three of my interviewees broke down and cried, others became verbally aggressive toward me—and one left the room mid-interview and never came back. I encountered difficulties similar to those described by Olivier Schwartz during his research into the private lives of workers. However, they were exacerbated here by the fact that this research concerns not only the intimate private lives of respondents, but investigation of a past that is taboo, even shameful. The “breach of intimacy” is thus even more invasive. Through the relationship of trust I was able to establish with the interviewees, I created conditions that enabled me to “steal”: their trust, their intimacy, and their family pride. Revealing my own family history<sup>38</sup> in the interview context might have facilitated their openness, but engaging in what Schwartz calls “the [excessive] gift of the self, often grueling, is also perverse because it is essentially manipulative: we open ourselves up to theft so that we may steal in our turn” (Schwartz 1990: 53).

### “Why Are You Spying on Us?”

Conducting observation in the classroom is not always easy because of the dual relationship established: with the teachers on one hand and with the

students on the other. Just as with any fieldwork, it is first necessary to “find one’s place.” The presence of an observer in a classroom breaks a kind of taboo—classes are always held behind closed doors. For German teachers the situation evokes the *Referendariat*, the two-year inspection period during which trainee teachers have to teach in front of a more experienced teacher. This is generally what my presence reminded some of the Hamburg teachers of. Mr Schulze, for example, always took the time after class to explain what he was doing during the class, as though I was a trainee teacher. This relationship was easier for the older teachers, because unlike the inspection, it put them in a position of prestige, as transmitting their knowledge and expertise. Ms Heide, a young teacher, who had just passed the exam, was more hesitant to allow me to attend her classes—seeing me more as a judge than as an apprentice (she had never had to train another teacher). Mr Schulze by comparison had trained several dozen young teachers and participated in many examination committees over the course of his thirty-year career.

In Leipzig, the situation was different. As I was born in Hamburg, I was first considered a *Wessi* in the former GDR. The image of the (Western) inspection is very present here. In this context it was the older professors who categorically refused to allow me to attend their classes, except when they were “obliged” to accept by the hierarchy, which was the case of Ms Seidengleich. The younger teachers, however, accepted me more readily. Ms Meersteiner, although she remained hesitant, saw herself as having had no teaching experience under the GDR (she started work in 1988), so she considered herself less likely to be stigmatized. Mr Wolff, who also allowed me to observe his class, had a particular legitimacy—as the new school principal he had been “certified” by the administration and was therefore “on the right side.” To convince the teachers who remained reluctant I learned to openly talk about my West German origins from the very beginning of the interview. At this point I sometimes criticized the FRG to show—if not my neutrality—at least my openness to critical opinions and arguments. Because the interviews were long and repeated several times, I was able to overcome this suspicion by progressively establishing a relationship of trust.

When I began to follow Mr Schulze’s class in Hamburg, the students found my presence strange. On the first day, my note-taking was a particular source of attention, even though I had already introduced myself to present my research. During a sports class at the end of the day, Karsten came to see me and asked: “Why are you spying on us?” (*Warum belauschen Sie uns?*) I did not have an answer. “I would like to get to know you,” I replied. He remained skeptical, “So who am I then?” These adolescents felt observed and rightly so. My presence was disturbing to them. On that particular day, Lisa and Maren did not want to participate in sports and hid behind a nut tree near the field to collect some nuts. They realized that I had noticed them, and

with some irony, called out to me “We are collecting nuts. You can write that down in the log: Lisa and Maren collect nuts.”

However, given I was there, they thought they might as well make the most of it. Later in the day, Elisabeth pulled me aside and said, “Can you convince the teacher that we can use a calculator on the exam?” She was disappointed when I explained that the math teacher is unlikely to listen to me. Not only was I constantly watching them, but I was also useless! This put me in a difficult position. It was when I decided to only attend the history classes that the relationship became easier and the students got used to my presence.

In addition to my fieldwork, I also studied the archives in Weinberg, where all the *Abitur* exams are preserved, dating back to 1983.<sup>39</sup> I also photocopied papers from exams held in the classes I observed (and corrections made by the teachers), and included them in the analysis. I also incorporated the films shown in the classes I attended and the documents distributed in class.

### **Describe, Record, Translate**

I used a particular protocol in order to transcribe the interviews. The goal of an exact transcription, recording silences, laughs, and noises, was considered important in order to provide a reading that was the closest possible to what was actually said—even though moving from oral to written language is already an initial “translation.” This is why I always re-listened to the recording when reading the interviews transcribed for the analysis. Interpretative comments were added (in brackets) in order to make the discussions easier to understand. As this book was originally published in French, a second translation came after the analysis—translating the interviews originally made in German into French. The temporality is important here. I was able to integrate my analysis of the German interviews into the French translation. A third translation came with the publication of the book in English. Throughout the book, I have worked closely with the translator to navigate between the French translation and the original German of the interviews. All translation (like all description) is already an interpretation (Geertz 1973), it is always open to critique and questions. This is why I have sometimes added the original German wording, and I have added explanations of the translations and choices made when it seemed particularly important.

Moreover, in order to reflect the casual language of the German remarks, I have sometimes chosen linguistically “incorrect” language, or informal or colloquial terms. What is important here is not so much the words themselves; the syntax, the intonation, and all the para-verbal clues contribute significantly to the meaning. A word-for-word translation would be unable to capture that. For example, in German, the end-of-phrase expressions

(such as *und irgendwie sowas, nech*, “or something like that”) add nothing semantically but make the phrase informal and casual. This playing with syntax exists in different forms in English (for example, the expressions “like” or “you know,” which give an oral character to the phrase). It was therefore sometimes more important to me to convey the tone, the level of language, rather than to look for exact expressions that would be meaningless in different translations. There is therefore a significant distance between the French and the English translations of original German testimonies, due to the attention to colloquial language and the importance given to intonation and underlying tones. This also leads to a choice of expressions in French and English that seem more familiar than the German. This is not “dumbing down” the language but trying (wherever possible) to be faithful to expressions for which there is not always a direct equivalent in English. I therefore opted for a more liberal translation, with greater subjectivity in the hope of making it more rigorous. Indeed, given that it is difficult to transcribe intonations and effects of syntax (Beaud and Weber 1997) and even more difficult to translate them, I had to play with the language. This choice is linked to the belief that discourses have a range of meanings and we must attempt to translate them as a whole.

Indeed, language does not only convey thought, it also structures it. Translation, although sometimes complex, is also a means of making explicit that which is implicit in the “self-evidence” of communication; there are specific difficulties with translation because it always involves a transformation of thought. However, this approach has the advantage of being an explicit study of the implications and associations imposed by language as the primary frame of speech and therefore thought.

### Personal Involvement

Richard Hoggart ([1957] 2006), in his “social self-analysis” of working-class culture, warned against the dangers of an author becoming psychologically involved in his or her object. From a working-class background himself, he was referring to his own tendency to be nostalgic about the old working-class culture and refuse recent changes—nostalgia against which he struggled during the whole process of writing of his book. Moreover, he noted

a tendency in myself, because the subject is so much part of my origins and growth, to be unwarrantedly sharp toward those features in working-class life of which I disapprove. Related to this is the urge to lay one’s ghosts; at the worst, it can be a temptation to “do down” one’s class, out of a pressing ambiguity in one’s attitudes to it. (Hoggart [1957] 2006: 4–5)

Like Hoggart (and perhaps like all researchers in social sciences), I chose to study a subject that resonated with me on a personal level. In my own analytic work, I found a similar tendency in the “tone, the unconscious emphasis and the rest” that reveal “the [woman] saying it” (Hoggart [1957] 2006: 5). As a university professor,<sup>40</sup> I undoubtedly had an ambiguous relationship with the teachers I interviewed, and perhaps a desire to set myself apart from them even more because they were close to me both in profession and origins (I am the daughter of a secondary school teacher). Hoggart pursued his analysis in emphasizing the fact that he was also likely to “overvalue the features of working-class life of which I approve . . . as though I was subconsciously saying to my present acquaintance—see, in spite of it all, such a childhood is richer than yours” (Hoggart [1957] 2006: 5). In my fieldwork, this tendency to idealize my origins appears through a more or less strong identification—or perhaps idealization?—with the students (particularly the students of the *Gymnasium*) who were receiving the same education I received. It is through comparison with other institutions and through my own self-reflexivity that I have tried to address this bias, as much as possible.

The risks associated with the researcher’s involvement can also be found at another level. I am from a family in which both sides, maternal and paternal, were involved in Nazism. On my mother’s side, my great uncle was a doctor in the SS (*Reichzarzt SS*) under Himmler, responsible for the coordination of medical experiments in the concentration camps. On my father’s side, my grandfather was a member of the NSDAP (the National Socialist Party for German Workers) and director of a coal mine in Upper Silesia. The forced labor in the mines and the shootings at the end of the war caused the death of around two thousand prisoners of war and civilian workers. My family is trapped in a deep, three-generation silence about the crimes committed by family members. This omnipresent past had daily repercussions on my research and my writing that I had to constantly force myself to control. First, the family silence provoked in me a kind of “inquisitorial” attitude toward Nazism. This personal stance was most certainly the impetus of this research—although it was initially unconscious. In this sense, the researcher’s involvement can be a resource, as well as a risk. But in universalizing my personal attitude, for a long time I was unable to refrain from morally condemning the interviewees who had not questioned their own family past. This was also a part of my need to “lay my ghosts to rest” combined with a kind of class-based ethnocentrism demanding a more or less intellectualized relationship to the Nazi past. Similarly, I have had to master a tendency to react positively to the ways of treating the Nazi past that I approved of, particularly when it involved a critical stance toward the family past—and therefore corresponded to my own approach.

In Leipzig, my position in relation to the fieldwork was not exactly the same. Here I dealt with the problems of being an outsider (a *Wessi*) rather

than an insider. Moreover, my position was not so removed from that which Hoggart condemned as a “middle-class Marxist,” observing the working class, rather open to populist interpretation, either by glorification or compassion for his or her object of study (see also Grignon and Passeron 1989; Revel 1986). My relationship toward the respondents in Leipzig was doubly influenced by my own position as a researcher with critical left-wing pretensions of the FRG. I was stuck between a tendency to idealize the socialist convictions of the teachers on the one hand, and on the other, to pity these “people of the East” recovering from dictatorship.

At this stage, I cannot improve upon Hoggart’s conclusion that “a writer has to meet these struggles as [s]he can, and in the very process of writing” ([1957] 2006: 5).

## The Chapters

The organization of this book follows an analytic structure, moving from the teachers and teaching framework to the students. Chapter by chapter it deals with different relations to Nazism—initially legitimate, and later illegitimate—and the practices of students’ appropriations of the Nazi past, which follow different social logics: gendered, class, “anti-system,” refusal, and last but not least, amusement or play. The first chapter will attempt to explain the conditions of emergence and the stages of a specific pedagogy used to transmit an “affective relation” to history and politics through the teaching of the Nazi past. It is known as the pedagogy of emotional upheaval (*Betroffenheitspädagogik*<sup>41</sup>). It consists in provoking the students’ emotions, particularly through the use of audiovisual material in order to incite them to identify with the victims of history (Gudehus 2006). This identification should lead them to reject this past and adopt the more “suitable” political alternative: the pluralist regime. Pedagogical use of emotion works together with more “critical” uses however: the two are not exclusive and exist in parallel. The political “wager” underlying this approach, which contributes to the “burning” importance of the subject, is the (unverified) hypothesis that we only need to find the “right” relationship to the memory of Nazism in order to educate all the inhabitants of the Federal Republic as “good democratic citizens.” This would avoid, among other things, citizens becoming racist and/or extremist, raising questions about civic education. This is the “wager” that is at the heart of the politico-pedagogical framework of the teaching of Nazism in Germany, even though or despite the fact that “ultimately we know very little about the true effects of education on the level of racism and other ethnocentric behavior” (Baudelot and Leclercq 2005: 95)<sup>42</sup>. The first chapter of the book aims to elucidate this “wager.”

The second chapter deals with the “good students” and the social and school conditions that contribute to the adoption of the discourses on Nazism that are legitimate in the school context. What words should be used, what language, which images, how should one’s responsibilities be described in order to succeed in class? However, beyond the simple relation between the students and teachers, other issues bring adolescents to develop particular relations to the Nazi past: some students even make this appropriation of the past the first step in a life-long path, drawing on their social and family trajectories, their involvement in a group (political militants, for example). We will use three case studies to look at the conditions that are favorable to such a transformation. It is from these questions that we leave the problems of pedagogy to focus on our central concern: the social frames of different forms of appropriation.

The first one of these frames will be covered in the third chapter. The forms of appropriation of the Nazi past obey gendered logics; whether in the classrooms, in the playground or around the family table, “gender” roles influence the way students position themselves, and how they give meaning to this past. This is because appropriating history is a social process, linked to the dispositions and situations of the students. Here, gender also serves to make connections between different universes (family, parents, brothers and sisters, peers, school) in which the continuity of gender relations will contribute to the strength of the influence of this factor on the way history is appropriated by the students.

The fourth chapter studies the way in which the students who are particularly interested in the Nazi past use their knowledge, often acquired outside school, to criticize the FRG. It shows that the students who combine several disadvantages at school (families in economic difficulties, low levels of cultural capital) will not make the same use of the Nazi past as those who have inherited more cultural capital. The form that their “anti-system” criticisms take depends on the context, social belonging, and the resources the students have at their disposal. From criticisms of public policies, to criticisms of the government system, these students use the Nazi past outside institutional rules and frameworks and/or teachers’ expectations and sometimes directly against them.

The fifth chapter, however, analyzes the students who are not (or no longer) interested in the Nazi past in order to see the limits of these appropriations. The objective of this chapter is to understand the social conditions that lead to an impossibility to give meaning to the Nazi past, or to a certain tiredness about the subject.

A sixth and final chapter, more based on the sociology of interactions, sets out to identify the logics that are specific to the groups (of boys) who use the Nazi past in the playground to affirm their masculinity. Through jokes,

insults, and teasing, the Nazi past is caricatured, used as a weapon, or used to make friends laugh. The teachers do not see these extracurricular uses of the past in a positive light, and most of the time they are performed out of their spheres of vision and influence. Although some students' comments might be "politically" shocking for the reader, the objective here is not to judge them, but to understand the social logics behind them.

## Notes

1. Although quantitative analysis may not be sufficient in itself, it can provide an initial impression as to the media presence on the subject. This analysis is based on the study of the *Der Spiegel* index between 1969 and 2000. This index is organized by year and, in addition to the title, it contains a short description of the contents and keywords of each article.
2. Figures based on a frequency analysis using the index of the German National Bibliography (*Deutsche Nationalbibliographie* 1997-April 2002).
3. The term "extermination policy" refers to the genocide of Jews, Gypsies, and handicapped people, as well as the extermination of other targeted groups. The latter include political opponents and resistance members, particularly communists, Slavs, homosexuals, Freemasons, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc. Talking about an extermination policy emphasizes the fact that this was a rational policy that was planned by actors and implied conscious will. These criminals often remain absent, not only from the content of discourses on the past but also from the terms that are used in these discourses. It is therefore important to use a different terminology from that used by the interviewees. By using the adjective "National Socialist" or "Nazi," I am referring to the crimes planned by the National Socialist regime but put into place with the active support and passive tolerance of the immense majority of the German people, whether they explicitly adhered to the Nazi doctrine or not. On this particular problem, see, among others, Hilberg (1992).
4. The ARD (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) is the leading public television channel in Germany based on a consortium of regional channels: MDR (*Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk*), SWR (*Südwestrundfunk*), WDR (*Westdeutscher Rundfunk*), NDR (*Norddeutscher Rundfunk*), HR (*Hessischer Rundfunk*), SR (*Saarländischer Rundfunk*), RB (*Radio Bremen*), BR (*Bayerischer Rundfunk*), and RBB (*Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg*). The ARD is the only channel that agreed to send me documents including the index of the eight previous years of programs dealing with Nazi Germany, accompanied by a small description of each program, varying from one line to several paragraphs long. These documents provide the basis for this analysis.
5. The German expression "we must remember" (*wir müssen uns erinnern*) or "we must not forget" (*wir dürfen nicht vergessen*), which is closer to the English-language adage "lest we forget" evokes the moral duty to remember.
6. This is a distinction between three visions, but this clearly does not imply that there would be only one erudite way of learning history, only one political or one non-

specialist way. On the contrary, these categories each regroup thousands of ways of learning history.

7. The text of Halbwachs is based on the English translation by F. Ditter (1980) but has been amended when necessary.
8. Here we use the term “recollection” to emphasize the active dimension of memory, the act of recalling what Halbwachs illustrates above.
9. All the surnames and first names have been modified, as have the names of schools and sites, in order to ensure the anonymity of the respondents. The modified names have been chosen to reflect the way the interviewees presented themselves: with just their surname, their first and second names, or just their first name. This presentation seems to reflect the relationship I established with them, expressing more or less proximity and familiarity between interviewer and interviewee (using informal language and calling a teacher by their first name is not the same as remaining formal and using their surname). Because of this, I chose to preserve these differences, which reflect different relationships with respondents, even though it meant giving up a harmony that might have been easier for the reader. In order to better situate the respondents socially, a summary table presents the teachers’ origins, ages, and places of training in Appendix 3 along with short biographies, including teachers’ social characteristics in Appendix 4. Summaries for the students can be found in Appendix 5.
10. The didactics of history is a discipline in its own right in Germany.
11. Translated from the French, original translation from German by Alexandra Oeser.
12. It is important to recall that the initial interpretations and appropriations are in a constant state of flux, subject to permanent evolutions and reinterpretations. The term “reappropriation” is therefore used to cover all these processes and their evolutions.
13. These approaches consist, for example, in counting the turns and speaking time for boys and girls respectively in different classroom configurations, depending notably on the sex of the teacher, classroom diversity, etc.
14. On the question of the way Max Weber has been interpreted in France and the debates around the functioning of domination, the political order, and questions of obedience, see Darras (2008).
15. For an overall vision of the German school system, see Appendix 1.
16. The neighborhoods have been given (invented) pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity.
17. In view of the size of the fieldwork and the costs associated with it, and in light of the lack of funding available in human and social sciences, having access to accommodation at no cost for two years greatly facilitated this research.
18. This is an establishment created in the new (Eastern) *Länder* after reunification, inspired by the *Haupt* and *Realschule* of the old *Länder* (of the West). See Appendix 1.
19. Interview 18 February 2003.
20. Interview with Herbert Weise, 22 April 2003. All names are pseudonyms to preserve the anonymity of respondents. A list of participants cited in the text can be found in the appendices.
21. The left-wing party *Die Linke* did not yet exist at the time of the study. It was founded in 2007.
22. They have access to this information when organizing class trips, for example. Children whose parents receive social payments have access to financial assistance if they provide an attestation from the administration.
23. Informal conversation, 24 April 2003.
24. Hamburg is second only to Berlin in terms of the population of foreign nationals living there. The official figures only indicate a person’s own nationality, so it is impossible to

- have figures at the town level as to the percentage of people with foreign parents, or those who immigrated to Germany as children and acquired nationality since. There are no ethnic statistics in Germany.
25. The *Thomasschule* is the only school in Leipzig that has more than 50 percent of its teaching staff from the former *Länder* of the FRG, which is why it was eliminated from the study.
  26. The GDR of the 1950s had a policy of massively increasing the overall level of education, which was particularly advantageous for workers and peasants, and especially for women. Only one quarter of the first generation of the GDR (the generation of the parents) left school after eight years, 10 percent went all the way to the final high school exams in the mid-1960s, and the rest ended their school career after ten years of schooling. In 1961, access to university was set at 6 percent of the total student population each year. In fact, this percentage put an end to a period of increasing access to higher education in the GDR and had consequences for the state regulation of this access (see Wierling 2002: 267–88).
  27. Between 1959 and 1964, the law on the socialist construction of the school system in the GDR progressively replaced the eight years of primary school with a single school that lasted ten years, known as the *Polytechnische Oberschule* (POS). This school prepared students for the position that they would fulfill in socialist society. To pass the *Abitur* exams (for the high school diploma), one had to attend the *Erweiterte Oberschule* (EOS), which lasted twelve years. The move to the EOS happened after the eighth year of POS, by attending preparatory classes (Wierling 2002: 119–20). See also Table A.2 in Appendix 1.
  28. In Leipzig, the foreign population remained under 3 percent for a long time, only rising to barely 5 percent since the 2000s.
  29. Karl Mannheim distinguished “generational location” from “generational whole” and “generational unit,” a distinction that allows a definition of connections that are more or less close between individuals within a cohort. Mannheim defined “generational location” (*Generationslagerung*) as belonging to a specific historico-social unit, which contains potential possibilities of providing structuring principles (Mannheim [1928] 1970). He talks about a generational whole “when real, social and intellectual, content . . . make real connections between the individuals who are in the same generational location.” Even though they are in the same generational location, the students, unlike the teachers, do not (yet) belong to a generational whole. On the importance of Mannheim’s generational theory for British sociology, see Pilcher (1994).
  30. The film exists with English subtitles. It was adapted from the novel by Thomas Brussig, *Am kürzeren Ende der Sonnenallee* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999).
  31. The film, screenplay by Bernd Lichtenberg and winner of many cinematographic awards, also exists with English subtitles.
  32. One hundred of these interviews were fully transcribed, which corresponds to 2,500 pages of text. In addition, there are seven hundred pages of field notes written during the class observations and informal discussions in corridors or during meals. The fact that certain interviews were exceptionally long can be explained by the fact that I returned to see the interviewees several times, particularly the teachers. One non-directive biographic interview at the beginning was generally followed with a more directive interview, in which I asked specific questions about the events I had not understood as I re-transcribed the first interview. Then, during a third encounter I applied the interview protocol that can be found in Appendix 2.

33. The biographical approach is less relevant for adolescents because of their young age.
34. See Appendix 2.
35. See Appendix 2 for the model questionnaire distributed in Hamburg. It was slightly adapted for Leipzig.
36. The term *Mitläufer* (one who runs alongside), sometimes inappropriately translated as bystander in English, is often used in the context of a dictatorship, and in particular for Nazism, to refer to people who are not part of the resistance but who were not active members of the NSDAP or the authoritarian or dictatorial regime. This term refers to those who “went along,” the German word implying a much more active perspective of contribution to the crimes. Created during the occupation after the war to distinguish the “real culprits” from those who did not deserve punishment, the term has changed in connotation. Instead of enabling a “positive” distinction, it became pejorative. We used the English term “follower” here to translate it, which has probably a slightly less pejorative connotation than the German.
37. The demand also expresses a desire to protect the reputation, and thus the symbolic capital, of the group.
38. See below, section “Personal Involvement.”
39. The *Abitur* exam is held within the school, with normal classroom teachers.
40. At the time of writing, I was an assistant lecturer at the Institute of Political Studies in Toulouse, where I taught first and second year students who were scarcely three or four years older than the youngest students in the classes I was observing here.
41. This expression is difficult to translate because of its ambiguity. *Betroffenheit* means “emotion,” but in German it may also refer to the fact of “being touched” by an event or even “being involved.” In the theory of *Betroffenheitspädagogik* both of these meanings are present. They refer to the emotion felt by the students and their implication in the learning process. The expression “pedagogy of emotion” seems weak, and “emotional upheaval” seems to more adequately reflect the dual signification of this expression.
42. This observation is also true for Germany on the effects of politicization of memory policy specifically relating to Nazism.