

University teaching about the Holocaust in Germany

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1 Introduction

With over 72 years having elapsed since the liberation of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps, what is the current status of teaching about the Holocaust¹ at German universities? What do students, within the framework of their studies, experience about the Holocaust and its aftermath? To what extent and in which disciplines is the topic taught? What special challenges arise from German responsibility for the Holocaust? Does the higher education system in Germany have any special features that affect the way of teaching?

Up till now there have been no comprehensive studies of all these questions. Unlike the status and development of Holocaust education at secondary schools in Germany, teaching at German universities on the subject has rarely been a topic of academic research.

The present study, which is the result of a joint project sponsored by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and Freie Universität Berlin and conducted by the Center for Digital Systems at Freie Universität Berlin,² intends to close this gap.³

The aim of the project is to ascertain, describe, and point out special features and trends in the actual state of affairs of teaching about the Holocaust at universities in Germany. By means of a two-stage survey procedure, combining an empirical evaluation of academic calendars with a content analysis of interviews with experts, the status quo will be quantitatively and qualitatively described, thus creating a differentiated picture of academic teaching about the Holocaust in Germany.

1.1 Current Research Status

In Germany, the independent academic discipline of history didactics has been in existence since the 1970s, and is dedicated to historical learning—theoretically, empirically, and pragmatically—with a focus on history teaching and teacher training (cf. i.a. 2000, Barricelli/Lücke, 2012, Pandel, 2013). The questions as to how the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust can and should be conveyed in education and whether—or respectively how—lessons can be learned from the past, are still central not only in history didactics (cf. i.a. Rathenow et al., 2013, Gautschi et al., 2013, Brumlik, 2004), but also in extracurricular historical-political education and memorial education (cf. i.a. Gryglewski et al., 2015, Thimm et al., 2010).

Accordingly, there are numerous studies on various aspects of school and extracurricular teaching about the Holocaust in Germany. Examples include the empirical study by Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting on the historical-cultural socialization of young people in Germany (cf. Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007), the works of Viola B. Georgi on the historical views of young immigrants in Germany (cf. Georgi, 2004) and Rosa Fava's discourse analysis on education in immigrant society after Auschwitz (cf. Fava, 2015). In addition, there are studies and recommendations from the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Länder (KMK) for incorporating discussions about the Holocaust in secondary schools (cf. KMK, 1997, 2005, and 2014) and state-wide reports from the German delegation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA),⁴ which give a brief overview of the developmental status of dealing with the Holocaust in research, memorial culture, and education (cf. Task Force, 2006, IHRA, 2012).

1 In the context of this research, the term "Holocaust" is used to denote the murder and extermination of European Jews and other victim groups under National Socialism. Nonetheless, we refer here to the problem of the generally synonymous terms "Holocaust" and "Shoah." Like the Hebrew term "Shoah" (meaning "great catastrophe"), which refers to a meaningless calamity, the term "Holocaust," derived from the Greek *holókaustos* ("completely burnt"), is only conditionally fair for describing the historical events of the Nazi extermination of the Jews (cf. i.a. Claussen, 1995, Agamben 2003).

2 Cf. Center for Digital Systems (CeDiS): www.cedis.fu-berlin.de/, May 30, 2018.

3 The project was led by Nicolas Apostolopoulos, the director of the Center for Digital Systems at Freie Universität Berlin, academically supervised by Johannes Tuchel, and conducted by Verena Nägele and Lena Kahle with the support of Belinda Nüssel. The Topography of Terror Foundation was a cooperation partner in the project.

4 Cf. www.holocaustremembrance.com, May 30, 2018.

In contrast to the relatively extensive academic engagement with teaching about the Holocaust in secondary schools, teaching about the Holocaust at the university level has thus far received little attention. Historical-didactic works on the contents and concepts of teacher education are an exception (cf. i.a. Rathenow, 2005). In 2014, the institution *Erinnern.at* conducted a systematic study of Holocaust education in teacher training at Austrian universities and pedagogic colleges (cf. Greussig, 2014). Despite the focus on teacher education and the different country of research, the study is of interest due to its similarly formulated questions and methodological approach. The courses offered at five selected universities were surveyed and interviews with experts were conducted (cf. *ibid.* 7 f). The study comes to the conclusion that teachers and B.A./M.A. history students in Austria have the option of bypassing the topic of National Socialism and Holocaust in their studies. The thematization is ultimately dependent on the “personal interests and semester planning” (*ibid.*: 49) or on the research priorities of the instructors (cf. *ibid.*: 48).

In Germany, the systematic investigation of the subject is limited to a study conducted by Andreas Wirsching in 2012, in which the count and content of all courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism in historical scholarship at universities in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg from 1995 to 2011 were investigated (see Wirsching, 2012: 73 f.). The results were, among others, that in the investigation period, a quantitative increase in courses on National Socialism was registered (see *ibid.*: 74) and that “topics that dealt explicitly with the history of the Jews and the Holocaust” (*ibid.*: 75) were far rarer: 101 out of 936. An evaluation of the course topics showed that many of them were overview courses, and that a large number of the courses dealt with classic topics of research on National Socialism, such as the analysis of the system of power or Hitler’s rise and so-called seizure of power (cf. *ibid.*: 74 f.). Only 8.6 percent of courses on National Socialism dealt explicitly with the Holocaust and extermination policies (see *ibid.*: 76). The results of the investigation were presented in October 2011 at the 12th Dachau Symposium on Contemporary History and were published in the conference transcript “Der Holocaust in der deutschsprachigen Geschichtswissenschaft” (“The Holocaust in German-Speaking Historiography”), edited by Michael Brenner and Maximilian Strnad. (Brenner/Strnad 2012). The other contributions documented in the conference transcript also take stock of Holocaust-related teaching and research in Germany and call for its institutionalization (cf. *ibid.*: 14). With the founding of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute of Contemporary History, this institutionalization was taken into account for the first time—more than 65 years after the mass murder of European Jews (cf. Bajohr, 2016).

In July 2015, the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), together with the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute of Contemporary History Munich (IfZ), held the Summit on Teaching the Holocaust at German Universities.⁵ Twelve faculty members from various disciplines who teach about the Holocaust at German universities were invited to discuss the status quo and the challenges they experience in teaching their courses. In preparation for the summit, the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies browsed the course catalogs of 67 universities for the 2014/2015 winter semester for courses dealing with National Socialism and/or the Holocaust. Around 25% (74) of a total of 319 courses had a title that suggested a connection to the Holocaust. In contrast to a study by Andreas Wirsching, the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies also looked at courses offered outside of history or history-related departments.

The present study builds on this work and uses it as a methodological starting point. In the following second chapter, the relevant presuppositions and research-related questions for the epistemic interests and approaches of the study are conducted. This is followed by the two central parts of the study: The empirical evaluation of lecture lists (Chapter 3) makes it possible to depict the current state of knowledge teaching at German universities on the subject. With the systematic survey of all courses on the Holocaust that were offered in Germany over a period of four semesters, however, not only was the number of courses ascertained, but also their central thematic priorities.

The second central part of the study (Chapter 4) extends the results of the quantitative survey of the courses with the expertise and experiential knowledge of 13 proven experts. The evaluation of these interviews makes it possible to present a differentiated picture of the current state of teachings about the Holocaust at German universities and to describe the institutional conditions and trends that are significant for the topic.

5 Cf. www.ifz-muenchen.de/aktuelles/themen/zentrum-fuer-holocaust-studien/konferenzen/ sowie www.ushmm.org/research/competitive-academic-programs/summit-on-teaching-the-holocaust-at-german-universities, November 15, 2017.

2 The Research Field: Teaching about the Holocaust at German Universities

The following chapter presents the presuppositions and research-related questions that are relevant to the study's epistemic interests and approach. The first subchapter (2.1) outlines the general characteristics of the higher education system in Germany and develops the questions that arise from teaching about the Holocaust. The second subchapter (2.2) deals more specifically with the institutional and structural incorporation of academic teaching of the Holocaust in Germany. In the third subchapter (2.3), substantive specifications for teaching about the Holocaust are finally made and particular features, derived from German responsibility for the Holocaust, are implemented.

2.1 Particular Features of the University System in Germany

Based on the assumption that university teaching about the Holocaust cannot be considered independently of general learning, teaching, and working conditions at German universities, some of the particular features of the higher education system in Germany are explained below.

2.1.1 From the Humboldt Model of Higher Education to the Internationalization of the University System

In his 1810 memoir, the former Prussian Section Director for Culture and Education in the Ministry of the Interior, Wilhelm von Humboldt, developed a model of higher education with which the German university system is still closely linked. His basic principles, the unity of research, teaching and the freedom of science (cf. Humboldt, 1810), are still—at least ideally—shaping the perception of the higher education system in Germany. At the same time they contradict, to some extent, today's demands for competitiveness and efficiency.

Since the 1999 signing of the Bologna Declaration (cf. Bologna Declaration, 1999), a fundamental study structural reform has taken place in Germany, including in particular the conversion of the study system to the two-level system of professional bachelor's and master's degrees, and the use of transparency instruments, such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, ECTS. (cf. European Commission: 2009). This structural reform, named the "Bologna Process" after the 1999 declaration, aims at the creation of mobility as well as international competitiveness and employability, following the core idea of the internationalization of studies or the creation of a "European Higher Education Area"⁶

This process has grave consequences for university teaching: according to the common national structural guidelines for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's degree programs, the new study programs have to be modularized. The modularization means that the study contents and courses are grouped into superordinate content modules. Each of these modules must be completed with a test. The modularization of the range of courses means that the offered courses must be able to be integrated into the prescribed compulsory structure. This in turn means that teachers have less freedom in selecting and designing the subject topics, and there are more overview lectures and recurring standard seminars. As a result, the contents of teaching are more detached from those of research (cf. Terhard, 2007: 142).

Without a doubt, university teaching about the Holocaust in Germany must be viewed against the background of these developments. One of the guiding principles for the present study is therefore the assumption that it shifts within this tension between the still effective Humboldt model of higher education and the practical requirements of teaching in the modularized study programs.

6 Cf. European Higher Education Area, www.ehea.info/, May 30, 2018.

It can be assumed that it is a challenge to fit teaching about the Holocaust into the prescribed compulsory structure in certain subjects. The likelihood that an overview lecture or a recurring standard seminar on the subject of the Holocaust can be offered in subjects such as political science or educational science is rather low. For the survey of courses, this could mean that courses that address the Holocaust are sometimes difficult to identify as such because they only carry a general module title. On the other hand, in the course of this development, new specialized master programs such as the “Public History Master” at Freie Universität Berlin and the “Master Jewish Studies” at the University of Potsdam have been developed, as well as programs from private universities such as the “Holocaust Communication and Tolerance” program of Touro College, where it can be assumed that the Holocaust is at least one of the emphasized topics.

2.1.2 Third Party Funding at Universities

Another aspect to consider is the budget available for research and teaching. A change over the past decades may be observed here. While basic university funding stagnated, the proportion of third-party funds in university budgets between 1992 and 2011 increased disproportionately from 12 to 23 percent (Wissenschaftsrat [German Council of Science and Humanities], 2013: 56). Since third-party funds are raised for research projects, the field of teaching relies on available basic resources (cf. Marquardt, 2011: 2). “This makes it more difficult for universities to fulfill one of their core businesses: imparting knowledge and producing a new generation of academics” (ibid.). The universities are therefore confronted with a variety of requirements due to the increasing numbers of students, the increasing competitive pressure of third-party funding, and the changes described by the study reform. In this context, it is a matter of concern in this study to see to what extent research on the Holocaust in Germany relies on third-party funding and if this also has an influence on teaching at universities.

2.1.3 Working Conditions and Career Paths

Working conditions in academia are sometimes much worse than in the private sector. Academic positions are usually bound to professorship, and promotion and career options are linear and hierarchical. The personnel structure is divided into two areas: In most cases, only professors have non-terminable civil servant positions; among the academic staff, fixed-term employment contracts are the rule and reliable professional perspectives are not available (cf. GEW, 2010). At many universities, a considerable portion of (compulsory) teaching is provided by contractual lecturers. For reasons of further qualification, junior researchers undertake teaching and examination assignments—either free of charge or for a small allowance—before, during, and after their doctorate. Despite the introduction of junior professorships, the German university teacher’s career, especially in humanities subjects, is still largely linked to habilitation. Due to the lack of tenure track positions that would allow them to stay permanently at the universities, most of the postdoctoral fellowships have no reliable career prospects (cf. ibid.).

For the present study, the question arises as to what extent inadequate career options, not least in the area of Holocaust research, hamper the training of junior academics. In 2012, Jürgen Matthäus formulated thus: “Academics specializing in the Holocaust are no longer blocking their careers by choosing their area of focus, but it is usually tolerated academically only as a stopover on the path to professional qualification” (Matthäus, 2012: 35).

2.2 Structural Characteristics of Teaching about the Holocaust in Germany

In the following, central institutional and structural aspects are emphasized that characterize the academic teaching of the Holocaust in Germany and are therefore a key topic of the investigation.

2.2.1 Multidisciplinarity of Teaching and Research on the Holocaust

Based on the idea that Holocaust research is an interdisciplinary field, the present study assumes that the Holocaust is the subject of teaching and study in numerous disciplines. Furthermore, the increase in academic examinations of the history of the Holocaust's aftermath and impact (cf. i.a. Reichel, 2001) and questions about its representation in the media and the culture of remembrance (cf. i.a. Assmann, 2013), also speak in favor of placing these fields in the study of academic teaching. Especially literature studies, the various philological and cultural studies, social sciences, and religious studies must therefore be considered, in addition to courses in history. Furthermore, teacher education courses are of particular importance.

2.2.2 Institutional Incorporation of Teaching and Research on the Holocaust

Teaching and research on the subject of the Holocaust are less institutionalized in Germany than in the US and Israel, or even in countries such as Australia (cf. Lower, 2012: 51). In contrast to the US, where there are numerous M.A. and even B.A. programs in Holocaust Studies, the subject "Holocaust Studies" does not actually exist in Germany. The only exception is the interdisciplinary M.A. program "Holocaust Communication and Tolerance" at Touro College in Berlin. This does not mean, however, that there is no teaching about the Holocaust—just that it is not institutionalized in the form of a specific field of study, but rather takes place in various disciplines. While there are endowed professorships for Holocaust Studies at numerous universities in the US (cf. *ibid.*: 50), the "Professorship for the Study of the History and Impact of the Holocaust," which is expected to be formed on May 1, 2017 at the History Department of Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, will be the first of its kind in Germany (c.f. HMWK, 2017).

It's a similar picture in the field of historiography. There are numerous habilitated historians whose research interests are in the field of National Socialist or Holocaust research, but there is only one chair in Germany that bears this emphasis in the title: Prof. Dr. Michael Wildt chaired "German History in the 20th Century with a focus on the National Socialist period" at Humboldt University in Berlin.

In the field of research, with the Center for Research on Anti-Semitism in Berlin and the Fritz Bauer Institute in Frankfurt am Main being the only research institutions on the Holocaust in Germany for decades, something has changed in recent years. With the founding of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, there is now another research center on the topic.

For the present study, it is interesting to investigate if this lack of institutional incorporation, so often criticized in the past, persists, and if this impression was created solely by the various higher education systems and cultures, or if a real gap could now be closed by the above-mentioned new establishments and vocations. In addition, besides the examination of the range of courses and the conducting of expert interviews, a systematic list of existing institutions will be part of this study. One of the research questions is if the range of courses offered in certain places and universities where there is institutional incorporation, such as Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, and Munich, is actually significantly greater than at other university locations.

2.2.3 Curricular Incorporation of Teaching about the Holocaust

One of the central questions in dealing with the teaching about the Holocaust is if pupils in secondary schools and students at universities learn enough about the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust. This “enough” is a normative quantity and cannot therefore be conclusively defined. However, representative surveys—such as those recently conducted by Klaus Schroeder and others (cf. Schroeder et al., 2012)—regularly lead to disappointing results.

The present study does not aim to evaluate the success of teaching about the Holocaust, but rather to examine the existing curriculum. Since there is no separate higher education curriculum in Germany on the history of the Holocaust, the individual universities or faculties themselves decide whether they will offer overview lectures on the subject or whether they see the purpose of higher education as being to equip students with the academic tools of the trade so they can work on topics themselves.

2.3 Teaching about the Holocaust in Germany

The following chapter focuses on central content-related aspects of teaching about the Holocaust at German universities, a key research topic for the study. The text explicitly makes no claim to presenting⁷ the central topics of Holocaust research in Germany, but rather to outlining the issues relevant to the object of the study—teaching about the Holocaust in Germany.

2.3.1 Definition of Contents of Teaching about the Holocaust

This research focuses on teaching about the Holocaust. In view of the problem of the term Holocaust (cf. footnote 1), it will be specified once again how this term will be used in the study.

The term “Holocaust” refers to the systematic murder and extermination of European Jews under National Socialism. In this study, it is understood as part of the National Socialist policy of violence and extermination, which was also directed against other groups of victims, such as Sinti and Romani and patients of health and care institutions. In addition to the systematic annihilation in the years 1941 to 1945, the gradual disenfranchisement and exclusion of these groups in 1930s Germany and in the occupied territories from the beginning of the war in 1939 are the subject of this investigation.

In terms of academic teaching, it is interesting to focus on whether the Holocaust is addressed in teaching as an aspect of a general history of National Socialism and its system of rule, or is taught in isolation. This study focuses on teaching that explicitly deals with the Holocaust. The thematic separation of these fields is, of course, artificial, for it is self-evident that the Holocaust can only be understood in its historical and socio-political context. As the study by Andreas Wirsching has shown, however, there are already numerous course topics in history studies about National Socialism that do not necessarily include a thematization of the Holocaust (cf. Wirsching, 2012: 76). It can be assumed that this is the same in other fields of study. For the present study, it follows that teaching about the topic of National Socialism is at least included in a comparative perspective.

Another question of importance to the study is that of defining the scope of the topic of the Holocaust and, consequently, of the significance of post-Holocaust history and impact, as well as its literary treatment and media representation. An example is the broadcast of the miniseries *Holocaust*, which was of central importance for the societal perception of the topic in the 1980s. For Peter Reichel, it marks “the beginning of the willingness of a mass audience to deal with the Nazi past at all” (Reichel, 2007: 253), and thus represents a milestone in the historical mindset of the Federal Republic of Germany (cf. *ibid.*). At the same time, it is a TV series, that is, a pop-culture, fictitious presentation, whose reception may say something about society in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1980s, but not about the Holocaust itself. Therefore, the question arises as to whether or not courses on such topics should be included in teaching about the Holocaust. Due to the high societal and political relevance of the topic—72 years after the end of National Socialism—and the decision to focus on the teaching of various disciplines, the study includes courses on these topics. It asks accordingly about the relationship of courses about the real historical events of the Holocaust to courses about its impact, reappraisal and media presentation.

An additional question concerns the relationship between teaching about the Holocaust and Holocaust research. For example, after the opening of the Eastern European archives in the 1990s, numerous academic works on the Holocaust in Eastern Europe appeared, thus increasing the European dimension of the Holocaust as part of historical Holocaust research (cf. Löw/Bajohr, 2015: 14 ff.). Projects such as the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure project,⁸ funded by the European Union, in the framework of which a digital list of all European archives on the Holocaust is to be developed, and the publishing project “The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews by Nazi Germany 1933-1945”⁹ simplify researchers’ access to central, but hitherto difficult-to-access sources about the Holocaust, and thus facilitate the internationalization of Holocaust research. For the present study, the question arises as to if and how such developments in research find their way into teaching.

7 For just such an up-to-date overview, please refer to the publication by Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw (cf. Löw/Bajohr, 2015).

8 European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI), www.ehri-project.eu/, May 30, 2018.

9 Edition project: The persecution and murder of the European Jews by Nazi Germany, 1933-1945 (VEJ), www.edition-judenverfolgung.de/, May 30, 2018.

2.3.2 Teaching about the Holocaust in the Country of Perpetrators

As an unprecedented universal crime, the Holocaust is an essential socio-political reference point in many countries of the world. Its memory has become a “standard for humanistic and universal identifications” (Levy/Sznaider, 2001). In Germany, the country that bears a significant responsibility for the persecution and systematic destruction of more than six million Jews and other victims of racist persecution, as well as the innumerable victims of the Second World War, this socio-political relevance is of particular importance. The memory of National Socialist crimes has a major impact on politics and culture. The topographical traces of National Socialism are omnipresent. In his study *The Holocaust and West German historians*, Nicolas Berg presented the conflict of German postwar historiography with the Holocaust, and criticized the focus on perpetrators in Holocaust research in Germany (cf. Berg, 2003). The issues described in the study show the extent to which contemporary historical academic activity has been shaped by memorial controversies.

On the assumption that teaching the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust in the country of the perpetrators faces particular challenges, some of these particular features are formulated as presuppositions below:

- The question of how the Nazi past can be “managed” or processed is still of central importance in Germany today. The collective memory and national identity in Germany are still shaped by how we deal with this responsibility. The emphasis on the suffering of the German population during the Second World War, the relativization of German guilt and responsibility, as well as the recurring attempts to put an end to the past, reflect the desire to be part of a “normal, good” nation (cf. i.a. Klundt et al., 2007). At the same time, the remembrance of National Socialism has become increasingly institutionalized and ritualized since the 1990s (cf. i.a. Jureit/Schneider, 2010). The topic receives a high level of media attention and is thematized in schools in different subjects. This leads students to a paradoxical concurrence of an articulated oversaturation on the one hand, and an empirically proven lack of historical knowledge on the other hand (cf. i.a., Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2007).
Since university students, unlike secondary school pupils, can choose their topics of study more freely, they can be expected to articulate less of a feeling of oversaturation than students. As part of the expert interviews, university students are also asked about their reactions.
- The traces of National Socialist rule and its crimes are difficult to ignore in Germany: people live in the houses from which Jews were deported, they use the railway stations where the deportation trains started, they are taught in school buildings where forced laborers were accommodated during the Second World War, and use roads that were built by prisoners of war (cf. i.a. Heesch/Braun, 2006). The traces of National Socialism are even visible at many universities. In addition, there is a memorial with its own pedagogical offering at each large former concentration camp in Germany (cf. Puvogel/Stankowski, 1995 & 2000). The connection of teaching with local or regional historical references or “searching for traces” is correspondingly close. As part of the examination of the courses, the present study looks at the extent to which such regional references and excursions to memorial sites actually form part of university teaching.
- In the past, encounters with survivors have played an important role in educational and historical-political educational work on National Socialism in Germany. In the meantime, fewer and fewer witnesses are able to pass on their personal memories directly. This makes recorded oral history interviews increasingly important. They have become a central element of public history about the Holocaust. But Holocaust research also increasingly uses survivors’ reports as a source. Video interviews, in particular, seem to be suitable for academic teaching (cf. Nägel, 2012). This assumption will be examined as part of the evaluation of the lecture lists.
- Due to various migration processes, the structure of German society has changed considerably since the end of the Second World War. Even though West German society has denied this reality for decades, today’s Germany is, in fact, a country of immigration. In the year 2014, 20.4 percent of the population had a so-called migration background (cf. German Federal Statistical Office, 2015: 7). Since then, this number has certainly continued to rise as a result of the current refugee movements. The teaching of Nazi crimes must therefore take into account the fact that some of today’s students may themselves have had experiences of war, expulsion and escape, but have no direct family connection to the Holocaust. In the field of school teaching, various papers have appeared dealing with this situation (cf. e.g. Georgi, 2004; Gryglewski, 2013; Fava 2015). In the context of this study’s expert interviews, it’s interesting to ask if the migrant background of the students plays a role in the day-to-day life of the interviewees.
- Despite the changed population structure, it can be assumed that about 70 percent of young people between the ages of 20 and 30 do not have a migration background (cf. German Federal Statistical Office, 2015) and are thus connected to the Nazi past via their family biographies. The question is, 72 years after the end of the Second World

War what role do these family biographies still play? In the 2002 study *Opa war kein Nazi* (“Grandpa was not a Nazi”), Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller and Karoline Tschugnall investigated what “normal Germans” remember from the Nazi past, how they talk about it and what was passed on to the children and generations of grandchildren by way of communicative transmission. (Welzer et al., 2002: 11). The authors came to the conclusion that the memories of contemporary witnesses change in the family conversation, that they themselves are updated and adapted by the listeners, i.e. the children and grandchildren, and that in the end, two-thirds of family narratives consist of stories of victims or heroes (see *ibid.* : 54). Assuming that current students were born between 1994 and 2004, and are accordingly familiarly associated with the so-called wartime generation only in the third or even fourth generation, there is little likelihood that many of them will have had personal contact with people who had consciously experienced the National Socialist period. This does not mean, however, that the familial transmission of this narrative no longer has any meaning. The study will not be able to answer this question, but it can use the expert interviews to inquire if students in the courses have broached the issue of biographical references.

3 Empirical Survey of Courses Offered

For this survey, academic calendars available online from 79 institutions of higher education were searched for courses offered on the Holocaust. To obtain a representative data pool illustrating the current status of teaching about the Holocaust in German institutions of higher education, we collected information on courses offered over a period of four consecutive semesters between 2014 and 2016.¹⁰ On the basis of selective criteria, all courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism were recorded for the survey.

In the following, the methodological procedure, the evaluation, and the results of this survey are presented.

3.1 Methodology

The data collection took place in three central steps: After first deciding which data corpus should form the basis of the survey (see Chapter 3.1.1), search terms were developed in order to record the courses relevant for the survey (see Chapter 3.1.2). After that, categories were formed and in the end the data was evaluated in a quantitative matter (see Chapter 3.1.3).

The relevant aspects of the study were elaborated upon on the basis of the research-related questions from the set of all characteristics that mark the object under investigation — courses about the Holocaust at German universities (cf. Bortz/Döring 2005, 139).

In order to assess both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the data, we used the method of content analysis for the qualitative empirical survey on courses offered on the Holocaust. In addition to frequency, the topics of the courses on the Holocaust were also recorded. The qualitative content analysis is a method of data collection through which the aspects of a text—in our case the course title and content of courses—are assigned to categories (cf. *ibid.*, 149). The system of categories that is derived from theoretical assumptions is then reassessed and specified with the material (cf. Gläser/Laudel 2004, 192-93, Mayring 2002, 114). Phillipp Mayring has identified three basic steps to this analysis: (1.) The summarization: reducing the amount of material while maintaining the essential content. (2.) The further explanation that allows the researcher to draw on additional material when uncertainty or questions arise. (3.) Structuring the material filtered from the compiled classification criteria by way of particular aspects that allows for a generalization of the material (cf. Mayring 2002, 115).

3.1.1 Research of Academic Calendars and Choice of Universities

The data was collected from the academic calendars and student management systems available online. The selection arose from the fact that most universities and colleges now only publish digital instead of print academic calendars. Due to varying formats and structure, there is no systematic collection of all academic calendars.¹¹

10 The period of investigation covered the summer semester 2014, winter semester 2014-15, summer semester 2015 as well as the winter semester 2015-16. A period of four semesters allowed a minimal comparability and included courses that were offered annually, that is, every 2 semesters.

11 The German Rectors' Conference library has archived the printed academic calendars of all German universities since 1945. According to the library's employees, the change to digital academic calendars in the beginning of the 2000s has meant that this collection can no longer be systematically carried out. The reason is that the data in the digital formats is too inconsistent. The evaluation of the academic calendars available online was difficult due to these inconsistencies. There are big discrepancies in the availability and structure of the data, and the search functions of the various online platforms of the universities also varied. Thus it was difficult to collect standardized data. In some cases, it was possible to research the course title but not the course description or syllabus. In a few cases it was not even possible to ascertain information about the instructor. On the basis of this non-standardized data availability, we could not be sure that we covered every relevant course. Nevertheless, we could collect a reliable dataset from which we could deduce the status quo on teaching the Holocaust as well as establish and interpret central themes and trends (<https://www.hrk.de/hrk/bibliothek>, May 30, 2018).

Thus, the basis for the selection is the “Higher Education Compass” of the German Rectors’ Conference. This databank contains authorized information on all state and state-accredited universities in Germany.¹² From the 401 institutions of higher education listed in the “Higher Education Compass,” we compiled a sample of 79 relevant universities. For this purpose, the range of studies and subjects was examined and those institutions were chosen which, due to the range subjects offered, were expected to offer courses on the Holocaust.¹³

The sample is comprised of 74 of 110 universities in Germany, of which 72 are public universities including the six universities of education in Baden-Württemberg. Additionally incorporated were the ecclesial, state-accredited Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, because of its B.A. and M.A. interdisciplinary programs¹⁴ with transferable subjects for an education degree, and the private, state-accredited Witten/Herdecke University, with its study program Philosophy, Cultural Reflection, and Cultural Praxis. The 36 universities with a main focus on medicine, technology, theology, management or economics were not included in the survey.

In addition, five colleges¹⁵ were selected for the sample: the private, state-accredited Touro College Berlin, whose M.A. in “Holocaust Communication and Tolerance” offers the only degree explicitly dealing with the Holocaust; the private, state-accredited Center for Jewish Studies (Hochschule für Jüdische Studien) in Heidelberg, which offers several B.A. and M.A. programs; the public Koblenz University of Applied Sciences, offering a B.A. as well as an M.A. in “Teaching at Vocational Schools” in general subjects; the Freie Hochschule Stuttgart Seminar für Waldorfpädagogik, a state-accredited Waldorf teacher-training college with an M.A. for high school teachers; and finally, Bard College Berlin, which offers a B.A. in Liberal Arts. Thus only the universities of applied sciences that offer degree programs leading to teacher accreditation or those taken on the basis that likely offer courses on the Holocaust were selected. The 58 art schools and music conservatories, which offer programs, for example, in the visual arts, drama, design, and architecture were not included in the sample.¹⁶

3.1.2 Collection of the Data by Keyword and Search Criteria

The next step in the analysis was to identify relevant courses for our survey. Defining keywords enabled the systematic search of courses offered. Presuppositions and prior knowledge of the Holocaust and National Socialism helped define the search criteria. In addition, preliminary research revealed that our search should go beyond the field of history and related programs to include other disciplines. The search criteria were chosen in such a way so that all possible courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism could be incorporated. Included in the search criteria were terms that reference the Holocaust, such as “Auschwitz,” “Shoah,” or “Einsatzgruppen.” In order to document the courses that deal with the postwar period, including processes of dealing with the past, terms such as “politics of memory,” “memorials,” and “reparations” were also used.

By using search terms such as “Third Reich,” “National Socialism,” “Hitler,” and the “Second World War,” additional courses on National Socialism could be incorporated. The data on these courses are useful for a comparison and are selectively included in the analysis. A comparison is explained when needed.

The following search terms were worked out and defined (listed here in alphabetical order):

1933/1936/1939, 1941/1942/1945, Aktion Reinhard (Operation Reinhard), Antisemitism, Auschwitz, Deportation/deported, Concentration Camp/KZ, Contemporary witnesses, Crimes of violence, Einsatzgruppe (mobile killing units), Extermination, Final Solution, Forced Labor, Memory culture, Euthanasia, Fascism, Genocide, Ghetto, Hitler, Holocaust, Jews/Jewish, Memorials, National Socialism/National Socialist/NS, Perpetrator research, Restitution, Reparations, Resistance, Second World War/WW2/WWII, Shoah/Shoa, Sinti and Roma, Survivors, Third Reich, Trials, Volksgemeinschaft (people’s community), Wannsee Conference.

12 “Higher Education Compass” of the German Rectors’ Conference, <https://www.hochschulkompass.de/home.html>, May 30, 2018.

13 The data pool is the German Rectors’ Conference list of all universities in Germany (http://www.hs-kompass2.de/kompass/xml/download/hs_liste.txt, May 30, 2018).

14 Interdisciplinary bachelor and master’s programs at the Catholic University Eichstätt – Ingolstadt (<http://www.ku.de/studiengaenge/flexis/ueberblick/> May 30, 2018).

15 For reasons of simplicity for the international reader, the remainder of the survey will refer to universities but this term includes these five universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen).

16 Information on the German university system (in German) (https://www.hrk.de/uploads/media/Das_Hochschulsystem_In_DEUTSCHLAND.pdf, May 30, 2018).

As previously mentioned, alongside course titles and descriptions we assessed other variables that were of interest to the analysis.

The following course variables were recorded:

University, federal state, website, academic calendar or PDF, subject/discipline, program of study / degree, name, gender and title of instructor, type, title and course description, bibliographic references.

Using the search criteria and an additional content check of the collected data, 994 courses over a period of four semesters were identified as the dataset.¹⁷

From this, various aspects of the status quo on teaching the Holocaust at German universities could be defined and are presented and discussed in Chapter 3.2.

3.1.3 Categorizing the Courses

During the survey it was necessary to reduce the material at hand and summarize the information to identify categories from the material. Information was “extracted” from the text, evaluated methodologically, and categories were assigned (cf. Gläser/Laudel 2004, 193). Using the keywords, courses on the Holocaust and on National Socialism could be identified. In order to carry out a useful evaluation of the courses, we divided them into two categories. In the first category we determined whether the course dealt with the Holocaust or National Socialism. This differentiation was made based on the content of the seminar. Practically all courses on the Holocaust address National Socialism, yet not all courses on National Socialism necessarily address the Holocaust. For example, we found courses that address the debates on the Volksgemeinschaft or the relationship between National Socialism and the church. In the first step of the categorization we assigned these courses to the category “National Socialism” since the Holocaust only plays a marginal role.

The second category we defined to categorize the courses determined the thematic focus of the courses on the Holocaust or National Socialism. The third step was to define and evaluate the variables that provide additional information on the courses. This third step refers to the courses’ methodological references specific to Holocaust research and teaching, for example field trips to memorials or conversations with contemporary witnesses and survivors.

The First Level of Categorization

The first category identified whether the course dealt with the Holocaust or National Socialism. The following definitions were established for these categories:

- **Holocaust**
Courses that deal with the Holocaust, its legacy in the postwar period, and its reception. Included in the term “Holocaust” is the entire spectrum of the National Socialist policy of annihilation, i.e. persecution and murder of European Jews and Roma and Sinti, as well as the murder of patients in state hospitals and care facilities. The category includes not only the systematic extermination from 1941, but also the gradual disenfranchisement and marginalization of German Jews in the 1930s and in the occupied territories at the beginning of the war in 1939.
- **National Socialism**
Courses that focus on National Socialism, its aftermath and impact history. The Holocaust plays a minor role in the course titles or descriptions. Instead, the political and social circumstances of National Socialism are addressed.

¹⁷ An internet search with terms resulted in an initial base of 1331 courses. Subsequently, all courses identified were examined for content. Of the 1331, there were 40 individual courses that were not included in the evaluation, either because they were evening courses or public lectures. From the remaining 1291, we culled all the courses in which the Holocaust or National Socialism were not centrally addressed. This is how we came up with our dataset of 994 courses.

The Second Level of Categorization

A second step was to define sub-categories to further specify the courses placed in the two main categories. The development of the categories was done inductively on the material and deductively by incorporating theoretical assumptions and theses on the contents of Holocaust teaching into the process of formulating the categories.

Here we made distinctions between the following categories:

- **Historical Events**
The category “Actual Historical Events” was assigned to courses that focused on the actual historical events from 1933 to the liberation of the camps and the end of the Second World War in 1945.

- **Social and Political Processes of Coming to Terms with the Past**
The category “Social and Political Processes of Coming to Terms with the Past” was assigned to courses that dealt with the legal and political and/or social processes of coming to terms with the past in the postwar period. The category covered contemporary topics such as denazification, the legal reappraisal (war crime trials), as well as the politics of reparations and restitution. Also assigned to this category were topics on memory and culture, such as public historical-political debates, how victims have been treated and their testimonies, and the public presentation of the topic in monuments, memorials, and museums. In these courses explicitly no media-related forms of coming to terms with the past were addressed.

- **Literary Representation**
The category “Literary Representation” was assigned to courses that focus on the literary representation of National Socialism and/or the Holocaust. This comprises contemporary literature such as camp, ghetto and exile writings, as well as autobiographical literature by contemporary witnesses and fictional treatment of the topic. It also includes theater, philological, and linguistic aspects as ways to address the legacy of the Holocaust and National Socialism.

- **Media Representation**
The category “Media Representation” was assigned to courses that were dedicated to exploring media representations and the visualization of National Socialism and/or the Holocaust. Most of the courses addressed representations in film and television, but also other forms of media such as the internet, graphic novels, and works of art.

- **Education**
The category “Education and Pedagogy” was assigned to courses that focus mainly on historical-political education work on the topics of National Socialism and the Holocaust in and outside of schools. This includes historical-didactic courses as well as memorial pedagogy and Holocaust education.

The following table shows how the categorization was carried out:

Course title	Course description	Category 1	Category 2
History of National Socialism	In this colloquium new research on National Socialism will be introduced and discussed.	National Socialism	Historical Events
Persecution of Jews by National Socialists 1933-1945	This survey lecture course on the persecution of Jews under National Socialism in Germany and occupied Europe gives a factual introduction to the process of the persecution and extermination of European Jews in the German sphere of influence. (...)	Holocaust	Historical Events
Holocaust Denial and Historiography	(...) In this class, the historical, legal, political and also educational dimensions of the topic are addressed. The development, methodology, and results of Holocaust research and Holocaust denial will be presented in detail and critically assessed. (...)	Holocaust	Social and Political Processes of Coming to Terms with the Past
National Socialism in History Lessons – with a field trip	Learning about the National Socialist dictatorship ranks as one of the most important tasks in teaching history for two reasons: firstly, to underscore the need and importance of freedom, democracy, and human rights; secondly, to raise awareness for what is probably most significant chapter in German history. Yet the treatment of this topic comes up against resistance from school students who claim that they are confronted “too often” with this topic or say they “already know everything” or that they don’t feel they should be “burdened with the guilt” of the German Nazi past. The objective of this class is to analyze the topic’s didactic potential while considering the latest research, as well as becoming acquainted with a variety of methodologies. (...)	National Socialism	Education
Holocaust – The Story of the Family Weiss (USA 1978/ FRG 1979). The US American four-part TV series seen in a critical light: Authenticity, Aesthetic, and Reception in Germany	The US American miniseries (4 parts, broadcasted in the third channel in West Germany in January 1979) plays an important role in the discourse of German culture of remembrance: The compelling miniseries is attributed with providing a way for a wide spectrum of Germans to emotionally engage with the Nazi genocide of European Jews. The seminar, that will include an excursion to the Flossenbürg concentration camp memorial, will focus on three aspects of the film: authenticity, aesthetic, and impact.	Holocaust	Media Representation

Table: Exemplary categorization of the courses

Consideration of Methodological Aspects

While defining the categories, a number of other variables were collected and could be matched to a course. With these variables we recorded relevant methodological aspects of the courses for our survey. We explored the following re-search-specific methods on courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism.

- **Field Trip**
The keyword “field trip” was assigned to all courses that included a field trip in the course plan. For the most part, these excursions were to concentration camp memorials, but not exclusively. There were also visits to museums, documentation centers, or longer trips to particular cities (e.g. Berlin) or regions.
- **Encounter with Survivor**
This keyword was assigned to all courses that included encounters with survivors.
- **Recorded Testimony**
The keyword “Recorded Testimony” was assigned to all courses that worked with audio and video interviews with survivors.
- **Regional Reference**
This keyword was assigned to all courses that had a regional focus (city or state). Usually this was connected to the location of the university.
- **Comparative Aspects**
This keyword was assigned to all courses that discussed the Holocaust in the context of comparative genocide re-search.

3.2 Evaluation and Results

In this section the results compiled from the quantitative survey and the evaluation of the data are presented.

3.2.1 Results of the Categorization

This chapter outlines the results of the three level categorization.

Level 1

Using the defined search criteria, 994 courses in the evaluation period could be determined as the data set. This data set included 468 courses on the Holocaust as well as 526 courses on National Socialism.

Courses on the Holocaust over four semesters	Courses on National Socialism over four semesters	Total number of courses over four semesters
468	526	994

Table 2: Number of courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism throughout the entire period of investigation.

Throughout the investigation period, an average of 117 courses on the Holocaust was taught per semester. In every university investigated, an average of 1.5 courses on the Holocaust were offered each semester and 1.7 courses on National Socialism, or a collective total average of 3.1 courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism offered each semester.

Level 2

The collection of data over four semesters points to a quantitatively similar distribution of courses on the Holocaust and courses on National Socialism. Yet in all four semesters, the number of courses offered on National Socialism was slightly higher. The number of courses across the period examined is relatively constant.¹⁸

Topics/ Semester	Historical Events	Social and Political Processes of Coming to terms with the past	Education	Literary Representation	Media Representation
Summer semester 2014	26	25	19	20	16
Winter semester 2014/15	41	23	21	15	11
Summer semester 2015	37	33	21	16	10
Winter semester 2015/16	49	22	23	22	18
Total	153	103	84	73	55

Table 3: Thematic focus of the courses on the Holocaust over four semesters.

As Table 3 shows, there were predominantly courses offered on the “Actual Historical Events” of the Holocaust over the four semesters, followed by courses on the “social and political processes of coming to terms with the past” and the categories “Education,” “Literary Representation,” and “Media Representation.” The individual list by semester reveals that the distribution of the thematic focus in the individual semesters is relatively constant. The themes listed above, applied to the 468 courses on the Holocaust, can be read in the following graph.

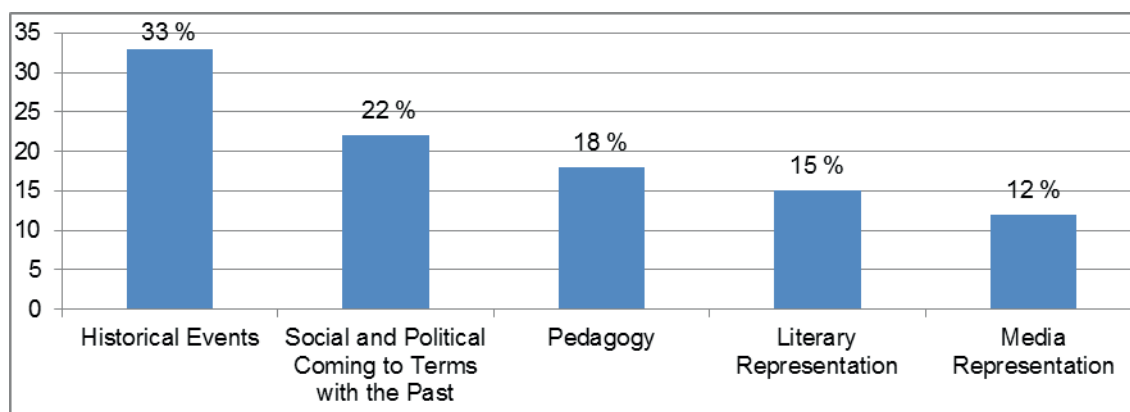


Fig. 1: Content-related focus of the courses on the Holocaust in the entire period of investigation. (N = 468).

Figure 1 shows that only a third (33 percent) of the total number of courses (468) on the Holocaust over four semesters focused on the actual historical events. Whereas courses that address the social and political processes of coming to terms with the past (22 percent), literary representation (15 percent), and media representation (12 percent), or more generally questions of historical relevance for the remembrance and reappraisal of the Holocaust, made up over half of the courses. 18 percent of the 468 courses contained an educational aspect. Almost half of the courses on the Holocaust (49 percent) dealt with questions such as coming to terms with the past, legacy and reception, or representation.

¹⁸ In every semester there are more courses offered on National Socialism. In the summer semester 2014 there were 106 courses offered on the Holocaust and 109 on National Socialism. In the winter semester 2014/2015 there were 111 courses on the Holocaust and 125 courses offered on National Socialism. In the summer semester 2015 the discrepancy is greater with 117 courses offered on the Holocaust compared to 156 courses on National Socialism. In the winter semester 2015/2016 the difference between the number of courses is at its lowest: 134 courses on the Holocaust compared to 136 courses on National Socialism. Overall one can discern a slight increase in total number of courses offered.

The small number of courses that dealt with the history of the Holocaust (153) points to a clear lack. In average, at each of the 79 universities investigated, only one half of a course per semester was offered about the history of the Holocaust. Although this average number does not say much about the distribution itself, it can be deduced that many universities do not teach their students a basic knowledge about the history of the Holocaust. This finding will be taken up and discussed again in the course of the results.

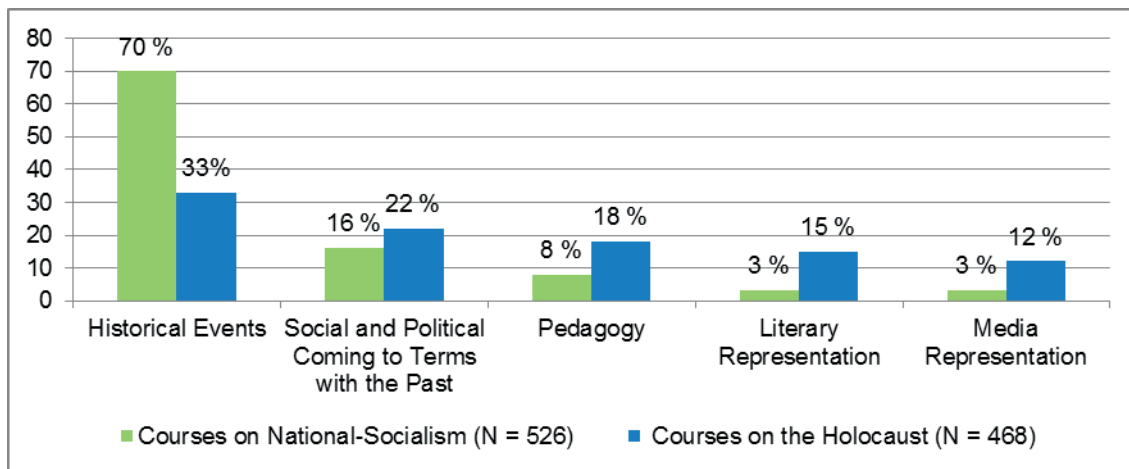


Fig. 2: Comparison of the content-related focus of the courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism over four semesters.

When one compares this to the percentage distribution of courses on National Socialism (Fig. 2), there is a considerable difference to the courses on the Holocaust. The courses on the Holocaust dealt mainly with questions of legacy and the processes of coming to terms with the past. The comparison to the courses on National Socialism shows that more courses address the historical events. While one third (153 of 468 courses) of the courses on the Holocaust focus on the historical events, over two-thirds (70 percent or 356 of 526 courses) on National Socialism dealt with the historical events. It is clear that the courses on the Holocaust have a stronger focus on postwar history and the aftermath of the Holocaust. An interesting aspect of the comparison is that there are more courses offered on the Holocaust in the field of education and pedagogy (18 percent compared to 8 percent of the courses).

Research-Specific Teaching Methods

The information collected on particular teaching methods is presented in Figure 3.

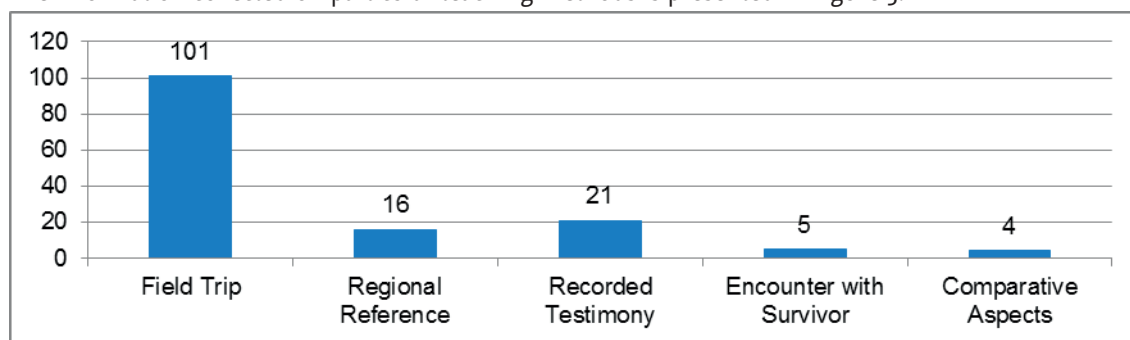


Fig. 3: Research-specific teaching methods in the courses on the Holocaust in the entire period of investigation (N = 468).

a) Regional (Local) References – Sites of Terror

The analysis of the data has shown the meaning of local references and visits to historical places in teaching the events of the Holocaust and National Socialism at German universities. Of a total of 468 courses on the Holocaust, 101 or one quarter in all four semesters offered a field trip. Most of the visits were to memorials at former concentration camps. In some cases there were field trips to cities with historical significance. Furthermore, field trips were most often found on the course syllabi for historical-didactic courses or in courses that offered job perspectives for future historians. In addition, we identified another 16 courses with an explicitly regional reference; for example, courses that addressed the deportation of Jews in the city or the history of the university under National Socialism.

b) Encounters with Survivors – Using Recorded Interviews with Survivors

In only five of the courses on the Holocaust did students meet survivors. Yet far more recorded testimonies were used in exploring the topic; the course descriptions of twenty-one courses indicated the use of oral history interviews as a source.

c) Comparative Aspects

Using the keyword “Comparative Aspects” we identified 17 courses over four semesters. Of the 17, only 4 focused on the Holocaust and its comparison to other genocides. We included these 4 courses in our data set of 994 courses. This finding shows that comparative genocide research as a topic in the course syllabi did not appear frequently. One could also posit that comparative genocide research in Germany is not particularly established or widespread. There is only one research connection identified at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, the Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Research, which offers courses on the subject.¹⁹

¹⁹ The institute’s website: <https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/idg/> and references to courses: <https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/idg/unterseiten/veranstaltungenRub.html> (May 30, 2018).

3.2.2 Courses Offered on the Holocaust according to Subject

Given that the Holocaust is the subject of teaching and research across multiple disciplines, we did not restrict our search to the academic calendars of history departments, but instead included the entire range of a university's academic calendar for the survey. The courses were offered as part of modules in diverse programs of study. We summarized the programs of study according to disciplinary emphasis so that the term "history" would encompass, for example, a bachelor's program "History for Teacher Training" as well as a master's program in "Public History." Subjects in which fewer than five courses were offered in four semesters are summarized in Figure 4 under "Other (Humanities)" or "Other (Life Sciences)."²⁰

The following figure presents the number of courses offered on the Holocaust and National Socialism over four semesters according to the disciplines in which the courses were taught.²¹

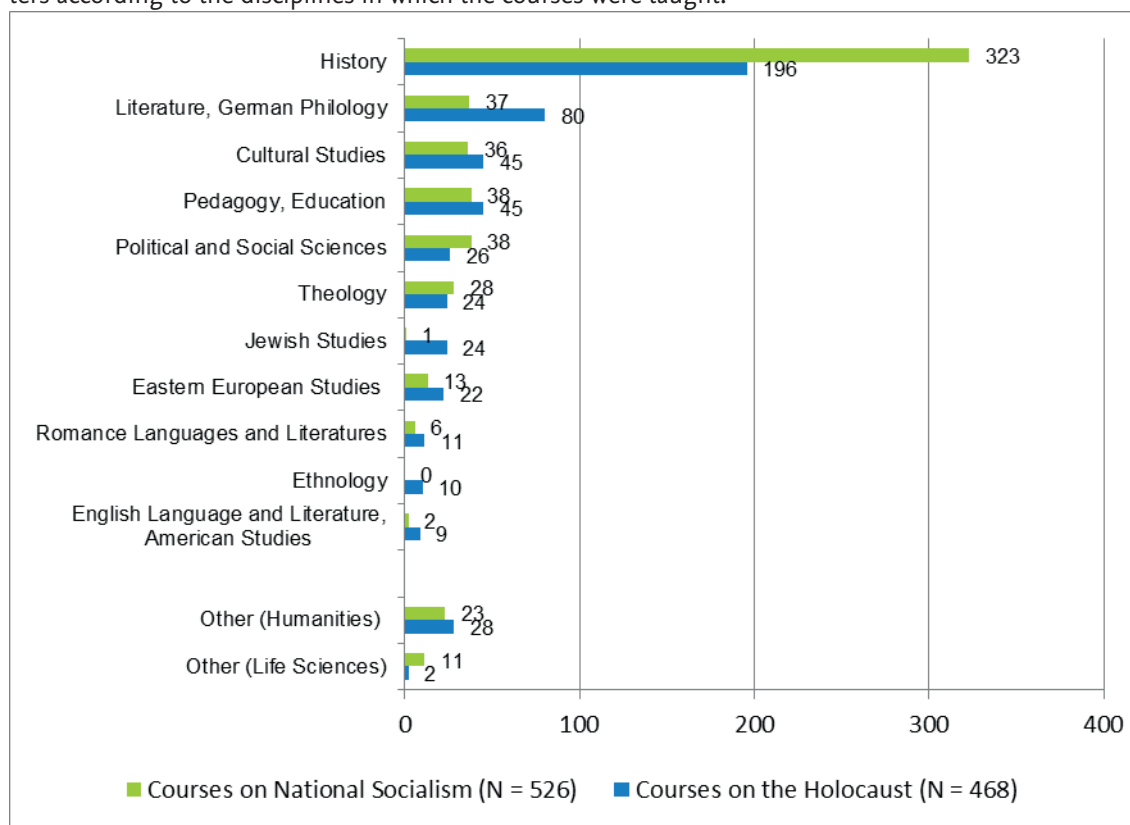


Fig. 4: Comparison of the disciplines that offered courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism over four semesters.

Figure 4 clearly shows that courses offered on the Holocaust, following history (196) departments, are particularly high in literary studies and German literature (80), cultural studies (45), as well as education and pedagogy departments (45).

If we look at the courses on National Socialism, it is apparent that most of the courses offered are concentrated in history departments (323), whereas courses on the Holocaust were also taught across disciplines.

²⁰ 19 courses offered in cross-disciplinary special programs, such as General Studies for university beginners or senior citizens as well as special courses offered for international students, were not considered. Also not included are courses offered as part of the interdisciplinary M.A. program "Holocaust Communication and Tolerance" at Touro College in Berlin. With so few students per semester (max. 15) in relation to the number of courses on the Holocaust, the college cannot be compared to other universities.

²¹ Regarding the distribution of courses, it should be considered that, at many universities, courses are designed for students in different programs of study and disciplines. As a result, one can see in Figure 6 that 25 courses on the Holocaust and 15 courses on National Socialism were assigned twice.

3.2.3 Regional Distribution of Courses Offered on the Holocaust

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there are specific features to teaching the Holocaust in Germany that should be taken into consideration while collecting and evaluating the data. One of these features is the institutional setting in which teaching is based at research institutes and chairs at universities. The following results give insight into the regional and quantitative distribution of courses.

Figure 5 depicts the number of Holocaust related courses in each federal state. It also provides information on the number of universities and student numbers in the respective state.²²

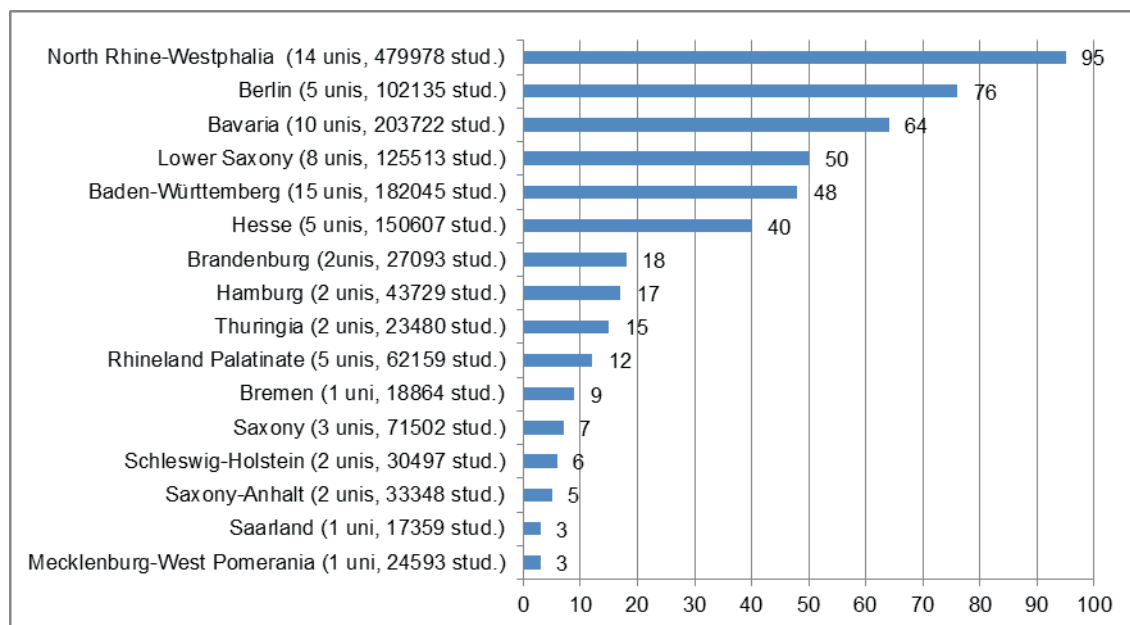


Fig. 5: Courses on the Holocaust according to state, (including the number of universities and students in the respective state (N = 468).

To assess the courses offered in the different states, the numbers should be compared. For example, the most populous state of North Rhine-Westphalia also offers the highest number of courses on the Holocaust. If you compare the number of courses to the number of universities in North Rhine-Westphalia (14) included in this study to the total amount of students of around 480,000, the impression is a very different one. In comparison, the amount of courses offered in North Rhine Westphalia is not much higher than in Schleswig-Holstein, where six courses were taught in the examined period at only two universities with a total of 30,497 students. In this comparative rendering, the states with the highest number of courses were Berlin, with 76 courses at five universities and 1,021,350 students, and Thuringia, with 15 courses taught on the Holocaust and a total of 23,489 students.

²² The total number of students is based on the information provided by the German Rectors' Conference for the universities examined in this survey for the winter semester 2015/16 (see <http://www.hochschulkompass.de/>). The number of universities per state refers to the 79 universities included in this study.

Accordingly, very different results can be gleaned when the average number of courses on the Holocaust per university is calculated from the data.

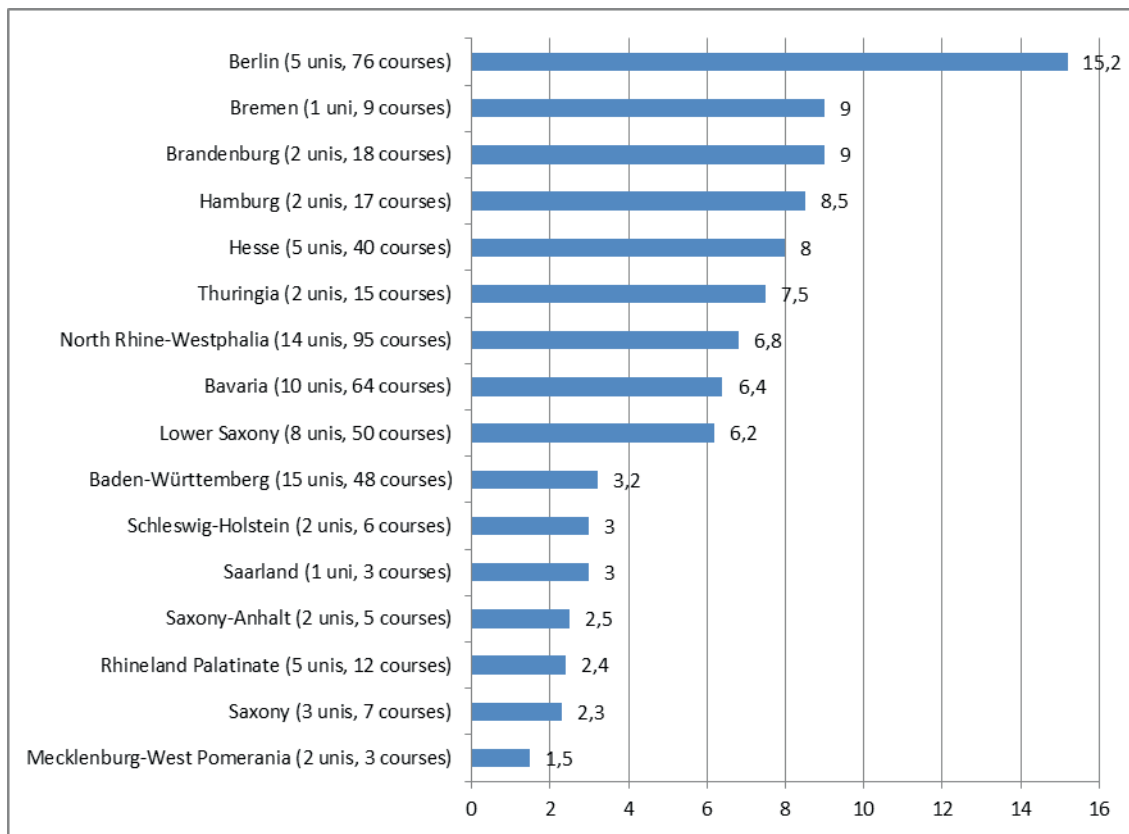


Fig. 6: Average number of courses by state on the Holocaust per university in the entire period of investigation (N=468).

It is noteworthy that the states of Berlin (15.2), Brandenburg, Bremen (9.0), Hamburg (8.5), and Hesse (8) offer the highest number of courses on the Holocaust per university. In contrast the average number of courses on the Holocaust is particularly low in the states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (1.5), Rhineland-Palatinate (2.4), and Saxony-Anhalt (2.3). It should be noted that this is the number of courses over a four-semester period covered in this survey. Thus, on average, in seven of the sixteen federal states, a course on the Holocaust is not offered in every semester. The following table (Table 4) compares the average number of courses and the number of universities in the respective states and also depicts the average number of students per university. It includes not only the number of courses dealing with the Holocaust, but also those courses dealing with the actual historical events of the Holocaust, and allows for a comparison with other courses on the topic of National Socialism. Thus the depiction also provides information on the average number of courses on the Holocaust in the individual states.

Federal State	Number of Students	Number of Universities	Ø Courses on the Holocaust	Ø Courses on National Socialism	Ø Courses on the History of the Holocaust	Ø Courses on the History of National Socialism
Berlin	20,400	5	15.2	6.2	6.4	3.4
Brandenburg	13,500	2	9	3	2.5	2.5
Bremen	18,800	1	9	10	3	9
Hamburg	21,864	2	8.5	7.5	3	6.5
Hesse	30,121	5	8	8.8	1.6	5.4
Thuringia	11,740	2	7.5	10	3	6
North Rhine-Westphalia	34,000	14	6.8	8.2	1.8	5.3
Bavaria	20,300	10	6.4	7	1.3	4.8
Lower Saxony	15,700	8	6.2	8.7	2.7	6
Baden-Württemberg	12,136	15	3.2	4.2	1	3.1
Saarland	17,359	1	3	8	1	7
Schleswig-Holstein	15,248	2	3	3.5	2	2
Saxony-Anhalt	16,674	2	2.5	7	0	6
Rhineland Palatinate	12,431	5	2.4	3.4	0.8	3
Saxony	23,834	3	2.3	6.6	0.3	5.6
Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	12,296	2	1.5	8	0	6.5
National Average		79	5.9	6.6	1.9	4.7

Table 4: Average number of courses per university by state in the entire research period.

National Average

When considering the national average at the bottom of the chart, the results discussed previously are reflected in regards to the relationship of courses on the Holocaust and those on National Socialism (see Table 2) and the subject specific courses (see Figure 4). In the entire research period 5.9 courses on the Holocaust were taught on average at the universities. In contrast, only 1.9 courses were offered that dealt with the historical events of the Holocaust. When comparing the courses on National Socialism more generally and those on historical events of National Socialism the difference is smaller (6.6 to 4.7).

Regional Comparison of Courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism

The picture changes when you differentiate the numbers by state. Comparing the average number of courses on the Holocaust per university in a state with the number of courses on National Socialism points to clear differences. Though there are large differences regarding courses on the Holocaust between the individual states, on average 15.2 courses in Berlin in contrast to 1.5 in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania or 2.3 in Saxony (see Table 4) the differences in the number of courses taught on National Socialism per university are not as striking. The states of Bremen and Thuringia offered, on average, 10 courses per university during the entire research period. In about half of the states the average number of courses on National Socialism ranged between 7-9 courses. The states with the lowest number of courses per university are Brandenburg (3.0) and Rhineland Palatinate (3.4). One can glean from this that courses on National Socialism are not as unevenly distributed as those on the Holocaust, where clear regional differences can be observed.

Regional Comparison of Courses dealing with the Historical Events of the Holocaust and National Socialism

Comparing the overall average on the number of courses dealing with the historical events of the Holocaust (1.9) and National Socialism (4.7) reveals that the number of courses on the historical events of the Holocaust is lower than those on the historical events of National Socialism. The above average number of courses on the historical events of National Socialism in Berlin (6.4) is noteworthy. In addition, there are six other states where the average number of courses was above the federal average of 1.9 compared with nine states that were below the federal average. In Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, no courses were offered in the entire period of investigation. It should be noted that in Saxony-Anhalt there was a relatively high number of courses on the historical events of National Socialism. The comparison to the number of courses on the historical events of National Socialism shows, as mentioned earlier, that more courses are offered on National Socialism than on the Holocaust. More than half of the states (11 of 16) were above the national average of 4.7 courses per state, and only five were under the national average. Schleswig-Holstein offered on average two courses on the historical events of National Socialism, which was the lowest number offered. In contrast to the courses offered on the historical events of the Holocaust, in which two states did not offer any courses, every state offers courses on the historical events of National Socialism. .

Universities with the Highest Number of Courses on the Holocaust

A consideration of the regional distribution reveals an important picture and differentiates the results of the thematic and subject-specific distribution of the courses. For this reason, the following table depicts the universities with the highest number of courses over four semesters.

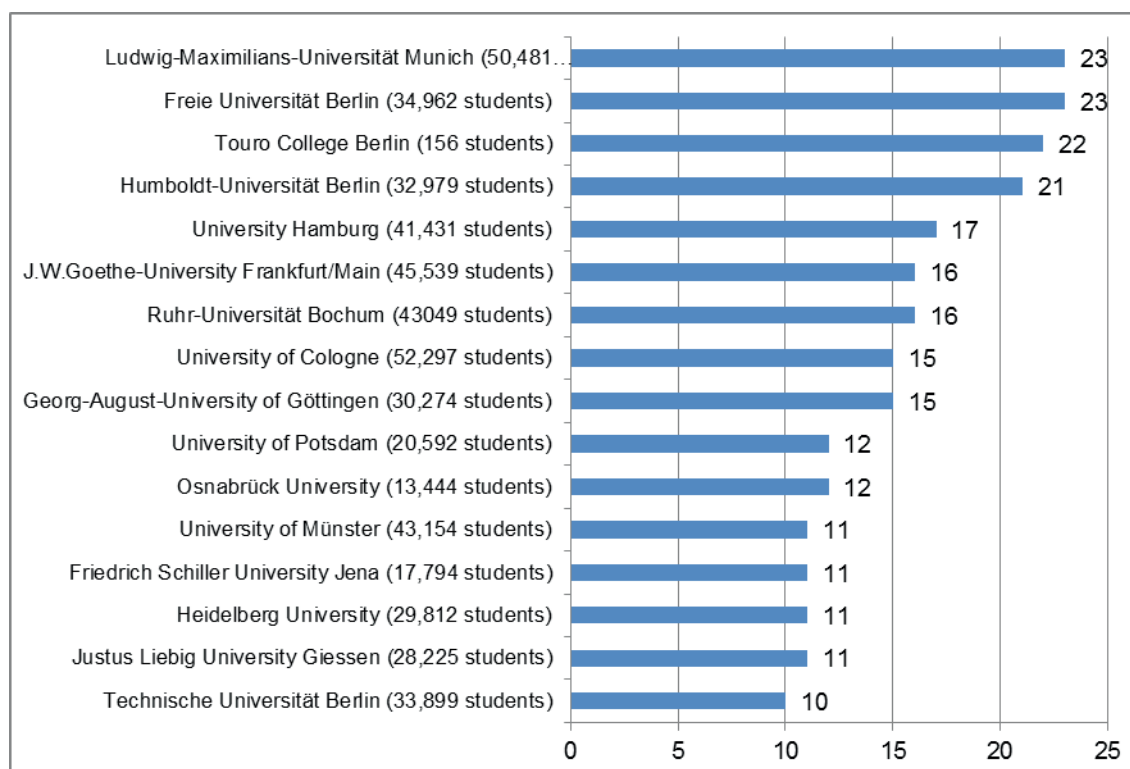


Fig. 7: Universities with the highest number of courses in the period of investigation (total = 468).

Figure 7 shows the universities where 10 or more courses were offered on the Holocaust in the entire research period. Four of those universities are in Berlin. The highest number of courses could be found at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich and Freie Universität Berlin (each with 23 courses respectively).

If you look more closely at the range of courses offered at the universities, the correlation between institutional incorporation of the Holocaust topic and a high number of corresponding courses is obvious: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich (23 courses) is, together with the Institute of Contemporary History and the affiliated Center for Holocaust Studies, one of the most important research institutions on the topic in Germany. Touro College in Berlin (22 courses) offers Germany's only M.A. program on the Holocaust. Humboldt-Universität in Berlin (21 courses) has the institute German History in the 20th Century, which is the only history chair with a denominated focus on the period of National Socialism (Prof. Dr. Michael Wildt). The Fritz Bauer Institute is affiliated with Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main (16 courses). At Universität Hamburg (17 courses), the graduate school "Visualizations: Representations of the Shoah in a Comparative Perspective" took place from 2015 to 2017. There is the Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature at the Justus Liebig University in Giessen (11 courses) as well as the Research Center on Anti-Semitism (ZfA) at the Technische Universität Berlin (10 courses). It is clear that the range of courses offered depends heavily on the institutional involvement and the commitment of individual teachers. Friedrich Schiller University in Jena is another example of this. At this comparatively small university (17,794 students), 11 Holocaust courses were held during the period of this survey. For the most part, these courses were offered at the historical institute with the chairs of Prof. Dr. Norbert Frei and Prof. Dr. Volkhard Knigge.

Nevertheless, there are also universities where there is no institutionally incorporated research focus on the subject, but which offer a comparatively large range of courses on the Holocaust. The most striking example is certainly Freie Universität Berlin: With 23 courses, it is one of two universities with the most courses on the Holocaust in Germany. If you look more closely at the courses here, it is noticeable that the range of courses was distributed among comparatively many different subjects, and that many of the courses offered were interdisciplinary. This finding fits in with the fact that it is a university with a wide range of humanities subjects. A similar structure was also found in other universities with a relatively large range of courses, such as the universities in Göttingen (15 courses), Cologne (15 courses), and Heidelberg (11 courses).

3.2.4 Are There Enough Courses offered on the Holocaust at German Universities?

The data in the previous chapters described the status quo of teaching on the Holocaust in Germany. The chapters described the quantitative scope of courses, and the emphasis as well as regional and discipline-specific features were presented. The question as to if the number of courses on the Holocaust in Germany is sufficient has not yet been answered. The answer to this question can only be assessed with a certain criterion. Therefore, we took the students' perspective and investigated how many of the universities included in the survey offer at least one course on the Holocaust per semester.

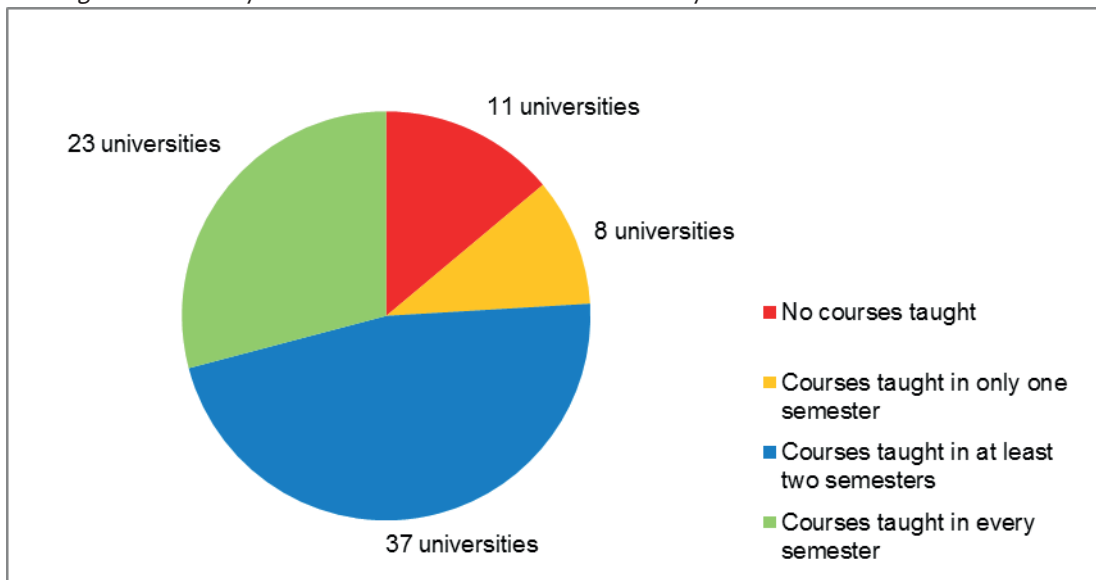


Fig. 8: Courses on the Holocaust in the period of investigation (total = 79).

At 23 of the 79 universities examined, courses on the Holocaust were offered in each of the given semesters. In 37 universities at least in two semesters courses were offered. In eight universities, only in one of four semesters were courses offered, whereas eleven universities did not offer a single course on the Holocaust.

A more narrow perspective on courses offered specifically on the historical events of the Holocaust itself (see figure 12) suggests an even more problematic observation::

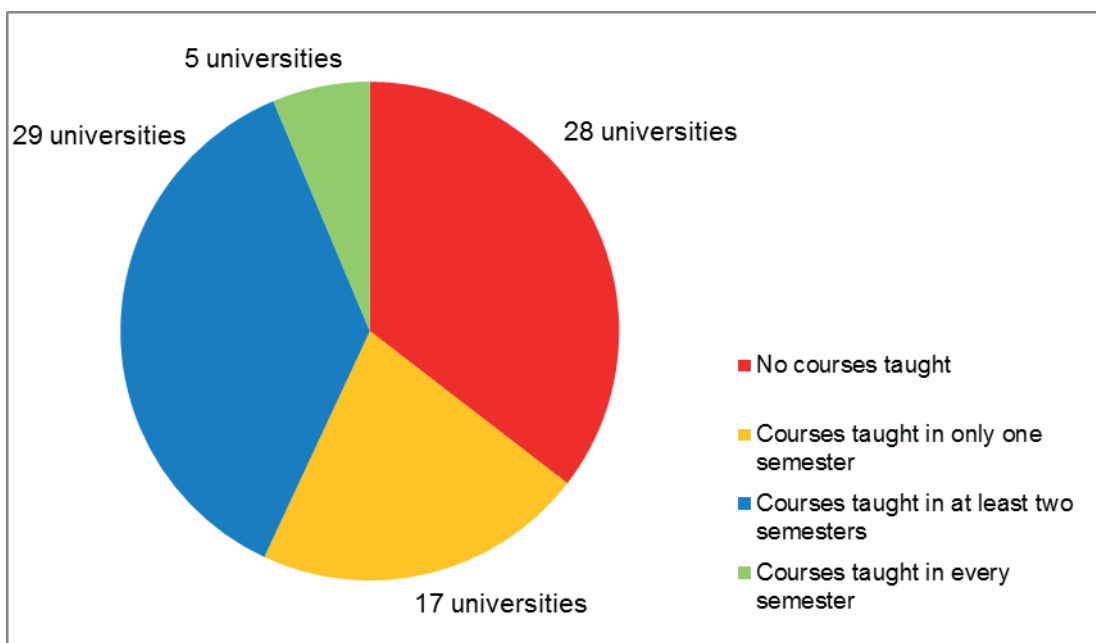


Fig. 9: Courses on the History of the Holocaust over four semesters (total = 79).

Only five of the universities under examination were able to offer courses on the historical events of the Holocaust each semester. At 29 universities it was possible to choose a course in two or three of the four semesters. But 45 of the 79 universities offered one or no course at all on the history of the Holocaust over four semesters.

This seems problematic, especially for aspiring teachers who intend to teach the history of the Holocaust once finished with their degrees.

The result improves slightly if we also include courses dealing with the history of National Socialism.

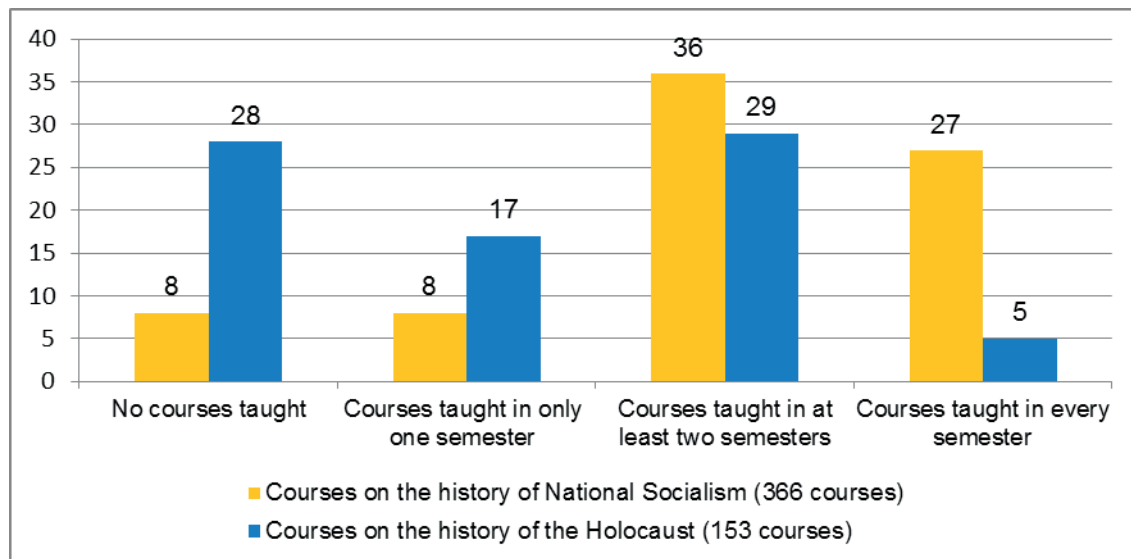


Fig. 10: Comparison of the courses offered on the historical events of the Holocaust and National Socialism in the research period (N=79).

Figure 10 clearly shows that there are far more courses offered on the historical events of National Socialism over the course of the four semesters. Only eight universities did not offer any courses on the historical events of National Socialism, compared to 28 universities that did not offer any courses on the historical events of the Holocaust. At 27 of the universities in this survey, courses were offered in each semester on the history of National Socialism.

3.3 Summary of the Results

By summarizing the results of the empirical study on the courses, the following conclusions can be drawn about courses offered on the Holocaust at German universities:

The 468 identified courses on the Holocaust are relatively evenly distributed throughout the four semesters. The data can be interpreted in such a way that at the 79 universities in this survey an average of 1.5 courses on the Holocaust and 1.7 courses on the National Socialism were offered each semester.

A closer look at the content of the 468 courses on the Holocaust shows that the focus is on questions of reception and the social, political, literary and media processes of coming to terms with the past (total of 49 percent). Only one third (33 percent), i.e. 153 courses, dealt with the historical events of the Holocaust over the course of four semesters. This result is also reflected in the distribution of the courses across different disciplines: The courses identified are spread across different disciplines. Following history departments, most courses were offered in literary studies, German literature, and cultural studies.

The small number of courses that dealt with the actual history of the Holocaust (153) makes one shortcoming clear: The survey shows that many universities do not teach basic knowledge about the history of the Holocaust.

The leading research question of if the range of courses offered in certain places and universities where there is an institutional incorporation is significantly greater than at other university locations can clearly be answered positively.

The examination of the number of universities in the study where it would have been possible for students to complete at least one course on the Holocaust each semester shows a clear shortcoming: Only 23 of the 79 universities examined offered courses on the Holocaust each semester. There were no courses at a total of eleven of the universities examined. The courses on the actual history of the Holocaust have an even greater shortcoming: At 45 of the 79 universities studied, it was possible for students in none or only one of the four semesters to attend an appropriate course.

In the following, these and other content-related questions will be further investigated in connection with the qualitative evaluation of the expert interviews.

4 Interviews with Experts on Teaching and Research on the Holocaust

This second part of the study makes it possible to discuss and augment, with the expert and experiential knowledge of experts, the results of the quantitative survey of the courses. On the basis of the interviews, it is possible to draw a differentiated picture of the current state of teaching about the Holocaust at German universities and to describe topic-relevant structural and institutional conditions and changes.

4.1 Methodological Approach

In the following chapter, the methodological approach is explained, as well as the preparation of the interview samples and the procedures for the survey and evaluation.

4.1.1 The Expert Interview

The main objective of conducting the expert interviews was to obtain further information on the state of academic teaching about the Holocaust. Beyond establishing of a factual basis, the evaluation of the interviews also offers the opportunity for further analyses.²³

Methodologically, the study follows the open guideline-based interview technique of Jochen Gläser and Grit Laudel, in which the open questions underlying the interview are based upon the epistemic interest of the research (cf. Gläser/Laudel 2004, 107 f.).

the epistemic interest of the research (cf. Gläser/Laudel 2004, 107 f.).

The interviews conducted during the study focused on the specialist and experiential knowledge of experts in teaching and research on the Holocaust. The main reason for the selection of the interviewees was their specific knowledge as experts on the topic of the study (cf. *ibid.*, 9). Because of their own active positions in the field of teaching and research on the Holocaust, it can be assumed that they accurately reflect on the development and status quo of teaching about the Holocaust in the context of German memorialization policy and international research (cf. *ibid.*, 44). They appear as epistemically interested witnesses and are themselves, in terms of their experiential knowledge, part of the investigation.

4.1.2 Survey of Interviewees: A Sampling

The sampling of the interviewees exemplifies the field of teaching and research on the Holocaust in Germany. As part of the preliminary research on the study and based on the survey of the courses, an overview of the institutions particularly relevant for university teaching of the topic was compiled. Most of the interviewees are representatives of these Holocaust research-relevant institutions. The following were interviewed, for example: the head and deputy director of the Center for Holocaust Studies in Munich; the holder of the visiting professorship for Interdisciplinary Holocaust Research for the 2015/2016 Winter semester at the Fritz Bauer Institute; the Dean of the MA program “Holocaust Communication and Tolerance” at Touro College Berlin; the former as well as current director of the Research Center for Anti-Semitism in Berlin; the head of the Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature in Giessen; and the spokesperson for the “Visualizations: Comparative perspectives on the Shoah” graduate school in Hamburg. We endeavored to achieve a balanced regional distribution. In addition, the sample depicts different academic positions or status groups and disciplines as well as a relatively balanced gender distribution in the interviews. In addition to chair holders, we interviewed a habilitated academic who teaches as an associate professor, post-doctoral researchers, a tenured lecturer, and a junior researcher in the doctoral phase, who works as a freelance lecturer. In order to do justice to the interdisciplinary nature of Holocaust research, representatives from literary studies, political science, American studies and didactics of history were also interviewed, not only historians.

²³ The anthology of Bogner, Littig and Menz (2009), in which problems, challenges, and areas of application are discussed, provides information on the methodological content of the expert interview.

As the study of the lecture lists has shown, questions about the social and political reappraisal of National Socialism and the Holocaust, such as discussions on historical-political debates and the public presentations of the topic in monuments, memorials and museums, are important aspects of teaching. Accordingly, an expert with a research and publication focus in this area was deliberately included in the sample. Cornelia Siebeck researches and teaches on the history and present of public memory of the Nazi past and its representation in public space, among other topics. Her lectures deal with general cultural memory and historical issues. The analysis and reflection of social negotiation processes for the “correct” handling of the Nazi past are an integral part of her seminar programs.

In summary, the selection of experts resulted from the following criteria: The experts cover the main research institutions for the Holocaust in Germany. They are academics and teach and research in different disciplines on different topics. The interviewees are at various points in their academic careers and teach in a variety of employment and working conditions at different locations in Germany.

4.1.3 The Interviewees and their Institutional Involvement

The experts were contacted personally, and when a positive response was given, an interview appointment was arranged. Interviews were conducted with 13 of 15 respondents during the period from February to April 2016. The interviewees have authorized their interview passages and agreed to their names being published.²⁴

Prof. Dr. Frank Bajohr is a historian with a focus on contemporary history. He heads the Center for Holocaust Studies, founded in 2014 at the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich. Since 2016 he has been an adjunct professor at the History Department of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where he regularly teaches.

Prof. Dr. em. Wolfgang Benz has been an emeritus historian since 2011, specializing in Modern and Contemporary History. He headed the Research Center on Anti-Semitism (ZfA) at the Technische Universität Berlin from 1990 to 2011. During this time, he regularly taught history at the Technische Universität Berlin.

Dr. Nicolas Berg is a historian and researcher at the Simon Dubnow Institute in Leipzig. At the time of the interview, he held the visiting professorship for Interdisciplinary Holocaust Research at the Fritz Bauer Institute in Frankfurt am Main, where he offered courses at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University. He teaches regularly at the University of Leipzig.

Christina Brüning is a lecturer of English and History, and at the time of the interview was an academic assistant at the Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg. She earned her doctorate in 2016 at the Selma Stern Center for Jewish Studies Berlin-Brandenburg and taught Didactics of History at the Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg. She now works and teaches at the Institute of Didactics of History and Public History at the University of Tübingen.

Prof. Dr. Sascha Feuchert is a literary scholar. He occupies the chair of Modern German Literature with a focus on Holocaust and camp literature and its didactics at the Institute of German Studies at Justus Liebig University Giessen. In addition, he directs the Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature there. Sascha Feuchert regularly offers courses in Modern German Literature and Literary Didactics.

Prof. Dr. Norbert Frei is a historian specializing in Modern and Contemporary History. He occupies the chair of Modern and Contemporary History and is head of Jena Center 20th Century History at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena. Norbert Frei teaches regularly at the Historical Institute there.

PD Dr. Susanne Heim is a political scientist. She is currently coordinating the publication project *The Persecution and Destruction of European Jews, 1933-1945*. As an associate professor, she teaches regularly at the Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science at Freie Universität Berlin.

²⁴ The expert interviews conducted within the framework of the study were deliberately not anonymized, as many of the interviewees were selected as experts due to their functions in certain institutions. This decision had a great influence on the evaluation of the interviews, because an authorization was obtained for each quoted interview statement. This approach led to a greater influence of the experts on the results of the study, which emerged in a working alliance between the interviewees and the interviewers.

Prof. Dr. Peter Klein is a historian. He is a professor and dean of the M.A. study course “Holocaust Communication and Tolerance” at Touro College Berlin, where he regularly teaches.

Dr. Andrea Löw is a historian and deputy director of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich. She coordinated Summer Schools and Methodological Seminars through Summer 2017 as part of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) project. In this context, she continues to perform regular teaching duties.

Prof. Dr. Martin Lücke is a historian and occupies the chair for Didactics of History at Freie Universität Berlin. He regularly teaches the courses “Didactics of History” and “Public History” at the Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut of Freie Universität Berlin.

Mag. Cornelia Siebeck is a historian. At the time of the survey, she worked as a freelance historian, publicist and consultant in historical and political education. She has held numerous teaching assignments in recent years, in particular at the Department of Social Theory and Psychology at Ruhr-Universität Bochum and at the chair of Modern and Contemporary History at Humboldt-Universität in Berlin.

Prof. Dr. Stefanie Schüler-Springorum is a historian. She is the director of the Research Center on Anti-Semitism (ZfA) at the Technical University of Berlin and has held this position since 2012 in the Directorate of the Selma Stern Center for Jewish Studies Berlin-Brandenburg. She regularly teaches at the Technical University as part of the M.A. program “Interdisciplinary Anti-Semitism Research.”

Prof. Dr. Susanne Rohr is a professor of American Literature and Culture at Universität Hamburg. She is the spokesperson for the 2015–2017 postgraduate program “Recollections: Representations of the Shoah in a Comparative Perspective.”

4.1.4 The Interview Guidelines

Assuming that even experts’ knowledge is structured by experiences that cannot be captured easily by a fixed questionnaire, an open guideline-based interview technique was chosen as the survey method (cf. Meuser/Nagel 2009, 51). Guideline-based interviewing should ensure that the interviews are fair to both the research interest of the experts and the expert status of the interviewees. The open interview allowed the experts to contribute topics and thus help shape the thematic direction of the interviews. With the help of the guide²⁵ developed for the study, key information was identified as relevant to the epistemic interests of the study.

The guide divided the interviews into three central thematic blocks: (a) professional biography and institutional connectivity, (b) the development of Holocaust research in Germany, and (c) experience in teaching about the Holocaust.

a) The Professional Biography and Institutional Connectivity of the Experts

The first part of the interview focused on the interviewees’ occupational biographies and/or academic careers as well as their current research topics. However, we also asked about the founding history, the academic priorities, and the financial resources of the respective institutions in which the experts are active. This first section of the interviews was adapted individually to the persons interviewed.

b) The Development of Holocaust Research in Germany

The second part of the interviews included questions about the development of Holocaust research in Germany. The introductory question of this block focused on a presentation of Holocaust research and its recent development. This made it possible to work out different perspectives in the various disciplines and subjects. The findings, determined during the evaluation of the courses, that courses on the Holocaust deal to a large extent (49 percent in total) with questions of processing, impact and representation (see Chapter 3.2.1), were taken up in the expert interviews. We inquired specifically if an increase in corresponding research topics was perceived and how the interviewees evaluate this prioritizing. Some questions in this part of the interviews varied due to the different disciplinary expertise of the interviewees.

²⁵ An exemplary interview guide can be found in the study’s appendix.

c) Experiences with Teaching about the Holocaust

The third part of the interview focused on teaching about the Holocaust. As an introduction, we asked about the last course they taught on the topic. Further questions focused on the motivation of the students as well as experiences with defensive reactions. In addition,

we asked about their perception of distinctive features that are revealed at courses on the Holocaust in Germany. In this part of the interviews, we also asked about the interviewees' experiences with the consequences of the restructuring of the German university system as part of the Bologna Process.

4.1.5 The Evaluation of Interviews after Qualitative Content Analysis

In order to evaluate the interviews, 13 audio recordings, averaging 60 to 90 minutes each, were completely transcribed. The resulting transcriptions were evaluated with the qualitative content analysis method.

The qualitative content analysis method is a "systematic, intersubjectively comprehensible description of content and formal features of statements" (Früh, 2007: 27), which deals with the formal description of these characteristics as well as the "academic analysis of communication processes by means of statement and medium" (ibid.: 43).

During the 1980s, Phillip Mayring further developed the hitherto exclusively quantitative content analysis method into a more qualitatively-oriented method. It is not the frequency with which certain information occurs that is of interest, but rather its content (cf. Gläser/Laudel 2004 192 f.; Mayring 2002, 114). The fundamental aim of such a content analysis is a summary and reduction of the material that also preserves the essential content. In addition, the material is structured by filtering out important aspects on the basis of an established order criteria (cf. Mayring 2002, 115).

4.1.6 The Incremental Evaluation of the Material

The evaluation of the expert interviews was essentially made according to the qualitative content analysis method of Gläser and Laudel, which is a modified version of the method developed by Mayring (cf. Gläser/Laudel 2004). The interviews were analyzed in the following two central evaluation steps:

a) Extraktion thematischer Felder

In the first step, central thematic fields were extracted. In the extraction process, information is taken from the text and evaluated methodically (cf. ibid., 193): The extraction "occurs by means of a search grid constructed on the basis of theoretical considerations" (ibid.: 194). In principle, all parts of the text that are relevant for the investigation are extracted.

In our case, this search grid was already pre-structured by the topics given in the guideline (deductive extraction). In addition, topics were covered inductively that were not covered by theoretical considerations and were not explicitly queried via the guideline. These inductively extracted topics include, for example, aspects such as "the significance of perpetrator research in Germany" and "the increasing internationalization of Holocaust research."

b) Categorization and Interpretation

The elaborated thematic fields are assigned to categories that were produced from theoretical considerations and extracted information. After extraction, the material is condensed into categories and the contentually-related parts of the text are evaluated (cf. Meuser/Nagel 2009, 56). The various statements that are assigned to a category reflect the nature of the topic and indicate controversies or important aspects of the respective topic that appear in the various interviews. The selected parts of the text are analyzed, interpreted, and combined into a general information base (cf. Gläser/Laudel 2004, 194 ff.).

In this specific case, this means that thematic categories extracted in the first step were used in the second step to identify essential thematic categories, controversies, and information. This information made it possible to get an overview of the current teaching and research on the Holocaust in Germany, with its controversies, challenges, and distinctive features.

4.2 Holocaust Research Institutions in Germany

For a long time, there have been complaints about the insufficient institutionalization of research and teaching about National Socialism and the Holocaust in Germany. For example in the late 1960s, Jewish scholar and Auschwitz survivor Joseph Wulf attempted in vain to establish a documentation center and an institute for the study of National Socialism at the Wannsee Villa in Berlin (cf. Berg 2003, 451 ff.; Tuchel 1992, 150 ff.). Only about 25 years later, in 1992, was the current memorial and education site founded, accordingly with a memorial and educational focus—but not as a research institution.

For many years the Research Center on Anti-Semitism (ZfA), founded in 1982 at the Technische Universität Berlin, acted as “the secret Holocaust research center in Germany” (Schüler-Springorum Interview 2016, 1). It has been dedicated, especially in the 1990s under Wolfgang Benz, to the study of the history of concentration camps, but also to the publication of reports of Jewish survivors (cf. Benz/Thistle 2005-2009).

Nevertheless, the lack of an official German research institution on the Holocaust remained apparent.

In the 1990s, this deficit, of which one could still speak at that time, had become so obvious that after a visit to the Yad Vashem research and memorial site in Israel, everyone actually came back with the question: Why is something like this only there, and why we don't have something like this here in Germany too? (Berg Interview 2016, 4)

Since the end of the 1980s, there had subsequently been a semi-public discussion about a potential Holocaust Learning and Documentation Center in Frankfurt am Main, which led to the 1995 establishment of the Fritz Bauer Institute (cf. Loewy 1992). After many years of wrangling and the interim solution of third-party funded visiting professorships, the first German professorship on the Holocaust has been filled by Sybille Steinbacher for the summer semester 2017 at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main (cf. Fritz Bauer Institute 2016).

Even after the establishment of the Fritz Bauer Institute, the lack of academic infrastructure in the field of Holocaust research in Germany continued to be a topic of complaint, especially abroad. Germany lacks an institution comparable to the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington D.C. or the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem (cf. Brenner/Strnad 2012; Bajohr 2016). At the “12th Dachau Symposium on Contemporary History” in October, 2011, an analysis was made of the current state of teaching and research on the Holocaust in Germany, again strengthening the demand for institutionalization (cf. Brenner/Strnad 2012).

In 2013, the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich took these demands into account and founded the Center for Holocaust Studies. In his interview, Frank Bajohr reports:

A major impetus for the founding of this center came from abroad, especially from the USA but also in part from Israel, because the institutions working there in the field of Holocaust research felt that they lacked an institutional contact. They were worried that there could be no lasting academic talent due to the lack of institutional incorporation of this subject, not only at German universities, but at research institutions as well. (Bajohr Interview 2016, 1)

Peter Klein also describes the development of the foundation of the Munich Center for Holocaust Studies as a result of a long-term development

Of course, this is not the expression of a spontaneous intuition, but a very long-term trend that has developed and has led to a certain pressure in the Federal Republic of Germany to act, namely the globalization of this topic. After all, it's not the case that there are no German specialists who appear at international conferences—on the contrary. But there was no institutional response, and because of that pressure, and the fact that a new generation has moved into junior researcher' positions, this has been articulated aloud. It came to the attention of the Institute of Contemporary History that if they didn't want to get stuck in a certain provincial perspective, then they needed, as a relevant German research institution, a workplace or a center for Holocaust studies. At least they had to create something like a kind of relay station, where certain people based in Munich can create networks to link initiatives and institutions together. (Klein Interview 2016, 12)

With the institutionalization of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ) in Munich and the new occupation of Holocaust professorships in Frankfurt am Main and Giessen, the institutional incorporation of Holocaust research in Germany in 2017 is better than ever before.

Norbert Frei summarizes the state of the institutionalization of Holocaust research as follows::

I think we've achieved quite a good mix in Germany: the Fritz Bauer Institute, with which I was very much connected in its beginnings; the Research Center on Anti-Semitism; the Institute for the History of the German Jews in Hamburg; the Institute for Contemporary History in its former form; and the Research Centre for Contemporary History in Hamburg. There have always been research activities. And now with the Holocaust research center at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, and first setting up of a Holocaust professorship in Frankfurt, something has been added. In other words, there are institutional cores, but there are also many individuals at universities who research this topic substantially and well. The infrastructure for this topic is no worse than for any other. I would rather say that it's still a bit better, because there is a certain amount of social interest. (Frei Interview 2016, 6)

The following overview of the central institutions of teaching and research on the Holocaust in Germany summarizes the current state of institutionalization of the subject at German universities. The institutions described are exclusively institutions with a university connection that are also active in teaching. Expert interviews were conducted with representatives from eight of the nine institutions presented. The general information on the institutions was supplemented by citations from the interviews with representatives of the respective institutions, with information on the history and development of the institutions, as well as information on the institutions' key areas of activity.²⁶

4.2.1. The Research Center on Anti-Semitism at Technische Universität Berlin (1982)

The Research Center on Anti-Semitism (ZfA), founded in 1982 at Technische Universität Berlin,²⁷ is dedicated to interdisciplinary basic research on current and historical anti-Semitism. It is one of the few institutions worldwide with this special focus, and is the institution in Germany that provides academic policy advice on the topic of anti-Semitism.²⁸ Despite its emphasis on anti-Semitism research, the center's central focus was on research of the history of the Holocaust and German-Jewish history.

The Research Center on Anti-Semitism was directed from 1982 to 1990 by Prof. Dr. Herbert A. Strauss, from 1990 to 2011 by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Benz, and has been led by Prof. Dr. Stefanie Schüler-Springorum since 2011. In addition, there is a second professorship that was occupied from 1986 to 1994 by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Scheffler, and from 1994 to 2016 by Prof. Dr. Werner Bergmann. The staff members of the Research Center on Anti-Semitism regularly give lectures at Technische Universität Berlin. Since winter semester 2014/2015, the center has offered its own M.A. degree program "Interdisciplinary Research on Anti-Semitism," which also includes modules on historical anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.²⁹ Stefanie Schüler-Springorum and Wolfgang Benz were interviewed as experts in this study.

The systematic study of the Holocaust, and especially the Nazi camp system, has been a major focus of the Research Center for Anti-Semitism, especially in the 1990s under Wolfgang Benz. In addition, they produced extensive overview works, such as the nine-volume series *Der Ort des Terrors* ("The Place of Terror"). This history of the National Socialist concentration camps (cf. Benz/Thistle 2005-2009) has also been especially dedicated to the publication and popularization of eyewitness accounts of Jewish victims and the Holocaust in Eastern Europe.

26 The selection of institutions is based on the orientation of the study on university teaching, and is not intended to emphasize the importance of other institutions relevant to research or pedagogical work on the subject of the Holocaust, such as remembrance and memorial sites (<http://www.bpb.de/die-bpb/138852/federal-agency-for-civic-education>, May 30, 2018) or the International Tracing Service (www.its-arolsen.org, May 30, 2018). The presentation of the institutions follows a temporal chronology. Thus it starts with the longest-existing one and ends with the last one founded.

27 Cf. www.tu-berlin.de/fakultaet_i/zentrum_fuer_antisemitismusforschung, May 30, 2018.

28 Cf. the assessment of the Research Center on Anti-Semitism at the end of 2016 on the seminar "The social situation of the young people in Palestine" at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Hildesheim (see www.hawk-hhg.de/aktuell/default_215613.php, May 30, 2018) as well as the mandate to Wolfgang Benz in January 2017 to make a report on allegations of anti-Semitism against a lecturer at the Otto Suhr Institute of Freie Universität Berlin (cf. Institute Council of the Otto Suhr Institute 2017, 2).

29 See www.tu-berlin.de/fakultaet_i/zentrum_fuer_antisemitismusforschung/menue/studium_und_lehre/m_a_studiengang, May 30, 2018.

Wolfgang Benz describes it thus: “We explored the individual locations of the Holocaust: the Holocaust in Romania, Hungary, Lithuania, and Latvia. These were the topics. At that time, at least for the German public, these were largely blank spots on the map.” (Benz Interview 2016, 2). The Research Center for Anti-Semitism was, at that time, the only research institute in the world “dedicated exclusively to anti-Semitism in all its facets and effects.” (ibid.) Under Wolfgang Benz, it followed a very broad understanding of anti-Semitism research as a general research on prejudice. “I have tried to see anti-Semitism as a paradigm and to harness it for research on general prejudice. In my term of office, that was the focus, the interest, and the core value” (ibid.).³⁰ Furthermore, the Research Center on Anti-Semitism under Wolfgang Benz was an institution that pursued a strategy of taking a stand in political controversies and acting in an advisory capacity.

Since taking over the direction of the center in 2011, Stefanie Schüler-Springorum has put a stronger focus on anti-Semitism research than on historical Holocaust research. She explains “limiting ourselves to the core topic” pragmatically, referencing the existence of the Fritz Bauer Institute and the Center for Holocaust Studies in Munich (Schüler-Springorum Interview 2016, 1).

She also intends to direct the Research Center on Anti-Semitism closer to research and further away from the direction of popularizing the research: “I see the Research Center on Anti-Semitism as an academic institution: a university, research, and teaching institution, and less as an institution for adult education” (ibid.).

Since 2012 Stefanie Schüler-Springorum has represented Technische Universität in the directorate of the Zentrum Jüdische Studien Berlin-Brandenburg.³¹

4.2.2 Fritz Bauer Institute in Frankfurt (1995)

The Fritz Bauer Institute³² is an interdisciplinary and independent research, documentation and educational institution that is dedicated to the history and impact of the Holocaust. The research focus of the institute is in the legal, political and cultural examination of crimes in post-war Germany up to the current day. Another focus is the educational work on the topics of National Socialism and the Holocaust. Thus the Fritz Bauer Institute, in cooperation with the Jewish Museum Frankfurt, operates the Pedagogical Center Frankfurt am Main.³³ For the present study an interview was conducted with Nicolas Berg, the holder of the visiting professorship for Interdisciplinary Holocaust Research in winter semester 2015/2016. He describes the focus of the institute as follows:

Of course, the legal reappraisal of the Third Reich and its crimes is a central building block for the work here: by means of the biography of Fritz Bauer, the publication of his writings, and the publication of the Auschwitz Trial transcripts. Frankfurt is special in that the first major Auschwitz trial took place here in the 1960s, which had an immense effect in all areas of the German public sphere. (Berg Interview 2016, 5)

The Fritz Bauer Institute was founded in 1995 by the state of Hesse, the city of Frankfurt am Main, and the Förderverein Fritz Bauer Institut e.V. as a foundation under civil law. Since 2000 it has been an associate affiliated institute of Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main.

The Institute was led from 1995 to 2000 by Dr. Hanno Loewy, who already played a key role in the conception and implementation of the institute as preparatory director from 1992 to 1995. The directors of the Fritz Bauer Institute were Prof. Dr. Micha Brumlik (2000–2005), Prof. Dr. Dietfried Krause-Vilmar (2005–2007) and Prof. Dr. Raphael Gross (2007–2015). In 2017 Prof. Dr. Sybille Steinbacher took charge of the institute.³⁴

The visiting professorship for interdisciplinary Holocaust research at the Fritz Bauer Institute, established in 2001, is the first professorship in Germany dedicated solely to the history and impact of the Holocaust. The visiting professorship has since been held, with the exception of two hiatuses 2006–2008 and 2012–2015, on a regular rotational basis. Between

³⁰ The broad term “anti-Semitism” described was expressed, for example, in the comparison between anti-Muslim racism or “Islamophobia” and anti-Semitism, which led to a controversy (cf. Botsch 2012).

³¹ Cf. www.zentrum-juedische-studien.de, May 30, 2018.

³² Cf. www.fritz-bauer-institut.de, May 30, 2018.

³³ Cf. www.pz-ffm.de, May 30, 2018.

³⁴ Cf. www.fritz-bauer-institut.de/gruendungsgeschichte.html?&L=0, May 30, 2018.

2001 and 2015 it was occupied by a total of twelve academics from various disciplines. The visiting professorship was and is made possible jointly by the Fritz Bauer Institute and various other cooperation partners and funding agencies (Frankfurt University, the Jewish Museum Frankfurt, the state of Hesse, and private donors).³⁵

The visiting professorship was extended to 2017 with the establishment of the first Holocaust-specialized Holocaust Studies Department. Its establishment is made possible by the commitment of the state of Hesse to finance the professorship with 150,000 euros annually. Prof. Dr. Sybille Steinbacher was appointed to the professorship on May 1, 2017. In addition to her and the visiting professors, who each offer two courses on their respective research topics, other staff members of the Fritz Bauer Institute also assume teaching duties at the History Seminar and the Seminar for Didactics of History at Goethe University.

In cooperation with the Evangelische Akademie Frankfurt, the Fritz Bauer Institute has offered a special seminar eight times, in which doctoral students have the opportunity to exchange and discuss their work on questions of the history and impact of the Holocaust. In September 2017 this event took place for the ninth time.³⁶

Nicolas Berg describes the path from civic engagement via the foundation of the Fritz Bauer Institute to the establishment of the chair for Holocaust Research in Frankfurt am Main as follows:

You were familiar with the name, you knew of the reference figure, the well-known Attorney General Fritz Bauer, and everything together then led to the establishment of a workplace for the history and impact of the Holocaust under the first director, Hanno Loewy. That was in the mid-1990s, I can still remember the first events. This was sustained by civic involvement. It was something like a grassroots movement that quickly resonated with city and state politics. So it was not founded as a brainchild, in that sense, but rather out of accordingly strong necessity. We're talking about the 1990s — this is the time when the truly spectacular 50th anniversary demanded an accounting, so to speak, of public awareness in the Federal Republic of Germany. (Berg Interview 2016, 4)

He describes the development from guest professorships to the establishment of a professorship at Goethe University as follows:

The visiting professorship at the Fritz Bauer Institute is basically a second consideration. After some initiatives here in Frankfurt to establish a Holocaust professorship failed to be quickly realized, it was easier and better to make appointments for a temporary visiting professorship with alternating prospects. So you could thus quasi directly connect people like Götz Aly, Philippe Burin, or Peter Longerich to the institute for one or two semesters. But the real goal has always been that which is coming up soon. Namely that now, after the integration of the Fritz Bauer Institute into Goethe University a few years ago, we actually managed to establish a professorship institutionally with the participants. The appointments have been made and the professorship will begin early next year. This means that there will then be a professorship for Holocaust research at Goethe University Frankfurt within the framework of the historical seminar there, which will be occupied jointly by the directorate of the Fritz Bauer Institute. (Berg Interview 2016, 2)

4.2.3 Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature at Justus Liebig University Giessen (1998)

The Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature³⁷ was founded in 1998 at the Institute of German Studies of Justus Liebig University in Giessen as an interdisciplinary institution, dealing with literary studies and literary didactics of texts from Holocaust and camp literature. It is “the only institution in the Federal Republic of Germany that really specializes in Holocaust and camp literature” (Feuchert Interview 2016, 9).

The three main focuses of the Research Unit are the literary-academic publication of source texts of victims of National Socialism, the exploration of Holocaust literature in general, and the teaching of the topic in terms of higher education and subject-related didactics. The Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature is led by Prof. Dr. Sascha Feuchert, with Dr. Markus Roth as his deputy. There are additionally other permanent, project-associated, and volunteer employees.

35 Cf. www.fritz-bauer-institut.de/gastprofessur.html?&Fsize=0%3F%3F&L=0, May 30, 2018.

36 Cf. www.fritz-bauer-institut.de/doktoranden-seminar.html, May 30, 2018.

37 Cf. www.holocaustliteratur.de, May 30, 2018..

As part of the present study, Sascha Feuchert was interviewed as an expert. He describes the focal points of the Research Unit as follows:

We have three fundamentals here at the Research Unit. One is publication, which mainly refers to victims' source texts or sources. Our largest publication so far is the chronicle of the Lodz-Litzmannstadt Ghetto.³⁸ These consist of about 3,000 posthumous pages that were written in Litzmannstadt Ghetto by victims—a kind of daily newspaper without readers. We have completely edited these, in a very long and time-consuming process, for the first time. The second fundament is the exploration of Holocaust literature as a whole. This means that we are currently occupied very much with early writings. By early texts, we mean texts that have been published up till 1949, until the founding of the two German states. We have just completed a major research project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), namely a database with bibliographies of these early texts, secondary texts, and a compilation of author biographies.³⁹ The third fundament is didactics, both for higher as well as general education. We invest a lot of time conceptualizing university courses. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 1)

In 2016 the Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature was provided with a five-year special budget by the Hesse Ministry for Science and the Arts (HMWK) in the amount of about one million euros. In return, in October 2016 Justus Liebig University in Giessen set up a W2 professorship for modern German literature with a focus on Holocaust and camp literature and its didactics, occupied by Sascha Feuchert. He describes the development from the founding of the Research Unit up to the present situation of relatively secure institutional incorporation and substantive establishment as follows:

The founding of the Research Unit was, to put it mildly, not without resistance. There was a certain discomfort with the topic, and the question, "What does that actually have to do with literary studies?" was often asked too. "Aren't these, if anything, rather non-literary texts?" This could be rebutted relatively quickly, since autobiographies—the majority of the memoirs are victims' autobiographies—have always been within the scope of literary studies. But here with a special focus. It was still very difficult at the beginning, and it took a while to be established and accepted. In the meantime this has completely changed. Today it is something at the university that is not only very well-regarded, but also majorly supported. There could be no funding from the Hesse Ministry for Science and the Arts without the support of the department and the executive board. At the beginning, they considered us to be quite exotic because of the Holocaust literature genre. We've put a lot of effort into making it plausible that these texts can be seen together as a specific genre. We asked: What do the texts have in common, and how can a specific genre be made more plausible from an epistemic viewpoint than if Holocaust survivor memoirs are viewed only as a general autobiographical genre? In this respect, it's certainly a content-related consolidation. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 1)

4.2.4 The Ludwigsburg Research Center at the University of Stuttgart (2001)

The Ludwigsburg Research Center, which since 2001 has been based in the Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes,⁴⁰ has been assigned to the chair of Modern History at the University of Stuttgart. The Central Office, established in 1958, probably has the world's most comprehensive collection of records on the history of Nazi injustice and the activities of the German judiciary in connection with Nazi crimes. A large part of the dossiers, the document collection, and the card files were acquired in the year 2000, from the German Federal Archives. The Ludwigsburg office of the German Federal Archives has the task of securing the documents of the Central Office and making them available for historical research. In this context, the establishment of the University of Stuttgart's Research Center on Nazi history in Ludwigsburg was arranged with the German Federal Archives, whose goal is the academic processing of the materials archived there.

Prof. Dr. Wolfram Pyta has been the director of the Research Center since 2001. Martin Cüppers is the academic director. Both teach on the topic at the University of Stuttgart's Historical Institute.

38 Cf. Feuchert et al. 2007.

39 Cf. the research project "A Virtual Atlas and Online Bibliography of Early Holocaust and Camp Literature", www.geobib.info, May 30, 2018.

40 Cf. www.uni-stuttgart.de/hing/forschung/ludwigsburg, May 30, 2018.

4.2.5 Jena Center 20th Century History (2006)

The Jena Center 20th Century History⁴¹ is an institution at the Historical Institute of Friedrich Schiller University in Jena. The topical focus of the center is to connect various historical interpretive approaches and research perspectives on the history of the 20th century. There is a special focus on the history of National Socialism and its impact.

It is headed by the holder of the chair of the Department of Modern and Contemporary History of Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Prof. Dr. Norbert Frei. His deputy is historian PD Dr. Annette Weinke. The chair of Modern and Contemporary History in Jena was founded in 1990 as part of the reorganization of historical departments of the former GDR. Prof. Dr. Lutz Niethammer held the chair from 1990 until his retirement in 2005. In 2005 Norbert Frei, who until then had held a chair of the same designation in Bochum, was appointed to Jena. In 2006 the Jena Center 20th Century History was founded on the basis of a private donation from Dr. Christiane Weickart and Dr. Nicolaus-Jürgen Weickart.

The Jena Center has a visiting professorship, to which renowned academics from all over the world who are researching 20th century history are invited for one semester each. It also has a graduate school where doctoral students can benefit from regular courses and conferences. The center also offers funding opportunities for visiting scholars and initial funding for the preparation of doctoral projects.

The Jena Center is not thematically oriented only on the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust, but rather has a deliberately broader focus. Due to the research profile of Norbert Frei, however, there is currently a working focus on Nazi and postwar history. Thus the Jena Center, with its focus on research, teaching, and in particular the promotion of young researchers in the field of Holocaust research, is of great importance. For this reason it is listed here and an expert interview was conducted with Norbert Frei.

Norbert Frei describes the concept of the Jena Center as follows:

The program is determined by the people who are here and their research interests. It is also defined by visiting professors who teach in our graduate program. This graduate program does not have the goal of acting in the sense of a graduate college, that is, very tightly bound thematically, but rather brings people together who work on different aspects of 20th century history—differing both methodically and in perspectives. With the seminar days and high-ranking visiting scholars, we offer them the opportunity to further educate themselves, increase their range of interests, and further develop beyond their own research topic in the area of contemporary history or 20th century history while they work on their specific topic. The concept is to counteract overspecialization. That's why, soon after the founding of Jena Center, we founded the master's program "History and Politics of the 20th Century," which we've reinforced with political science and modules from sociology and Jewish history (Frei Interview 2016, 2).

⁴¹ See www.jenacenter.uni-jena.de, May 30, 2018.

4.2.6 M.A. Study Program “Holocaust Communication and Tolerance” at Touro College Berlin (2007)

In 2007, the state-recognized private university Touro College Berlin introduced “Holocaust Communication and Tolerance,”⁴² the first M.A. study program on the Holocaust in Germany. Touro College Berlin is part of the American-Jewish Touro University network,⁴³ which opened branches in Jerusalem, Moscow, and Berlin in the early 2000s.

In 2001–2002, the suggestion was made here at Touro College in Berlin that in addition to the economics program, which had only been previously available for undergraduate students, another course of study could be offered on the topic of the Holocaust—precisely because Berlin was one of the centers of National Socialism where decisions to carry out the Holocaust were made. (Klein Interview, 2016, 2)

The fee-based M.A. program does not allow for more than twelve students per year. It combines study content from Holocaust studies, Jewish studies, and the public history of National Socialism and the Holocaust. Under the direction of founding dean Andreas Nachama, an M.A. degree program was designed that meets American expectations for a Jewish and Holocaust studies program, and fulfills the requirements of a German university of applied sciences as well. (see Klein Interview 2016, 2).

Prof. Dr. Peter Klein has been dean of the college since 2013. In addition, Prof. Dr. Stephan Lehnstaedt occupies a professorship in the program, and a third professorship has recently been taken by Prof. Dr. Gideon Reuveni. Furthermore, Prof. Dr. Johannes Tuchel teaches regularly as a visiting professor. Since 2009, Touro College has cooperated with the Institute of Jewish Studies at Freie Universität Berlin as part of its M.A. program, offering the M.A. program “Judaism in Historical Context.”⁴⁴ On the basis of this cooperation, students of both programs attend courses at both institutions. Peter Klein was interviewed as an expert for this study.

As a college of applied sciences degree program, the M.A. has a much more practical orientation and pursues the goal that its graduates “can research academically, prepare pedagogically, act as influencers for the media, and work as consultants or editors” (ibid.). The title “Holocaust Communication and Tolerance” refers to the three main content components of the program. In the course of the four study semesters, the students should first acquire a specific expertise about the fate of German and European Jews in the years 1933 to 1945. Furthermore, the aftermath history is covered, which is referred to by the term “communication” in the title. Peter Klein summarizes: “That which has long been called ‘coping with the past,’ that is, all major national and international debates about the Holocaust as a fact of historical scholarship” (ibid.). The third aspect concerns the philosophical approach to human rights and tolerance discussions:

Teaching tolerance and human rights does not have a grand tradition in the Federal Republic of Germany. In the US, this is an integral component of the liberal arts. We’re doing this in cooperation with the Institute of Jewish Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. That introduces specifically Jewish philosophy, discussions about tolerance since the French Revolution, as well as human rights discussions since the founding of the United Nations and the establishment of the concept of genocide into the debate. (Klein Interview, 2016, 2)

42 Cf. <http://touroberlin.com/academics/degree-programs/ma-holocaust-communication.html>, May 30, 2018.

43 Cf. <http://www.touro.edu>, May 30, 2018.

44 Cf. www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/judaistik/Studium/Masterstudienstudgang-_Judaism-in-Historical-Context_/index.html, May 30, 2018. Note: The M.A. program “Judaism in Historical Context” is currently under revision. The cooperation between the Institute of Jewish Studies at Freie Universität Berlin and Touro College continues.

4.2.7 Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich (2013)

The Center for Holocaust Studies,⁴⁵ founded in 2013 at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, aims to serve as a competence and communication center for the empirical research of the Holocaust and as a forum for international Holocaust research. The Center is headed by Prof. Dr. Frank Bajohr and Dr. Andrea Löw (deputy). Both were interviewed in the present study.

The Center's thematical focus is on the field of historical research of the actual history of the Holocaust up to 1945, with an emphasis on the Holocaust and societal dynamics in occupied Eastern Europe (cf. Löw Interview 2016, 2).

As described in the introduction, the establishment of the Center for Holocaust Studies is also a response to concerns and criticism expressed by various institutions in the US and Israel due to the lack of institutional incorporation of the topic at German universities and research institutions (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 1). The Center was initiated by the Institute for Contemporary History (IfZ, director: Prof. Dr. Andreas Wirsching) in cooperation with the chairs of Modern and Contemporary History (Prof. Margit Szöllösi-Janze) and Jewish History and Culture (Prof. Dr. Michael Brenner) at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) in Munich. The focus was on the following three goals:

- The Center is to build an internationally attractive research infrastructure with fellowships for visiting academics, thereby offering established researchers, postdocs and doctoral candidates a place to research in Germany.
- It is intended to promote research in Germany on the Holocaust and cooperate closely with international research institutions. Holocaust research in Germany is to be institutionalized and interlinked with global research through an international scholarship program for doctoral students.
- Thirdly, the Center should secure university teaching on the history of the Holocaust at LMU Munich, but also support general teachers via publications and courses by offering courses on the topic at German universities (cf. Bajohr 2016, 140). The book *Der Holocaust: Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung* ("The Holocaust: Conclusions and New Research Questions"), published in 2015 by Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw, is an example of such an overview publication. (cf. Bajohr/Löw 2015).

The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research financed the preliminary phase of the Center from 2013 to 2016. The application was made in January 2017 at the German federal and state Joint Science Conference⁴⁶ for the construction and consolidation of the Center. As a result, the financing was shifted, analogous to the Leibniz Institutes, to federal and state funding, with half of the funding being provided by the German federal government, 35 percent by the state of Bavaria and 15 percent by other federal states. Frank Bajohr emphasizes that from January 1, 2017, the Center will therefore be able to operate on a much broader institutional basis. In addition, since the summer of 2016 Frank Bajohr's appointment as adjunct professor at the History Seminar has also associated the Center more closely with LMU (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 2).

In addition to carrying out its own research projects, such as the publication of Alfred Rosenberg's political diary (cf. Matthew/Bajohr 2015), the Center would like to serve as a bridge and bring researchers from various countries together by hosting international conferences and workshops. Since participation in conferences overseas is barely affordable for young academics from (Eastern) Europe, Bajohr and Löw are planning a European offshoot of the "Lessons and Legacies" conferences that take place every two years in the US, and function to some extent as a conference of Holocaust research historians⁴⁷ (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 5; Löw Interview 2016, 3).

45 Cf. www.holocaust-studien.de, May 30, 2018.

46 Cf. www.gwk-bonn.de, May 30, 2018..

47 Cf. <http://hef.northwestern.edu/lessons-and-legacies-conference/lessons-and-legacies-2016>, May 30, 2018.

In addition, the Center for Holocaust Studies is a key partner in the European EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) project.⁴⁸ Proposed by 20 research institutes from 13 European countries and Israel, and funded by the European Commission with a total funding of seven million euros, this project aims to create a digital infrastructure to provide an online register of European archival resources on the history of the Holocaust. The Center for Holocaust Studies leads the fields “Work Package 4: Transnational Access to Research Infrastructures” (Work Package Leader: Frank Bajohr) and “Work Package 5: Training” (Work Package Leader until June 2017: Andrea Löw, thenceforth: Anna Ullrich). In addition, a research assistant (Giles Bennet) is working in the project.⁴⁹

4.2.8 Graduate School “Visualizations: Representations of the Shoah in a Comparative Perspective” at Universität Hamburg (2015)

The graduate school “Visualization: Representations of the Shoah in a Comparative Perspective,”⁵⁰ set up in 2015 at Universität Hamburg, is a cross-curricular, literary, and cultural-academic doctoral program. The graduate school’s spokespersons are American studies professor Dr. Susanne Rohr and as deputy, Slavic studies professor Dr. Anja Tippner. Susanne Rohr was interviewed as an expert in this study.

The graduate school has a three-year initial funding from the Landesforschungsförderung Hamburg (“Research Funding Institution of the Federal State of Hamburg”) that ends on 31.12.2017 (cf. Rohr Interview 2016, 1). Due to the lack of follow-up funding, the graduate school was not continued in 2018.

The interdisciplinary graduate school currently offers eleven scholarship holders and seven associates a framework for their humanities dissertation projects that deal with the memory of the Shoah from 1989 onwards. The aim of the graduate school is to qualify the doctoral candidates in academics and research in the field of comparative analyses of artistic representations of the Shoah since 1989. The doctoral candidates have a residence obligation in Hamburg and are obliged within the framework of the graduate school to complete 13 semester hours per week (cf. *ibid.*, The President of Universität Hamburg 2014, 2). The interdisciplinary and comparative orientation as well as the bringing together of doctoral candidates from different disciplines is intended to lead to synergy effects and a networking of different approaches to similar topics. According to Susanne Rohr, this exchange has been taking place successfully (cf. Rohr Interview 2016, 2).

In addition to two historians (Prof. Dr. Birthe Kundrus and Prof. Dr. Joachim Tauber), the ten graduate school members are professors from various humanities and cultural studies disciplines.⁵¹ Accordingly, almost all doctoral projects are devoted to literary and cultural studies topics.⁵²

The program of the graduate school is divided into three main topics:

- The topic “Practices of the Visualization of the Shoah” deals with different media practices of processing the Holocaust in literature, film, art, and music. Of further interest here are questions about the practice of memorial-cultural representations of the Holocaust at memorial sites and museums (cf. Rohr Interview 2016, 2).
- The core area “Interdependencies of National and Post-National Narratives” focuses on the dynamics of national and transnational perspectives on Holocaust remembrance and its representation. In view of the fact that research in various disciplines, such as Slavic studies, Romance language studies, and American studies, is strongly related to the respective national perspectives, this core area is devoted to the study of various national memory discourses and their interrelationships. Susanne Rohr refers here to the significance of the respective victim, perpetrator, and bystander contexts, but also to tendencies of universalization (cf. *ibid.*).

48 Cf. www.ehri-project.eu, May 30, 2018.

49 Cf. www.ifz-muenchen.de/forschung/forschungsinfrastruktur/ea/projekt/european-holocaust-research-infrastructure-ehri, May 30, 2018.

50 Cf. www.gwiss.uni-hamburg.de/einrichtungen/graduierenschule/vergegenwaertigungen-shoah.html, May 30, 2018.

51 Cf. www.gwiss.uni-hamburg.de/einrichtungen/graduierenschule/vergegenwaertigungen-shoah/kollegmitglieder.html, May 30, 2018.

52 Cf. www.gwiss.uni-hamburg.de/einrichtungen/graduierenschule/vergegenwaertigungen-shoah/kollegiatinnen.html, May 30, 2018.

- The third central focus is on the study of the “Dynamics of Taboos and the Breach of Taboos,” which has become increasingly important in the area of the artistic and cinematic representation of the Holocaust since the 1990s. Susanne Rohr emphasizes that certain forms of representation were dominant for a long time and “there [was] something akin to ‘Holocaust etiquette’ about how the Holocaust is to be represented in art” (Rohr Interview 2016, 3). From the 1990s onward, so-called “camp comedies” (Žižek 2000) such as the film *Life is Beautiful* employed the artistic means of breaching taboos to compel memories that are less rigid and predictable” (Rohr Interview 2016, 3). The third core area of the graduate school focuses on the study of these cultural practices.

4.3 Teaching and Research on the Holocaust in the Various Disciplines

In the following, six central disciplines, with their primary teaching and research topics about the Holocaust, are presented. The selection of disciplines was made on the basis of the courses surveyed in the empirical study. Based on the survey and expert interviews, this chapter presents the essential teaching contents and describes the relevant leading chairs and institutions.

4.3.1 Historiography

The historical research on the Holocaust is assigned in Germany to the historical epochs of Late Modern and Contemporary History (Neuere und Neueste Geschichte) and belongs, according to the German system of periodization, to Contemporary History (Neueste Geschichte), which covers the period from the Soviet October Revolution and the end of the First World War to the recent past. For this phase, the term *Zeitgeschichte* (“contemporary history”) is also used, which designates “the epoch of the those who lived at the time and the academic approach taken towards them” (Rothfels 1952, 2). According to this understanding, contemporary history is not a conclusively definable epoch. For a long time, contemporary history in Germany was closely linked to research on National Socialism. Thus the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich, founded in 1949, focused at its inception on the study of the history of National Socialism and its immediate pre- and post-history.⁵³ In the meantime, the Institute of Contemporary History is explicitly dedicated to the research of the entire German history in its European references from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day. This orientation paradigmatically illustrates the temporal shift of the subject of contemporary history.

University historical teaching and research on National Socialism and the Holocaust often take place in Germany at the chairs of Modern and Contemporary History, *Zeitgeschichte*, or History in the 20th Century. Since chair designations in Germany are relatively broad, the concrete focus of the work is rarely specified. Since 2009, Humboldt-Universität in Berlin has, for the first time, a chair with an explicit focus on National Socialism: Prof. Dr. Michael Wildt’s chair “German History of the 20th Century with a Focus on National Socialism.”

In addition, research and teaching on the subject takes place at the various regionally specialized historical chairs such as those for European and Eastern European history, but also at Prof. Dr. Sönke Neitzel’s chair, the “Military History / Cultural History of Violence” at the University of Potsdam.

More recent historical Holocaust research in Germany is primarily concerned with central event-historical questions using historical-empirical methods. It focuses on the analysis of the role of Nazi perpetrators (perpetrator research), the exploration of the meaning and construction of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (“national community”) as a method of marginalization, the study of everyday life and collaboration in German-occupied countries (especially in Eastern Europe), and the role of certain institutions in the planning and implementation of the Holocaust, among other things. It has an increasingly strong European orientation and is well connected internationally. Other fields of research include legal, social and media reappraisal. Here, particularly in the field of social and media reappraisal, there has been a shift towards questions of cultural history. The empirical study of the courses reflects this picture: by far the largest number of courses on the Holocaust (196), and in particular on National Socialism (323), were offered in historical subjects (cf. Chapter 3.2.2, Figure 4). However, these courses were not exclusively courses on the history of the Holocaust, but rather courses dealing with topics of legal, social, and media reappraisal as well (cf. Chapter 3.2.1, Table 3).

⁵³ In his book *Der Holocaust und die westdeutschen Historiker* (“The Holocaust and West German Historians”), Nicolas Berg analyzes the relationship of West German history studies to the Holocaust and criticizes an “extension of perpetrator-oriented explanatory patterns in the historiography of National Socialism and the extermination of the Jews” (Berg 2003, 576). Berg articulates this criticism with special references to the example of a (legal) dispute in the 1960s between the Institute for Contemporary History and Jewish historian Joseph Wulf over the evaluation the role of Wilhelm Hagen, who was responsible for health administration in the Warsaw Ghetto (cf. *ibid.*, 594 ff.).

Another new field, which is especially important for teaching about National Socialism and the Holocaust, is that of public history. Public history is concerned with the exploration of any form of historical representation that addresses a broad, inexpert public (cf. Zündorf 2016). Accordingly, the public history of National Socialism and the Holocaust addresses the issues of its media and museum representation and reappraisal. There are overlaps with cultural studies, history didactics and memorial-pedagogical approaches. In Germany as well as in other European countries, questions about the conveyance of history in historical places, such as former concentration camps, are particularly important here. Since 2009, Freie Universität Berlin has been offering a master's program in public history.⁵⁴ In recent years, junior professorships for public history have been filled in Heidelberg and Cologne, and at both universities history studies focus on public history.⁵⁵ Furthermore, similar chairs can be found at Justus Liebig University Giessen (chair of Specialized Journalism History, Prof. Dr. Ulrike Weckel) and at Friedrich Schiller University in Jena (chair of History in the Media and Public, Prof. Dr. Volkhard Knigge).⁵⁶ The development can be currently be observed that chairs of history didactics on the subject of public history are expanding, as the example of the University of Tübingen shows, where an Institute for History Didactics and Public History was founded in summer semester 2017 under Prof. Bernd-Stefan Grewe.⁵⁷

History didactics is a special area of Holocaust historical study. As the science of historical consciousness in society, it is a discipline of its own, but it is additionally dedicated to history teaching in schools and teacher education. Historical didactics investigates historical learning theoretically, empirically, and pragmatically (cf. i.a. Bergmann 2000; Barricelli/Gap 2012; Pandel 2013). The question of how the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust should be conveyed in school and extracurricular education, if and how lessons can be learned from the past, and how this teaching practice—also in society—is changing are central topics in history didactics (cf. i.a. Rathenow et al. 2013; Gautschi et al. 2013; Brumlik 2004). In Germany, important topics of the historical-didactic examination of the Holocaust include discussions about the historical consciousness and the challenges of how to support its development as well as the meaning of empathy and the “awareness of others” in this context (cf. i.a. Borries 2006). Thus international concepts such as human rights education and Holocaust education are also critically discussed (cf. Plessow 2013). Major areas of research are the education after Auschwitz in an immigration society (cf. Fava 2015), the importance of extra-curricular places of learning such as memorial sites (cf. Gryglewski et al. 2015), as well as the importance of various source categories such as historical documents, photographs, and survivor testimonies (cf. Brüning 2013).

54 Cf. www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/phm, May 30, 2018.

55 Cf. www.uni-heidelberg.de/fakultaeten/philosophie/zegk/histsem/forschung/publichistory.html and histinst.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/index.php?id=1072, May 30, 2018.

56 Cf. www.uni-giessen.de/fbz/fbo4/institute/geschichte/fachjournalistik and www.gmoe.uni-jena.de, May 30, 2018.

57 Cf. www.uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/philosophische-fakultaet/fachbereiche/geschichtswissenschaft/seminareinstitute/geschichtsdidaktik-und-public-history/startseite.html, May 30, 2018.

4.3.2 Literary Studies

The literary examination of the Holocaust is an important field of literary research in Germany. An understanding of the genre “Holocaust literature” as defined by the Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature in Giessen⁵⁸ can serve as an orientation for the main areas of research. All literary works that treat the Holocaust as a central topic are included in this genre. This includes contemporary accounts such as diaries or chronicles, as well as post-Holocaust memoirs, but also fictional works such as novels, poetry, and dramas that were written during or after the Holocaust. In addition to works by victims and survivors, there are also works by perpetrators, by those born in the second and third generation, and by those not personally affected (cf. Feuchert 2000, 22 f.).

Research into the literary reappraisal of National Socialism, the Second World War, and the Holocaust by authors of the war generation in West and East German postwar literature is another central literary research topic. In the 1970s and 1980s, the field of relevant German-language reappraisal literature was expanded to include so-called *Väterliteratur* (“fathers’ literature”), in which authors of the “second generation” deal with their relationships with their fathers and their fathers’ Nazi past (cf. Vogt 1998). Since the 1990s, this has been followed up with a so-called *Enkelliteratur* (“grandchildren’s literature”), in which the authors literarily process their family histories from the perspective of grandchildren of the war generation (cf. i.a. Forkel 2015).

The central difference between literary studies of the Holocaust and historical studies is their relationship to historical facts. While historians ask about the “what,” the literary-academic interest focuses more on how these facts are—possibly even incorrectly—remembered and linguistically staged, and what the consequences these stagings are (cf. Feuchert Interview 2016, 8).

Courses on topics that are part of this field are offered in the study of general and comparative literature, modern German literature, and particularly in German didactics. Since, in school education, the topic of the Holocaust often appears in German lessons as well as in history lessons, the subject is of interest in German didactics. The topic is also researched and taught in various so-called foreign language philologies such as American studies, Romance language studies, and Slavic studies. The empirical study of the courses determined that courses about the Holocaust were offered in literary study fields in 80 of the total 468 courses (cf. Chapter 3.2.2, Figure 4). An additional 20 events in foreign language philologies can be counted. There are overlaps with cultural studies, especially with the latter subject.

The above-mentioned Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature at Justus Liebig University Giessen is the central institution in Germany in research and in the field of teaching. Its director, Sascha Feuchert, holds a professorship for modern German literature with a focus on Holocaust and camp literature and its didactics. Referring to the role of literature on the Holocaust in schools and teacher education, he explains that German language studies have formed a canon of literature about the Holocaust. He cites Ruth Klüger’s autobiography *weiter leben* (“Continue Living”) as an example (cf. Klüger 1992) and Jurek Becker’s fictionalization of Lodz Ghetto, *Jakob the Liar* (cf. Becker 1969). Feuchert describes the general significance of Holocaust literature in German didactics as rather marginal (cf. Feuchert Interview 2016, 12). Besides Sascha Feuchert, Prof. Dr. Anja Ballis, who holds the chair of German Didactics at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, is an important representative of academic teaching and research on Holocaust literature and its didactics (cf. Ballis 2012).⁵⁹

Another literary field in which the Holocaust is the subject of research and teaching is that of German-Jewish literature. The Axel Springer Endowed Chair for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History, Exile and Migration⁶⁰ at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), instituted and chaired since 2012 by Prof. Dr. Kerstin Schoor, and Prof. Dr. Stephan Braese’s chair for modern German literature at RWTH Aachen University with the teaching and research field European-Jewish Literature and Cultural History,⁶¹ are noteworthy examples.

58 Cf. www.holocaustliteratur.de/deutsch/Holocaustliteratur, May 30, 2018.

59 Cf. www.germanistik.uni-muenchen.de/personal/didaktik/anselm/ballis_anja/index.html, May 30, 2018.

60 Cf. www.kuwi.europa-uni.de/de/lehrstuhl/lw/diaspora/index.html, May 30, 2018.

61 Cf. www.germilit.rwth-aachen.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33&Itemid=127, May 30, 2018.

4.3.3 Cultural Studies

The consideration of societal cultural phenomena is now relevant in almost all humanities and social science disciplines. Cultural studies approaches and methods are used in various disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, art and musicology, literature studies, media and communication studies, and film and theater studies. In Germany, a distinction is made between the concept of “cultural studies,” which is often used by the studies themselves as a comprehensive designation for humanities departments, and cultural studies as an independent academic discipline (cf. Vowinckel 2007, 393). The latter has, in line with the cultural studies approach which emerged in the United Kingdom in the 1950s and American humanities, all areas of culture as the topic of investigation.

Cultural issues are also becoming increasingly important in Holocaust research in Germany. The empirical evaluation of the academic calendars shows that this trend is also reflected in teaching. Almost half of the lectures on the Holocaust had questions of reappraisal, impact, and representation. A large part of these courses focused on topics of media and literary reappraisal (cf. Chapter 3.2.1, Figure 1). Of 468 courses, 45 were offered in cultural studies programs (cf. Chapter 3.2.2, Figure 4).

In addition to cultural-historical research on society during the period of National Socialism and the Holocaust, cultural Holocaust research and teaching focuses on aspects of representation. Even during the Holocaust, people wondered how it could be witnessed and presented—archivally, literarily, and artistically. The question of the forms and limits of the representability of these events has been a current one ever since. The discussion of Adorno’s 1951 dictum, “writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric” (Adorno 1989, 30), is paradigmatic for this aesthetic discourse. This poetry-related statement is repeated in discussions about works of art, films, museum representations, the internet, and graphic novels (cf. Rohr Interview 2016, 11 f.). From 2015 to 2017, the graduate school “Visualizations: Representations of the Shoah in a Comparative Perspective” in Hamburg had its own doctoral study course in cultural studies, which focused on questions of the representation of the Holocaust (cf. Chapter 4.2.8).

Since the 1990s, the discussion about cultural studies in Germany has been strongly influenced by the memory research and theories of Jan and Aleida Assmann. Aleida Assmann’s research on cultural memory and the history of memory after National Socialism are particularly significant. Aleida Assmann is professor emerita at the University of Konstanz.⁶² Other important impulses came from sociologist and social psychologist Harald Welzer, whose research and teaching focus is on issues of memory, among other things.⁶³

The research on the culture of remembrance about National Socialism and the Holocaust in Germany cannot be assigned to a discipline, but is rather standing paradigmatically for the increasing importance of questions of cultural studies and methods in all humanities and social science fields.

The same applies to the examination of the written and especially the audiovisual testimonies of survivors. It takes place in different disciplines with different questions, such as those relating to history, literature, psychology, film, didactics and educational sciences. The use of the USC Shoah Foundation’s oral history interviews, which have been available since 2006 at Freie Universität Berlin, is a good example of this interdisciplinary use. The digital interview collections, centrally located at the Center for Digital Systems, have been used in 20 different subjects spanning 147 courses over the past eleven years.⁶⁴

62 Cf. <https://cms.uni-konstanz.de/litwiss/fachgruppen/anglistikamerikanistik/personal-ifaculty-and-staffi/detail-seite-angam/assmann-im-ruhestand-prof-dr-dr-hc-aleida-268/10688/8033/>, May 30, 2018.

63 Cf. www.kwi-nrw.de/home/profil-hwelzer.html, May 30, 2018.

64 Cf. www.vha.fu-berlin.de/fu/lehrveranstaltungen/index.html, May 30, 2018.

4.3.4 Political Science

Being revived as part of the postwar American reeducation program after the Second World War, political science in West Germany had a strong self-conception as an element of academic practice in a democracy. The self-evident nature of this was particularly expressed in its content-related profile, in which an examination of the Nazi past and the failure of the Weimar Republic was essential. For a long time, political science in Germany differed accordingly from American political sciences in its ideological and theoretical orientation. This difference has now largely disappeared: Political science in Germany is oriented towards empirical social sciences and geared to practical policy advice (cf. Bleek 2001).

Susanne Heim, who is habilitated at the Otto Suhr Institute (OSI) at Freie Universität Berlin, describes the impact of the changed study of political science from her perspective as a Holocaust researcher: "Although I have always worked on historical topics in my professional life, I liked having this political science background. But the political science I studied is not the one taught today at OSI" (Heim Interview 2016, 14). She describes that despite student demand, Holocaust-related courses are being rejected because they do not fit into the categories envisaged for the curriculum (cf. *ibid.*).

National Socialism and the Holocaust are no longer an integral part of political science studies, but have become rather marginal topics instead. The empirical study of the courses showed that a total of 26 of the surveyed courses on the Holocaust were political and social science courses. 38 courses on National Socialism were additionally surveyed (cf. Chapter 3.2.2). Most of these political science courses on the Holocaust had judicial reappraisal and post-war politics as topics. Other topics included the politics of Nazi extermination and violence, resistance to National Socialism, and the connection between historical and current anti-Semitism. There were also few courses in the field of political continuing and adult education.

This finding is problematic, especially in the area of political didactics, which deals with the teaching and learning processes for schools and extracurricular political education. In German schools, political education is a subject. The designation and exact content of the subject differs due to educational federalism in the various German states and types of schools (cf. Massing 2007, 63). In many German federal states, politics in elementary and lower secondary education is taught in a subject group along with history, economics, or even geography. So it is quite possible that teachers who teach history in the lower grades did not study history, but rather politics. Especially in these cases, the lack of thematization of National Socialism and the Holocaust in the study of political didactics is a problem for later political or social studies teachers, even if the teaching of the history of National Socialism and Holocaust at school is done in the subject of history. Interdisciplinary study opportunities for teachers in training in the subjects of history and political science would be important here.

4.3.5 Theology

As the empirical study of courses showed, there were 24 Holocaust-themed courses in the field of theology during the study period (cf. Chapter 3.2.2). These courses on the Holocaust, as well as on National Socialism, took place in both Catholic and Protestant theology and in religious studies subjects.

A central question on the topic of the Holocaust in the field of theology and religious studies is the position of the church under National Socialism. Above all, the debate on the attitude of the Vatican (or Pope Pius XII) on the Holocaust, which has been ongoing since the premiere of Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy* in 1962 (cf. Hochhuth 1963), is of particular relevance (cf. i.a. Rigano 2014; Kühlwein 2013; Feldkamp 2000).

Another focus is the lack of unified Christian resistance to National Socialism and the corresponding importance of individual church representatives and Christian groups in the resistance. Thus Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a theologian and co-conspirator in the July 20, 1944 assassination attempt who was executed by the Nazis in 1944, became the symbol of this minor Christian resistance to National Socialism (cf. i.a. Tietz 2013). Accordingly, the prominence of Bonhoeffer is reflected in the lectures: During the study period, eight courses could be counted which are largely concerned with his life and work. Furthermore, theological-ethical questions on the topic of "God after Auschwitz" are of relevance to the (Jewish as well as Christian) examination of the mass murder of the Jews. These topics, which are often connected with questions about Jewish-Christian relations and dialog after 1945, are also a central subject of religious didactics (cf. i.a. Petersen 1989; Boschki 2001).

4.3.6 Jewish Studies

The centers of Jewish Studies in Germany with two or more professorships are located at universities in Berlin (Freie Universität), Dusseldorf, Frankfurt am Main, Halle-Wittenberg, Cologne, Munich, and Potsdam.⁶⁵ The Hochschule für Jüdische Studien (“Center for Jewish Studies”) in Heidelberg was opened in 1978 on the initiative of the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (“Central Council of Jews in Germany”).⁶⁶ In 1999, Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam founded the first rabbinical seminary in Central Europe after the Shoah, in which rabbis and cantors are trained for liberal Jewish communities.⁶⁷ In 2013, the Zacharias Frankel College followed as a training center for conservative Judaism.⁶⁸ There are also affiliated institutes and research centers: the Salomon Ludwig Steinheim Institute at the University of Duisburg-Essen,⁶⁹ the Leibniz Institute for Jewish History and Culture – Simon Dubnow at the University of Leipzig,⁷⁰ and the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies in Potsdam.⁷¹ The research and teaching focus of all these institutions is on Jewish history, religion, and culture in the various eras, as well as on the Hebrew, Yiddish and Aramaic languages. While the Holocaust is inevitably an important reference point, it is rarely a central focus of research and teaching.

Nicolas Berg describes the state of affairs of Jewish studies on Holocaust research, using the example of the Simon Dubnow Institute under its former director Dan Diner, as follows:

Dan Diner had a clear idea for the institute in that he did not want to institutionalize what is, in the narrower sense, Holocaust research—mostly perpetrator research and historical events research into the planning and course of the killings and deportations—because this is not primarily Jewish history, but belongs rather to the topic of contemporary history. That was his conviction, and certainly not a decision made for reasons of suppression. He therefore asked that we [his colleagues] keep the Holocaust in mind, but that we prioritize our own research into its prehistory and, above all, its postwar history. Not from avoidance or circumvention, but to get concepts with which to understand this event and make it narratable. (Berg Interview 2016, 6)

This statement is reflected in the results of the empirical study of the courses: There were 24 Jewish studies courses that essentially dealt with the Holocaust (see Chapter 3.2.2). The contents of these courses focused in particular on Jewish life in Germany after the Holocaust and on the work with testimonials of Jewish survivors. Elie Wiesel’s work was also subject of several courses.

There is only one degree program in Jewish Studies in Germany that explicitly includes a thematization of the Holocaust. This is the aforementioned M.A. degree program “Judaism in Historical Context” at Freie Universität Berlin, which is offered there in cooperation with Touro College Berlin.⁷²

The seven-volume *Encyclopedia of Jewish History and Culture* (Diner 2011–2015), edited by Dan Diner, may be paradigmatic for the relationship of Jewish studies to Holocaust research. It provides a description of Jewish history, but also of contemporary Jewish culture and life in Germany, for which the Holocaust is an indispensable point of reference. However, the *Encyclopedia’s* central research subject is not the Holocaust, but its significance for Jewish culture, for example in the numerous literary contributions to Jewish memorial sites (cf. Berg Interview 2016, 6).

The Selma Stern Center for Jewish Studies Berlin-Brandenburg,⁷³ in whose directorate Stefanie Schüler-Springorum represents Technische Universität Berlin, places a clear focus on the cultural and religious history of Judaism. The five central areas of the center’s work are devoted to the study of Jewish intellectual history in the 19th and 20th centuries in Berlin and Brandenburg, the religious studies of the relations of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the study of Sephardic Judaism, the question of the transnational dimension of the Jewish diaspora, and memorialization after the Shoah.⁷⁴

65 For an overview cf. Verband der Judaisten in Deutschland: www.judaistik.eu/judaistik-in-deutschland, May 30, 2018.

66 Cf. www.hfjs.eu, May 30, 2018.

67 Cf. www.abraham-geiger-kolleg.de, May 30, 2018.

68 Cf. zacharias-frankel-college.de, May 30, 2018.

69 Cf. www.steinheim-institut.de, May 30, 2018.

70 Cf. www.dubnow.de, May 30, 2018.

71 Cf. www.mmz-potsdam.de, May 30, 2018.

72 Cf. www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/judaistik/Studium/Masterstudienstudgang-Judaism-in-Historical-Context_/index.html, May 30, 2018.

73 Cf. www.zentrum-juedisches-studien.de, May 30, 2018.

74 Cf. <http://www.zentrum-juedisches-studien.de/juedische-studien/>, May 30, 2018.

The profile of the Zentrum für Jüdische Studien states that the history of the Holocaust is not explicitly a priority. The dissertation and post-doctoral projects of Holocaust research at the center are accordingly dedicated to topics of aftermath history and the history of its impact (cf. Schüler-Springorum Interview 2016: 3).

4.4 Institutional Aspects of Teaching about the Holocaust

How and to what extent German universities are teaching about the Holocaust is dependent upon the particularities of the German higher education system and the teaching and working conditions at the universities, among other things. The following chapter describes such institutional aspects and particularities based on the statements of the experts interviewed. In addition to an assessment of study opportunities and career perspectives, as well as changes due to the Bologna Process and individual aspects of financial support, the chapter especially focuses on the discussion on the specialization of Holocaust teaching in the form of specific Holocaust chairs and study programs. In addition, the requirements and challenges of teaching about the Holocaust and National Socialism in teacher education are dealt with separately.

4.4.1 Assessment of Study Opportunities and Career Prospects in the Field of Holocaust Research

In assessing the educational and qualification opportunities for Holocaust researchers in Germany, the following will differentiate between (a) opportunities for studying the topic; (b) requirements for doctoral candidates with Holocaust research topics and (c) career perspectives for academics specializing in the topic of the Holocaust.

a) Opportunities in Germany to Study the Holocaust

When evaluating the opportunities for dealing with the Holocaust in the context of the study, the conclusions of the experts interviewed are divided.

Many of the interviewees—such as Nicolas Berg and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum—emphasize that, compared with the situation in the past, a basic education in the field of teaching about the Holocaust is assured, and evaluate the conditions for study on the topic comparatively positively:

I have, of course, a peer group, from whom I know that they offer these things in research and teaching. That's why I believe and know the circle of people is not small. I believe that today, you can learn the most important things on this topic anywhere, anytime, and anywhere. And that is, of course, a provision of basic knowledge. You don't have to travel far, you don't have to expend a lot of effort to get the latest expertise, journalistic anyway, but academic too. (Berg Interview 2016, 26)

Interview 2016, 26)

I think as far as studying is concerned, the opportunities are not so bad. So I would think that at historical seminars in general, at least something is offered on National Socialism. It must be thus in the meantime, but it wasn't the case in the past. If it's always especially about the Holocaust? Probably rather not. But if you really want that, you can very well study it in Frankfurt, in Munich, in Berlin, and also in Hamburg and in Vienna. (Schüler-Springorum Interview 2016, 9)

Others rate the opportunities to study the Holocaust as definitely in need of improvement. Peter Klein, for example, points out that teaching about the Holocaust is strongly linked to certain persons:

In the Federal Republic of Germany? Rather bad! If you wanted to do that in Berlin, you would go to Michael Wildt or the Research Center on Anti-Semitism. With Michael Wildt, you can probably get up to a master's on this topic and if it's reasonably approached, even submit a doctorate. But then it's bound very much to the person and is not structurally applicable to the universities. And it's not much different at the Research Center on Anti-Semitism. It's actually bound to Stefanie Schüler-Springorum then, because she's the one there and because she knows it's an interesting topic. (Klein Interview 2016, 10)

Sascha Feuchert also describes how specializing in Holocaust and camp literature in literature studies is not easy and requires dedication on the part of students:

It's not easy to do that in Germany. To acquire crucial knowledge in the field of Holocaust and camp literature and to obtain a doctorate in Germany requires luck. For example, if you are at a university where somebody is somehow interested in the topic. My impression is that, in the sense of how we are doing that here in Giessen, it's a rather marginal topic in the higher education landscape. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 16)

With reference to the 2015 survey of courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism in Germany prepared by the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (see Chapter 1: Introduction), Frank Bajohr discusses how an existing offer at relatively many higher education institutions comes along with a lack of institutionalization of the topic. Thus, according to his perception, a large number of the courses are offered by mid-level non-professorial academic staff or additional freelance assistant lecturers who do not occupy permanent positions, and not by established chair holders (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 15).

In summary, the interviewees clearly distinguish between the fundamentally improved opportunities in Germany for learning something about the Holocaust as part of students' studies, and the opportunities for Holocaust-specific studies, which are still very limited to certain cities and institutions.

b) Requirements for Doctoral Candidates with Topics of Holocaust Research

The requirements for doctoral candidates in the field of Holocaust research are also evaluated differently by the interviewees. Christina Brüning points out that there is a great deal of competition for doctoral positions and funding (cf. Brüning Interview 2016, 9). For example, this perception is supported by Sascha Feuchert's statement, where he emphasizes that he has to turn down supervision requests because he has reached the limits of his capacity (cf. Feuchert Interview 2016, 17). Stefanie Schüler-Springorum also stresses that she receives many supervision requests. She explains the reason for high number of requests having to do with the location in Berlin:

I am very, very overrun with requests concerning the supervision of doctoral theses, but honestly I think that has more to do with Berlin than with me and the topic. I think if I taught in Karlsruhe that wouldn't be the case. That's the "Berlin hype," I'm pretty sure. That wasn't the case even in Hamburg. (Schüler-Springorum Interview 2016, 13)

Susanne Heim and Martin Lücke, on the other hand, do not consider the opportunities for completing a doctorate on the topic of the Holocaust any worse than those on other topics. Both emphasize the need to be internationally oriented. Susanne Heim says:

It's important that people acquire language skills so that they can study the sources in their respective countries. [...] Otherwise, I'm not sure if it's that much harder for Holocaust researchers than for other researchers. Of course it's not that easy anyway, but I have the impression that at this time there are more centers to support such research. (Heim Interview 2016, 18)

Martin Lücke is even more positive in his assessment:

Very good. And very good indeed especially if you are ready to set up internationally. This is now a generally valid proposition in academia, but I believe that anyone who wants to perform prominent and successful research on the Holocaust should not only rely on the German research landscape, but also take timely note of approaches in the US and Israel as well as networking with institutions like Yad Vashem or museums in the US to get insight into the field. The Second World War, in terms of global history, is taught at universities around the world, making it a large and very attractive field of research internationally. (Lücke Interview 2016, 12)

The majority of the interviews have references about the importance of Yad Vashem's fellowship programs in Jerusalem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. (USHMM), and the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies⁷⁵ for the promotion of young researchers.

75 Cf. www.vwi.ac.at/index.php/forschung/fellows-aktuell, May 30, 2018.

In Germany, there is a comparable offer within the framework of the EHRI program (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) that offers short fellowships for archive research (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 15). In addition, the Center for Holocaust Studies in Munich offers such fellowships:

We have a joint fellowship program with the USHMM in Washington D.C. In each case, a fellowship is awarded for a researcher from Germany who can go to the USHMM for up to four months, and vice versa, a researcher from the US who can come to us for up to four months. Then we have our general fellowship program, where academics, regardless of status—they can be doctoral, they can be post-doctoral—can apply from around the world, including Germany. (Löw Interview 2016, 4)

Furthermore, the Fritz Bauer Institute offers an annual doctoral candidates seminar on questions about the history and impact of the Holocaust, for which doctoral candidates of various disciplines can apply.⁷⁶

There are few institutional offers in Germany (graduate schools or centers) with a focus on Holocaust research where doctoral candidates are offered financial as well as academic support and institutional relations. Since 2017, the Center for Holocaust Studies in Munich has been awarding doctoral scholarships that financially support doctoral theses on Holocaust research topics, but which also enable doctoral candidates to be included in a “close discussion context” (Bajohr Interview 2016, 3). From 2015 to 2017, doctoral candidates with topics in humanities and cultural studies on Holocaust research at the “Visualizations: Representations of the Shoah in a Comparative Perspective” graduate school at Universität Hamburg had the opportunity, which was atypical in Germany, to do a very structured doctorate with compulsory courses, attendance, and internships. Susanne Rohr describes these doctoral requirements in Hamburg as follows:

The doctoral candidates are required to reside in Hamburg, they sit in a room and have conversations. And then there are, of course, many classes that are compulsory. There is a weekly doctoral colloquium during each semester, where the progress of the work is presented and discussed. Then we also have study regulations. The doctoral candidates must attend certain obligatory seminars, and we supervisors have also made it obligatory to always offer sufficient seminars on the topic so that there's also a choice every semester. (Rohr Interview 2016, 4)

In conclusion, the interviewees emphasize that topics of Holocaust research are attractive doctoral topics. There is an accordingly high demand for financing as well as supervision offers. The international fellowship programs of Yad Vashem, the USHMM, and the Wiesenthal Institute are evaluated as particularly important for junior researchers in the doctoral phase. In Germany, it is only recently that programs offering doctoral candidates both funding and a specific discussion context for Holocaust research have been established.

c) Perspectives for Junior Researchers in the Doctoral Phase

As Norbert Frei points out in his interview, qualifications are of great importance for Holocaust research in Germany: “Most empirical progress today is made at universities through essays for academic qualification and through doctorates and habilitations” (Frei Interview 2016, 6). This assessment and the attractiveness of the topic for junior researchers in the doctoral phase as described above is connected to the question of career prospects in the field of Holocaust research in Germany.

A particularity of the German higher education system is its two-part personnel structure: Employed positions are mostly chair-bound and the career opportunities are linear and hierarchical. In contrast to most other countries, university professorships in Germany—especially in humanities subjects—are linked to habilitation. Furthermore, there is the peculiarity in Germany that the postdoctoral thesis, the “second book,” is required to be written on a significantly different topic than the doctoral dissertation. Due to the few chairs specializing in research on National Socialism and the Holocaust, many researchers who have written their dissertations on topics of Holocaust research inevitably end up habilitating with other topics. As Jürgen Matthäus puts it, university Holocaust specialization is usually only tolerated as a stopover on the path of professional qualification (cf. Matthäus 2012, 35). The lack of tenure track positions in Germany generally leads to career prospects for academics being precarious after graduation, since there are hardly any opportunities to stay at a university permanently (cf. GEW 2010).

⁷⁶ Cf. www.fritz-bauer-institut.de/doktoranden-seminar.html, May 30, 2018.

Several of the experts describe the impact of this situation on Holocaust research. Two aspects are emphasized here: on the one hand, vocational orientation abroad, and on the other hand, the need to be thematically broad, especially in the field of history, and to not specialize in Holocaust research.

This is how Stefanie Schüler-Springorum describes it: “Most of my doctoral applicants, or those whom I co-supervised, prefer to find positions abroad, for example in England, where German studies consists primarily of Holocaust or National Socialism studies. There are not so many chairs in Germany.” (Schüler-Springorum Interview 2016, 10). Norbert Frei describes the occupational orientation of German Holocaust researchers as an expression of international connectivity:

Even the sheer fact that a whole series of young German researchers who have worked on the topic of the Holocaust are working in England or the US today, for example that the head of research at the USHMM is German, that chairs in England are occupied by Germans, shows that Germans have indeed become very connected in this sense. (Frei Interview 2016, 3)

Susanne Heim comments on career prospects as follows:

I don't think it's advisable to specialize in the Holocaust if you want to stay at the university, because there are few opportunities. In teaching, you have to cover the 19th and 20th centuries at the very least. That's what our colleagues in Israel and the US always find so scandalous—that there are no specialized Holocaust chairs here [in Germany]. (Heim Interview 2016, 20)

Christina Brüning describes the situation from the perspective of a junior researcher in the doctoral phase who would like to specialize in Holocaust research and Holocaust education:

It's difficult, in perspective, to get a job position with it. And the other thing is, of course, that Didactics of History chairs, which will eventually come into question for me, have no specific administrative description. So it's rare to have a chair solely dedicated to Holocaust education, but if there's a chair of Didactics of History at the university, then they expect you to teach a lot of pragmatics, methodology and the empiricism of the didactics of history, and you aren't able to deal much with the Holocaust. (Brüning Interview 2016, 9)

In summary, it can be said that due to the particularities of the German higher education system at German universities in the field of Holocaust research, there are few opportunities for junior researchers after their dissertation is completed.

4.4.2 The Consequences of the Bologna Process

The study structure reform, called the “Bologna Process,” with its conversion of the study system to the two-level system of professional bachelor’s and master’s degrees, the modularization of study content, and the application of the European points and grading system ECTS (cf. European Commission: 2009) had serious consequences for university teaching. The study structure reform was accompanied by a very charged ideological discussion. It has often been regarded as an attack on the Humboldt-based tradition of the German university system and the cultural heritage of academic studies in Germany (cf. Winter 2015). The assumption that the consequences of the structural reform also affect university teaching about the Holocaust was taken up in the expert interviews. Almost all of the interviewees assessed the consequences of the Bologna Process critically. Mostly this criticism was made very explicitly, in a few cases implicitly as well.

a) The Two-Stage Bachelor and Master Studies

The changeover to the two-stage study system for qualifying Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees has major consequences for the course of study. After completing the undergraduate bachelor program with a standard six to eight semesters period of study, the students have, with a bachelor’s degree, their first career-qualifying university degree. With this they either have the opportunity to start their career earlier or to take up a master program. The master programs are either research or application oriented and last between two and four semesters.

In the interviews, two aspects of this change were particularly criticized. On the one hand, there is an interruption inherent in the two-stage course of study. Many master programs have admission restrictions, so that not every bachelor graduate always finds a master degree course. Either the place of study must be changed or waiting times have to be bridged. Cornelia Siebeck views this interruption very critically and additionally doubts the usefulness of too narrowly defined specializations in the master phase (cf. Siebeck Interview 2016, 10).

The specialization of the master program is addressed in several interviews. In the opinion of several interviewees, the master degree programs, newly created in the course of the Bologna Process, lead to an over-specialization of academic education. Frank Bajohr, for example, formulated it thus:

There are certainly useful specialized master programs, but I believe that the tendency is for the baby to be thrown out with the bath water, and we run the risk of getting into an overspecialization that then sets people up completely unilaterally. The important thing in studying is not—if you study historical science—to convey historical knowledge in the broader sense, but that historians be qualified at the end of their studies, above all. Namely, to be able to work on very complex topics within a relatively short time. And that would be lost if there is a one-sided specialization at a too early stage. (Bajohr Interview 2016, 14)

Norbert Frei describes how the study reform led to study programs that are in low demand due to their overspecialization:

There have been exaggerated diversifications after this reform, so now some of these masters that have not been in demand will have to be withdrawn in the next few years. Because offers have been made there that are, in part—not only in historical science, perhaps there least of all—clearly overspecialized. (Frei Interview 2016, 9)

Frank Bajohr discusses the repositioning efforts of smaller universities

... to create specialized master courses, whose staff are unable to offer a subject in its full breadth, but then compensate by specializing. Through this specialization, they throw themselves into an ever increasing field of universities that compete with each other and also have to vie for students. (Bajohr Interview 2016, 13)

The topic of master programs’ specialization has a concrete effect on teaching about the Holocaust. The purpose of setting up “Holocaust Studies” as specialized study program will therefore be discussed later in more detail. In this context, the importance of specialized master programs in the course of the Bologna Process such as “Contemporary History” or “Public History” is also thematized in the context of teaching about the Holocaust.

Interestingly, the three didactics experts among the interviewees especially pointed out positive changes in the two-stage study system. Christina Brüning emphasizes the positive aspects of a Master of Education. She points to the high drop-out rates in state examination teacher training and explains that many of the students started teaching after school without knowing if they really wanted to become teachers—and then had no other option but to complete the state exam.

Now, with the bachelor's degree option, there's actually the opportunity to say, "I'll do that for six semesters now, then I'll have a regular bachelor's degree and the opportunity to take a master's degree in modern history, a masters degree in political science [...] or if I realize now what my vocation is, I want to become a teacher, then I'll take a Master of Education." (Brüning Interview 2016, 21)

Martin Lücke also welcomes the fact that students study in groups, get to know each other, stay in touch and often work together in groups (cf. Lücke Interview 2016, 22). Sascha Feuchert, who trains future German teachers, emphasizes that the changed study conditions are accompanied by a reduction of complexity, but that the change can also be described in positive terms: "There are other forms of talents and interests that are in the foreground today" (Interview Feuchert 2016, 19).

b) Modularization of Teaching

Modularization is generally referred to as the second major change of study in the course of the Bologna Process. While studying prior to the Bologna Process consisted mainly—within the framework of the requirements of the degree programs—of relatively freely selectable individual lectures, seminars, and exercises, it is now divided into timed and thematically cohesive teaching and learning units or so-called modules. A module consists of several courses and must be completed with an examination. These course-related examinations replace the former final exam at the end of study. Practically, the modularization led to a formalization of study with a higher burden of examinations on the students (cf. Winter 2015).

For the present study, modularization is relevant in two ways. Firstly, we were only able to survey the courses that contained at least one of the specified search terms in the title. In some cases, only the much more general module titles were listed in the online module directories. Secondly, we have assumed that the modularization of study implies a formalization of teaching that has, for example, implications for teaching staffs' choices of subject matter. This hypothesis is only partially confirmed by the statements in the interviews. Many of the interviewees are chair holders who report that they are very free to choose their teaching topics. Only Susanne Heim, who teaches as an associate professor at the Otto Suhr Institute of Political Science at Freie Universität Berlin, reports that topics about the Holocaust that she proposed were not accepted:

I often have the problem that if I offer a course about the Holocaust, it doesn't fit into the Institute's grid. The sub-discipline "Historical Foundations of Politics" has been phased out. But I can't fit my seminar into governance categories. Thus these topics do not fit into the categories by which study is accordingly organized there. (Heim Interview 2016, 12)

Christina Brüning was an academic assistant at Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg at the time of the interview and has the highest teaching load of the interviewees. She describes her attempts to divide up the ten courses per semester (18 semester hours, plus internship supervision) that she has to lead. In addition to basic compulsory courses such as "Introduction to Historical-Political Learning" or "Introduction to Early Historical Learning in Primary School," she repeatedly offers some courses, but also develops two to three new courses each semester (cf. Brüning Interview 2016, 15).

Here it becomes clear that it is especially mid-level university faculty who, on the one hand, cover a large part of the teaching, and on other hand, are less free to choose teaching content. However, further restriction of freedom of choice in teaching through the modularization of studies was not addressed in the interviews.

It was rather criticized in some interviews that the changes via the framework of the Bologna Process have not generally led to the desired goals. For example, Susanne Rohr criticizes that modularization stands in the way of the goal of internationalization::

Especially for us, specialists in American and English studies, it's important that our students go abroad. That was previously a matter of course. This is almost impossible now because the module structure and credit point structure are no longer internationally compatible. A better mobility between the various countries and universities, none of it has happened, the opposite is the case. And apart from that, from the bottom to the top levels, modules make it more difficult to teach. They are completely artificial constructs. (Rohr Interview 2016, 27)

c) Change in Average Age

Another change noted in several interviews is that students are younger now than previously. In addition to the smaller number of long-term students due to the study structure reform, this is also certainly related to the discontinuation of compulsory military service as of 2011 and the 2000s reduction of the length of time of schooling from 13 to 12 years in almost all federal states. The lower average age of the students combined with a more school-like character of the studies connects to an overall perception of reduced curriculum complexity and more conformist students.

Nicolas Berg describes his observations as follows:

They are quite young, I realize that too. But they are also a bit more school-like in their expectations. I had the feeling that if I had not methodically circumvented it, my seminar would have become more like attending school. The people were—with a few exceptions—very good overall, passive and rather receptive. (Berg Interview 2016, 13)

d) Regimentation, Efficiency, Pragmatism

A central consequence of the study structure reform is a more school-based approach to study. This topic has been taken up in numerous interviews. It has been reported how the school-based approach to study leads to students having to attend more compulsory courses and how they have less capacity for attending courses on topics they chose out of interest. Many of the interviewees observe increasing pragmatism amongst students in this regard.

“Something that is very unusual after Bologna is that students volunteer to attend seminars,” says Sascha Feuchert (Feuchert Interview 2016, 19). Christina Brüning explains:

With the system becoming more and more school-based, I have the feeling that students are more and more following the compulsory courses and that they feel that society, the university, and maybe their parents too are putting more pressure on them than we had earlier. This subjective perception then leads them to look for where they can get these ECTS points together and then study those things. So anything that is not a compulsory module is harder to get through with the students. This is, however not a problem specific to education about the Holocaust. (Brüning, Interview 2016, 21)

Susanne Heim was also able to observe a changed economy of time among the students:

I have the impression that students pay close attention to the fact that can they get through the studies quickly, and pragmatically choose their seminars and homework topics. That doesn't mean that they treat everything superficially, but you can tell that they spend a certain amount of time doing it and they don't have more time in their schedule. (Heim Interview 2016, 24)

Martin Lücke describes the change as follows:

It has essentially changed in that students actually treat their study as a workload concept and also outwardly describe and convey it thus. That is, they say very clearly if what they are doing is too much or if it's not too much, and they have greater expectations from us lecturers regarding our timely evaluation of their performance. Unfortunately, they're always satisfied when their performance is registered with the campus management, and are then very rarely interested in the content of assignments if you don't make the discussions obligatory. Thematically, it has actually changed that the bachelor, at least in terms of methods, has become more school-based. (Lücke Interview 2016, 22)

For Cornelia Siebeck, it's not only "the pace of the tasks they have to accomplish, almost all of which are also included in the final grades" which is responsible for the increased pressure that the students are under, but also the fact "that many more students have to work in addition to their studies to ensure their means of subsistence" (Siebeck Interview 2016, 10).

These aspects are not limited to teaching about the Holocaust. Nevertheless, it is certainly to be noted that the topic of the Holocaust and its impact, at least in non-historical subjects, is only occasionally taught in the compulsory modules that pragmatic students seem to limit themselves to. The reduction of free electives and the increase in economic and time pressure can therefore have an effect on how courses on the Holocaust are perceived.

4.4.3 Third-Party Funding and University Support

For decades, third-party funding has become increasingly important for funding universities in Germany. Third-party funding refers to all funds which universities, in addition to their basic resources, have to attract from public or private donors to promote research and teaching. The third-party funds are awarded by state institutions such as the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), individual German states, and the European Union, but also by business enterprises, private foundations, and individuals. According to the German Federal Statistical Office, third-party income made up 16.5 percent of total university expenditures in 2013 and therefore represented an important financial factor (cf. German Federal Statistical Office 2016, 42). Due to the constant shortage of basic university resources, there is not only increased pressure to raise funds from third parties, but also increased competition for funding (cf. Wissenschaftsrat 2013, 55 ff.).

Based on the assumption that research and teaching on the Holocaust is also subject to these conditions, we asked the experts about their experiences with the acquisition of third-party funds and an evaluation of the funding practice. This resulted in three central topics: the funding of research and teaching on the Holocaust in Germany through (a) public funds, (b) private donations, and (c) the funding conditions for junior researchers in the doctoral and postdoctoral phase.

a) Public Funding

Institutions for Holocaust research and teaching, as well as individual research projects on the topic, receive third-party funding from the ministries responsible for education at state and federal level (the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, BMBF), the German Research Foundation (DFG), or the European Union. There are numerous various financing concepts. In the following, some financing examples relevant to teaching and research on the Holocaust are presented.

The Center for Holocaust Studies in Munich is funded by German federal and state government resources. This form of financing was preceded by a political debate, as a result of which the funds for the center were first applied for at the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) by the Institute for Contemporary History. After a three-and-a-half-year BMBF-funded preliminary phase, a joint funding application for the Center for 2017 from state and federal funds was made at the Joint Science Conference of the Federal Government and the Länder (GWK), which has meanwhile been approved. According to Frank Bajohr, half the costs will, analogous to the Leibniz Institutes, be borne by the German federal government, 35 percent by the state of Bavaria, and 15 percent by the other German federal states (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 2). The founding of the center is therefore the result of a political decision-making process, which is reflected by public funding from the federal and state governments.

In a number of cases, the goal of third-party funding is the creation of structures. Sascha Feuchert describes the significance of third-party financing for the construction of the Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature in Giessen thus:

We've just been given a special budget by the Hessen State Ministry for Higher Education, Research and the Arts for the next five years. That's about one million euros. Above all, employee positions have been created. In return, the university intends to set up a full professorship here with a focus on Holocaust literature, because that doesn't exist here at the moment. I'm just an honorary professor, but here in Giessen I'm employed as an academic advisor with that focus, and that will now become a full professorship.⁷⁷ So that's a significant developmental step that has now taken place. This is very important, as we are an institution that is partially financed in the long-term by third-party sources: more than one-third of the basic salary is paid by a foundation, namely the Ernst Ludwig Chambré Foundation in Lich. So this is actually a classic public-private partnership that has been realized here. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 2)

Another example is the “Visualizations: Representations of the Shoah in a Comparative Perspective” graduate school at Universität Hamburg. “The graduate school started on January 1st, 2015 and ends on December 31st, 2017,” reports Susanne Rohr. “We are currently funded by the Landesforschungsförderung (“State Funding for Research”) in Hamburg. We have an initial funding for three years.” (Rohr Interview 2016, 1). Due to a lack of follow-up financing, the graduate school cannot be continued in 2018. This example illustrates the importance and risks of third-party funding: infrastructure can be created with the aid of third-party funds, but their sustainability is bound to the continued funding by these third-parties.

Since 1968, the German Research Foundation (DFG) has funded so-called Special Areas of Research (SFB) from federal and state funds. The SFBs are research institutions in which academics work together across disciplines, and which can be funded by the DFG for up to twelve years. Thus far there had been no SFB that had the history or aftermath of National Socialism and the Holocaust as its topic. In 1997–2008, the SFB 434 “Remembrance Cultures” was supported at Justus Liebig University, where, among other topics, the culture of the remembrance of National Socialism also played a role—albeit a minor one.⁷⁸

Since 2005, the DFG has been funding the extensive academic publishing project “The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews by Nazi Germany, 1933–1945” as well as the translation of the individual volumes into English. The coordinator of the project, Susanne Heim, reports that it was a deliberate decision to apply to the DFG for funding for the project:

The idea was also that the Germans are obligated to bring out such a publication. It could be seen as scandalous that if you look at the fact that for decades there has been a huge documentation about displaced Germans, but not about the persecution of the Jews. In that sense, the idea that it should be financed with German funds was not based on the idea that Germans could do it better, but because it was overdue. (Heim Interview 2016, 8)

Overall, she regards the relationship to the DFG as constructive and the reactions of the reviewers as “positively encouraging” and “supportive” (ibid.). Because the project is very extensive, it is examined by the DFG’s main committee, which consists of reviewers from different disciplines, for whom the application must accordingly be formulated in a generally understandable way. In this context, Susanne Heim says “that there is a lot of competition, especially in the field of humanities, and that the reviewers have to decide: if they spend so much money for this publication, then they can’t sponsor other projects” (ibid., 9).

The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) project is another important publicly funded project, and is supported by the European Commission as part of the Horizon 2020 EU Research and Innovation Programme. The core of the project is to make data about archival material on the Holocaust from institutions in and outside of Europe accessible online in the EHRI portal. The first phase of the EHRI project ran from 2010 to 2015. The continuation project, which was requested by 23 research institutes from 17 European countries and Israel, has received a grant of almost 8 million euros and will run until 2019. In Germany, the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History, the German Federal Archives, and the International Tracing Service (ITS) are involved in the project. In the first phase of

77 Note: Sascha Feuchert started the professorship described in the interview on 01.06.2017, www.uni-giessen.de/fbz/zmi/das-zmi/angehoerige/mitarbeiter-zmi/feuchert-sascha, May 30, 2018.

78 Cf. www.uni-giessen.de/erinnerungskulturen/home/sfb-konzept.html, May 30, 2018.

the project, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen and the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe were the German partner institutions.⁷⁹ The EHRI is of great importance for international Holocaust research, as it centrally registers archival holdings throughout the world and makes it easier for researchers to access them. In addition, within the EHRI project, cooperative work and networking by numerous international participants and junior researchers in the doctoral phase will take place in the field (see Chapter 4.2.7).

In summary, it can be stated that the interviewees do not assess the chances of funding Holocaust research projects through state subsidies as being any different than other research topics. The historical-political relevance of the topic is perceived as conducive in this context.

b) Private Funding

Several of the aforementioned institutions for research and teaching on the Holocaust are funded by private donations. This form of research funding is not very common in the humanities in Germany. It is therefore particularly worth mentioning that the long-standing visiting professorships at the Fritz Bauer Institute in Frankfurt am Main as well as the Jena Center 20th Century History are financed by private donors.

Nicolas Berg describes the funding of the Frankfurt visiting professorship as a transition to a permanent chair as follows:

In fact, I've been teaching here this semester by means of a private endowment of Frankfurt residents, who felt that the fact that there is no Holocaust professorship in Germany was something that needed to be corrected. And they said that the Fritz Bauer Institute is the right place to start something like this for a five-year period. I'm talking about the support of Michael Hauck and Oliver Puhl, entrepreneurs who made it a matter of honor to make this possible for Frankfurt. If the professorship can be set up within this five-year period, their request will have been realized. (Berg Interview 2016, 2)

Norbert Frei summarizes the importance of private funding for his institution as follows:

The Jena Center 20th Century History is an institution at the Historical Institute, but is not a directly organizational part of the Institute. It's an institution that's been made possible above all by the fact that—for that time, 2005, still quite unusual in the humanities—a private donor was found who pledged to make the funds initially available for this center for five years. This year we're celebrating our 10th anniversary, and thankfully he's still with us. (Frei Interview 2016, 1)

Frei emphasizes that in contrast to funding from public sources, private funding provides great flexibility and doesn't require the need to write new applications for funding every two years. (cf. *ibid.*, 12).

The M.A. program "Holocaust Communication and Tolerance" is only partially financed by students' tuition fees. However, since this is not a typical private tuition but set rather at the relatively low rate of 720 euros per semester plus administrative fees (cf. Touro College, 2016), according to Peter Klein, the program operates at a loss—from the point of view of educational profitability. The American Touro College guaranteed funding because it wanted the program to be part of Touro College (cf. Klein Interview 2016, 1). In fact, it can be said that the founder of Touro College, Bernard Lander, ensures the financial existence of the only M.A. program on the topic of the Holocaust in Germany.

c) Funding Conditions for Junior Researchers in the Doctoral Phase

The funding of the doctoral phase in humanities and social sciences in Germany is fundamentally precarious. The classical academic career development, in which doctoral candidates are employed as academics during their qualification time at a university, is no longer a standard. Firstly, there are many more doctoral candidates than corresponding qualification positions, and secondly, the existing positions are limited in part to short periods of time and employed doctoral candidates have little time, in addition to their teaching duties and activities in their jobs and committees, to devote to their doctoral theses (cf. GEW, 2010). In addition to the academic staff employed at universities, there are therefore numerous junior researchers in the doctoral phase who do their doctorate independently and take care of the funding themselves. Since humanities and social science doctorates are rarely funded by business enterprises, many doctorates in this area are supported by scholarships from party-affiliated, trade union, or church foundations. It can be assumed that this is also the case for doctorates in the field of Holocaust research.

⁷⁹ Cf. www.ehri-project.eu/ehri-partners, May 30, 2018.

In this context, Norbert Frei questions the development that funding institutions' policies influence the content of the doctoral programs they sponsor:

I see this as especially critical in funding doctorates, for example through political party foundations, that with the specialized professionalization that has taken place on this academic administration level, these people are of the opinion that they also have to get involved with the contents of the doctorates they sponsor. This is an intrusion into the freedom of research and teaching. If a grant is bestowed, then the responsibility lies with the supervising university teachers and with the candidate. (Frei Interview 2016, 1)

Christina Brüning points out that due to the few funding opportunities—in relation to the relatively high demand, especially in the field of Holocaust—competition for funding is high:

It's indeed the case that there is simply a surplus of students pursuing the topic of the Holocaust, and it's very difficult to get funding for it. So I've seen that there's often a requirement among Jewish foundations that Holocaust topics not be explicitly promoted, and that where the topic is specifically the Shoah or the Holocaust, the number of applicants is very large. (Brüning Interview 2016, 9)

There are only a few interdisciplinary graduate schools in Germany. Junior researchers who are doing their doctorate in the field of Holocaust research can attend graduate schools in Jena and Hamburg or try to locate their project at the Selma Stern Center for Jewish Studies Berlin-Brandenburg. In order to improve this situation, the Center for Holocaust Studies in Munich plans to announce doctoral scholarships in the field of Holocaust research starting in 2017, for which interested people from other German federal states can also apply (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 3).

4.4.4 Specialization I: M.A. Study Program “Holocaust Studies”

Unlike the examples of the US and Israel, teaching about the Holocaust in Germany has a lesser degree of institutional incorporation (cf. Lower 2012, 51). Thus in Germany, with the exception of the M.A. program at Touro College in Berlin, there is no field of study in the area of Holocaust studies.

Just as the differentiation of M.A. study programs in line with the Bologna Process is cited by the interviewees as being generally problematic, so too is the demand for a specialized “Holocaust Studies” study program mostly viewed with skepticism and criticism. Historians especially see the thematic narrowing of Holocaust studies and the resulting risk of the topic becoming isolated in research and teaching as being problematic.

The following statement by Andrea Löw may be paradigmatic for the skepticism expressed by several others.

I'm rather skeptical about an isolated “Holocaust Studies” study program. I believe that this can only work with a sensible embedding. [...] We can't talk about the Holocaust without telling a general history of the Second World War, of the history of the occupation, and of National Socialism. (Löw Interview, 2016, 10)

The dominant position is that there is a need to embed teaching about the Holocaust into the overall history of National Socialism and the Second World War and, more generally, into 19th and 20th century German and European history. Concerning a specialized course of studies on the Holocaust, the fear was often expressed, also in regard to American Holocaust Studies, that such a narrowing of content would lead to students' over-specialization. Frank Bajohr formulates it thus:

For historians, I don't believe it's wrong to have a broader context of knowledge and approach, and then to specialize in the Holocaust within the framework of a doctoral degree, rather than being narrowly focused on it through a specialized master and actually have no idea of its historical context. (Bajohr Interview 2016, 13)

“There are colleagues,” criticizes Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, “who really work mainly with the periods 1933-1945 or 1941-1945. And I believe that something is lost if you don't have a broader context in mind. It's less about knowledge than about a sense of history” (Schüler-Springorum Interview 2016, 9).

The M.A. study course “Holocaust Communication and Tolerance” at Touro College is, despite this skepticism, widely appreciated. In several interviews it is noted that the necessary historical contextualization of the topic is performed there, and this is mostly attributed to the presence of Peter Klein. Concerning the meaning of Holocaust-specialized M.A. study programs, the question arises as to their orientation: Is their primary goal research-oriented, in order to prepare students for a doctorate and a further academic career, or is it to qualify its students for employment at memorial sites, museums and other places for the institutionalized culture of remembrance of the Holocaust?

The M.A. degree program at Touro College can be described as a hybrid. Peter Klein points out that the students attending the “Holocaust Communication and Tolerance” study program come with very specific interests, for which Touro College is currently the only starting point in Germany: “This differing specific interest is actually defined by the fact that these people want to deal with this and only this topic later on in their professional lives, whether as influencers, academics, educators, or as media representatives” (Klein Interview 2016, 11). Klein emphasizes that the M.A. study program at Touro College has a clear practical focus, as it simultaneously meets American expectations for a Jewish Studies and Holocaust Studies degree program as well as German requirements for universities of applied sciences (cf. *ibid.*, 2).

This combined objective is also reflected in other specialized historical M.A. programs, such as the “Public History” degree program at Freie Universität Berlin and the “Interdisciplinary Anti-Semitism Research” M.A. program at the Research Center on Anti-Semitism at Technische Universität Berlin. Stefanie Schüler-Springorum emphasizes that she has, with regard to the orientation, endeavored “to make the course of study as practical as possible. Although it's called a research-oriented study program, it's nevertheless designed in such a way that opportunities for a broad occupational field are opened up to graduates through internships at memorial sites, museums and NGOs. Especially in light of the problematic nature of this specialization” (Schüler-Springorum, Interview 2016, 4). And Martin Lücke also discusses the advantages for the career prospects of graduates through the specialized “Public History” master program. He describes how the combination of historical expertise and experience in the conveyance work of Public History graduates makes for a particularly high demand for them in the labor market. In the meantime, they are working in positions previously

occupied only by post-doctoral historians, for example as trainees at the German Historical Museum in Berlin (cf. Lücke Interview 2016, 20).

In addition, with regard to the need for M.A. programs specializing in the Holocaust, it's important to note the long-term demand for people working in the occupational field of the institutionalized culture of remembrance, such as museums, memorials, and foundations.

The M.A. program "Holocaust Communication and Tolerance" has engaged 39 persons altogether since its inception in 2006, 25 of whom have completed the M.A. Touro College has surveyed that 90 percent of its graduates have found employment in their profession or have opted for a postgraduate academic qualification (doctorate). The low number of students is explained by the concept of the program and the fact that it is a fee-based course of studies. Nevertheless, these findings can also be interpreted in such a way that there doesn't seem to be a great need for further programs of this kind in Germany—especially since the graduates, who have an interest in the Holocaust, share a profile and professional field with graduates of the "Public History" and "Contemporary History" degree programs.

For the majority of students in Germany, the questions to what extent and in what ways the topics of National Socialism and the Holocaust are integrated into the regular history studies are more relevant.

4.4.5 The Holocaust as an Aspect of Contemporary, Modern, and Recent History

Nearly all historians interviewed are of the opinion that the Holocaust should, for logical reasons, be taught as part of 19th and 20th century European history studies. Frank Bajohr, for example, argues—beyond a separate study program—for a thematic institutionalization of the subject at universities. Rather, the topic of the Holocaust should be thematically incorporated into existing master programs (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 13).

As part of the empirical evaluation of the courses in this study, general overview contemporary history courses were only surveyed if one of the specified search terms appeared in the course title or description, and if the description indicated that the focus of the course content was on the Holocaust or National Socialism (see Chapter 3.1.2). It can therefore be assumed that there have been other overview courses with more general titles, in which the Holocaust was at least one topic among others. This raises the question of the extent to which this takes place and the quality of the presentation of these overviews.

Accordingly, we asked the interviewed experts how they embed the topic of the Holocaust in their lectures. This is how Wolfgang Benz explains it:

I myself have always, in my teaching, devoted my main lecture to general contemporary history. But that could also mean that I offered a lecture on "Genocides in the 20th century," in which the Holocaust, of course, came to the forefront. I have taught many courses on National Socialism as overview courses—once as a three-part course over three semesters—in which the persecution of the Jews up to the Holocaust naturally occupied a lot of space. (Benz Interview 2016, 2)

Norbert Frei tells how teaching the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust at his chair of Modern and Contemporary History in Jena is an epochal focal point alongside those of the Weimar period, the two German states and the recent past. He emphasizes the importance of thematizing a European perspective as well as economic, social and cultural-historical aspects: "Contemporary legal history plays an important role for us, but media history as well. In fact, the topic of the Holocaust is one of many, but it also appears in courses that are not Holocaust seminars" (Frei Interview 2016, 8).

Susanne Heim finds it problematic that while there are outstanding teaching figures, such as Norbert Frei or Ulrich Herbert⁸⁰, who know how to embed the topic of the Holocaust in general contemporary history seminars, these are exceptions rather than the rule (cf. Heim Interview 2016, 21). It can't therefore be assumed that the topic in the average historical overview course will be treated in such a way that sufficient basic knowledge is conveyed. Andrea Löw summarizes the arising problem: "You can very well attend a teacher training course or master's program for modern history at a German

⁸⁰ Prof. Dr. Ulrich Herbert occupies the chair of Modern and Recent History at the University of Freiburg. Cf. <http://herbert.geschichte.uni-freiburg.de/herbert>, 01.06.2016.

university without having ever had a seminar on the Holocaust.” (Löw Interview 2016, 14). This finding is confirmed by the results of the empirical evaluation of the courses. The challenge thus arises as to how to ensure a comprehensive and high-quality curriculum on the Holocaust in the field of history.

4.4.6 Specialization II: The “Holocaust Studies” Chair

For a long time there was criticism that in Germany, unlike in the English-speaking realm, there were no chairs explicitly dedicated to Holocaust research (cf. i.a. Longerich 2012, 20). There has only been a chair with an explicit working focus on the general topic of National Socialism since 2009, the chair for “German History in the 20th Century with a Focus on National Socialism” at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin,⁸¹ occupied by Prof. Michael Wildt. After a long preliminary phase, the occupation of the Holocaust chair at the Department of Philosophy and History of Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main in summer semester 2017 established the first chair specializing in Holocaust research (cf. HMKW 2017).

The question of assessing such a specialized chair is often discussed in the interviews. The fact that there had thus far been no such professorship is widely perceived as a deficiency and late development.

Susanne Heim criticizes that the topic of the Holocaust—with the exception of Humboldt-Universität—was not institutionalized with clear professorial designations from universities. The topic is “often only covered by assistant lecturers” (Heim interview 2016, 21). Peter Klein sees the late establishment of the chair in Frankfurt as the expression of a development in which academics are playing catch-up with something that has already been established in remembrance culture: “The fact that this comes now and comes so late has to do with a realistic perception in Germany of what is happening out there on the topic. Better late than never.” (Klein Interview 2016, 13).

At the same time, however, the interviews are dominated by skepticism about specialization in the field of Holocaust studies. Wolfgang Benz formulates it very clearly:

I don't think very highly of Holocaust chairs. I've always argued for a more holistic view: every new modern historian, or at least every contemporary historian, has to deal with and offer the topic of the Holocaust. That was always my position and demand. A Holocaust chair, exactly like a chair of Research on Anti-Semitism, threatens to become elitist—an exotic subject, an orchid. (Benz Interview 2016, 17)

Various interviewees distance themselves from the American model of an institutionalization of Holocaust Studies—Norbert Frei, for example, emphasizes:

Yes, of course I see that it has taken up till now for there to be a chair in Germany specifically for the Holocaust—in Frankfurt am Main. On the other hand, you also have to say that in a certain way, we went against the trend. Well, Holocaust studies, which I've always found to be somewhat problematic, above all from 2000-2010 in the US, is now obviously on the decline again. Germans did not take any part in this, and perhaps it's not so bad that Germans didn't immediately latch onto this trend, but rather perceived their tasks to be in concrete archive-based work. The latter has spawned a generation of Holocaust experts who have worked empirically in archives. (Frei Interview 2016, 4)

In this context, the interviewees stressed the fundamental difference between chair designations in Germany and other countries, especially the US. While professorships in specialized work areas are common there, in Germany, especially in history, much wider fields are covered by one chair. Andrea Löw also emphasizes this difference:

We have a different university system, so some things just don't work here that work in the US. And you just have to accept that there are differences. I don't want to assess that at all right now. For me, it's not at all about better or worse, but it's a different system and we cannot—and why should we?—make an exact copy of this now and create a Holocaust studies chair at every university. (Löw Interview 2016, 26)

⁸¹ Cf. www.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/de/bereiche-und-lehrstuehle/dtge-20jhd, 01.06.2017.

Norbert Frei describes the different systems as follows:

When Holocaust studies in the US were booming, our American colleagues repeatedly asked: "Why is there no Holocaust chair in Germany?" I think that it's not only due to the belief of many of our colleagues that this field would be too narrow, but it's also due to the slower pace of change in German universities and the chair system. Just take the point that in the German system even today, for the habilitation or "second book," you can't use same topic that you earned your doctorate with. This is quite different in the Anglo-Saxon system. So you have to be broader in Germany, if only because the chair designations are broader. (Frei Interview 2016, 4)

In summary, most interviewees positively interpret the establishment of the Holocaust studies chair in Frankfurt am Main as a late development. However, they clearly aren't calling for any more specialized Holocaust chairs. They distance themselves from the interpretation that the state of Holocaust research in Germany is particularly bad because there are so few chairs. However, it is acknowledged that the establishment of a Holocaust chair in Frankfurt am Main as well as a chair focusing on National Socialism at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin is an expression of the intent of these universities to actively incorporate the topic into teaching and research that is missing at other universities.

4.4.7 Commitment of Individuals

Although a clear improvement in the institutional incorporation of the Holocaust topic is referred to in many of the interviews, many still criticize "that teaching about the Holocaust at German universities is still based too heavily upon the individual initiative of individual teaching staff" (Bajohr Interview 2016, 13). One reason for this is that there are no clear guidelines for course contents in Germany, as course topics arise rather from teachers' personal research interests. Universities nevertheless have an influence on the implementation of contentual focal points through their recruitment policies.

As the empirical examination of academic calendars has shown, it is not even remotely possible to attend a course on the actual history of the Holocaust every semester at every German university (see Chapter 3.2.4). Andrea Löw observes: "If there isn't any initiative on the part of individual teaching staff to offer this, then the topic doesn't appear" (Löw Interview 2016, 14). This fact that the topic's availability depends on the commitment of individuals consequentially means that even at universities where the topic was taught during the period of investigation, there was no guarantee that the topic would be regularly offered. Christina Brüning, for example, describes the extent to which the range of courses on the Holocaust at her university depends on her own choices, and that there have been almost no courses on this topic since she left for a research period at Selma Stern Center for Jewish Studies Berlin-Brandenburg (cf. Brüning Interview 2016, 18). Susanne Heim refers by way of example to Freie Universität Berlin and the University of Bielefeld, neither of which have an incorporated focus on the topic of the Holocaust. A large part of the relevant teaching is covered there by freelance assistant lecturers who do not occupy permanent positions (cf. Heim Interview 2016, 19). Thus the opportunities for—and responsibility of—individual universities are made clear: to ensure through their recruitment policies that the appropriate teaching staff is hired in order to at least be able to cover the topic of the Holocaust.

Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw see the role of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich as being to promote teaching and research on the Holocaust in Germany by bringing out basic publications that address precisely this teaching staff. In their interviews, they refer to their 2015 publication *Der Holocaust: Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung*, published by Fischer Verlag (Bajohr/Loew 2015), as well as a textbook on the Holocaust in the Seminar series planned by Oldenbourg De Gruyter. The aim of these publications is to encourage and enable faculty members to offer courses at universities where the topic is not institutionalized by a particular area of research or chair (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016: 3).

Susanne Rohr presents the graduate school “Visual Presentations: Representations of the Shoah in a Comparative Perspective” at Universität Hamburg as an example of how the commitment of various teachers can achieve an institutional incorporation of the topic:

When I came to Hamburg in 2006, it happened at one fell swoop that more and more colleagues were appointed to different disciplines that also focus on the Holocaust. At some point a critical mass had been reached, and we thought it would make sense to start a larger cooperative project and coordinate our research. The idea for the graduate school came from this. At the moment, we consist of nine professors from very different disciplines. (Rohr Interview 2016, 1)

This example of the University of Hamburg shows how recruiting practices and the initiative of individuals can institutionalize teaching about the Holocaust.

4.4.8 The Importance of the Holocaust in Teacher Education

In the Federal Republic of Germany, and in Germany since the reunification in 1990, there has been an educational requirement to teach about democracy. The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) calls education for democracy a primary goal, to which all school subjects and especially social sciences are obligated:

Students in the early lower secondary level should already be acquiring a sound knowledge of our recent history. The experiences from German history in the 20th century, from the Weimar Republic, from the time of National Socialism, from 60 years of democracy experienced in the Federal Republic, from the time of the GDR, and from the peaceful revolution play key roles in the context of a democratic education too. (KMK 2009, 2)

This requirement is institutionalized in different ways in the 16 federal states’ school laws and framework curricula. For example, the school laws of the State of Berlin, like that of some other states, include a prefixed section that specifies the schools’ mission and defines forming the identities of students so that they are “capable of categorically countering the ideology of National Socialism and all other political doctrines that support dictatorships”(SchulG 2004: §1) as a goal.

This assignment is a challenge, especially for history education, but also for social studies or political education, since it must in fact be implemented mainly in these subjects in the few available weekly hours. Christina Brüning points out that the educational requirement should, for logical reasons, also be reflected in teacher training. It would thus be obvious and explicable to also offer regular courses on National Socialism and the Holocaust to those students in teacher education who aren’t studying social sciences or cultural studies (Brüning Interview 2016, 20).

A large proportion of history students are studying for the teaching profession. Several of the interviewees agree that it is important for these future teachers to have the opportunity to complete at least one overview lecture on the history of the Holocaust as part of their studies. “I have always pleaded,” Wolfgang Benz explains, “to include the subject of the Holocaust in general education. No one who will become a teacher should leave the university without having thoroughly learned the necessary things about the Holocaust. But I see a problem here, since you can’t make attending a Holocaust course mandatory“ (Benz Interview 2016, 17).

Using the example of Freie Universität Berlin, Martin Lücke argues that it is possible for teacher training students to circumvent the topic of the Holocaust. Thus, it is by no means guaranteed that all graduates have a basic knowledge of National Socialism and the Holocaust:

It’s not guaranteed, and it’s not mentioned structurally in our study regulations as a desirable goal. Not even for students studying to become teachers. They can deepen their studies in different ways, and you’re not only able to avoid the topic there in the area of modern and recent history, but we very rarely have concrete offers here on the topic of National Socialism and the Holocaust. (Lücke Interview 2016, 15)

As a consequence, Lücke emphasizes the “almost old-fashioned idea” of incorporating this content prominently in the university curriculum (cf. *ibid.*).

Because of the few hours that are available to teachers in schools for teaching about National Socialism and the Holocaust, general overview courses with concrete references to future lessons are important for students studying to become teachers. “I have the impression that overly-specialized Holocaust topics do not go down so well with classic students studying to become teachers,” emphasizes Frank Bajohr, “because they like to attend courses that are more broadly themed, where they can directly relate the seminar to the lesson subject” (Bajohr Interview 2016, 22).

Christina Brüning points to the peculiarity of teacher education at Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg, where students do not become teachers at high school and college level, but rather teachers in elementary, lower secondary, and middle secondary schools. “We have a larger number of students who have doubts about themselves, perhaps because they have fears about going to the ‘real’ university. Perhaps they don’t dare to say that, and say instead, ‘I’m only doing lower and middle secondary school’” (Brüning Interview 2016, 14). History is one subject among many in the teacher studies program for lower and middle secondary schools. Some students study three or four subjects and accordingly only have the opportunity to study two modules of history really in-depth. (cf. *ibid.*). “This leads to a certain superficiality, which we then try to stave off in teaching internships. There, at the very latest, students studying to become teachers notice that it’s bad, because when they are only one step ahead of the students, the lessons are slipping away from them” (*ibid.*). Again and again, students expressed their gratitude to Brüning for the seminars that were offered on National Socialism and the Holocaust: “They also said, that’s what we need in the schools. ‘We have to deal with that, especially as lower and middle secondary school teachers, this is a huge subject area in grades 9 and 10 and we don’t feel well-trained there up to that point’” (*ibid.*, 11).

Sascha Feuchert, who teaches German didactics at Justus Liebig University Giessen, strongly supports the need to intensify teaching on the topic of the Holocaust in the teaching professions. He describes how the Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature invests a great deal of time in the conception of German didactics courses, which go beyond their calling and specifically cover the practicalities of education at schools (cf. Feuchert Interview 2016, 2). His lectures on Holocaust literature in schools, which are about the works of Ruth Klüger, Jean Améry, and Imre Kertész, are in great demand and are part of the standard course for student teachers in Giessen (cf. *ibid.*, 13). Feuchert furthermore emphasizes the importance of cooperation between German and history didactics in this field, and advocates an interdisciplinary teaching about the Holocaust (cf. *ibid.*, 2).

In summary, it should be noted that the particular relevance of the topic in teacher education is emphasized in the interviews. Interviewees who specialize in didactics particularly emphasized the challenges that students and teachers face in teacher education in this respect, and the need for regular, interdisciplinary, and even compulsory Holocaust-related overview course offers.

4.5 Developments and Discussions in Holocaust Research in Germany

The state of research on the Holocaust is, in the best case, reflected in the teaching on the topic. For this reason, the following chapter provides an overview, based on the expert interviews, of key developments and specialist discussions about Holocaust research in Germany.

The following topics are especially highlighted in the interviews: (1) the intensified internationalization tendencies of research on the Holocaust, (2) the importance of numerous literary and publication projects since the end of the 1990s, and (3) the special role of concentration camp memorials in Germany for Holocaust research. In addition, the significance of comparative genocide research in Germany is specifically discussed in the interviews (4). Furthermore, the relationship (5) between event-historical and impact-historical questions in historical Holocaust research is examined, as well as (6) the growing importance of cultural research about the Holocaust.

The topics dealt with in the interviews could easily have been expanded and deepened through corresponding discussions in the available literature. The following presentation, however, is limited to a summary of the statements of the interviewed experts. This includes not only specialist discussions, but also anecdotes and narratives that are important for the study. A special focus is the elaboration of cross-disciplinary controversies and discussions. As the example of the assessment of cultural studies research approaches shows, it is about technical limitations and their academic validity.

4.5.1 The Holocaust as a National and International Field of Research

A key characteristic of Holocaust research is that the interviewed experts agree that it is an international research field. This is evident, according to the statements, not only in history, but also in cultural and literary sciences. For Holocaust research in Germany, this results in two key aspects that will be discussed below: (a) the connection of historical Holocaust research in Germany to international research and (b) specific national particularities of Holocaust research in Germany.

a) The Connection of German Holocaust Research to International Research

Numerous interviewed experts emphasize internationality as a central characteristic of Holocaust research and the international connectivity of German research as a central development since the 1990s.

Norbert Frei, for example, points out that the question of how National Socialism came into being was also of interest to other western democracies (and thus historians) from a wide range of countries in early contemporary history research in the 1950s. This internationality has continued to accompany research on National Socialism and is a feature of current Holocaust research. Frei notes “that many things are published in English from the outset and that, in this sense, national borders don’t really play a major role anymore. At any rate, this has been the case since the end of the 1980s or the beginning of the 1990s, when empirical Holocaust research in Germany really took place to a certain extent” (Frei Interview 2016, 3).

In numerous interviews, the current international connectivity of German Holocaust research is attributed to its development in the field of historical-empirical research in the 1990s, which opened up opportunities for access and dialog for the international research community. Although the Holocaust was not perceived by German research as a European event in its thematic range until the 1980s, the regional studies on the Holocaust that have emerged since the 1990s, especially in Eastern Europe, have succeeded in connecting with international research (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 8). In this context, the importance of acquiring language skills is also emphasized (cf. Heim Interview 2016, 15).

Several interviewees stressed the relevance of the international discussion exchange promoted by Fellowships at Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). Some of the interviewees were Fellows in Jerusalem or Washington D.C. and stress the importance of this exchange for their academic work.

Internationality, and most especially the influence of American research, are also mentioned as important features for literary and cultural academic research on the Holocaust. For example, Sascha Feuchert refers to the works of Susan E. Cernyak-Spatz, who opened the research field with her 1985 dissertation and coined the term *Holocaust Literature* (cf.

Cernyak-Spatz 1985), and James E. Young, whose book *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust* (cf. Young 1988) has been a central stimulus for the literary-academic examination of the Holocaust.

b) National Differences and Particular Features of Holocaust Research

Although Holocaust research is described as very international, the interviews identify particular national features.

Nicolas Berg thus points out that there are inner-Jewish debates—such as the question of the role and the limits of scope of action of the so-called Judenräte—which non-Jewish researchers can't easily or don't want to participate in, and that are mainly taking place in Israel (cf. Berg Interview 2016, 16).

A pronounced focus on perpetrator research is pointed out as a distinctive feature of German research that has only been replaced by more integrative research approaches since the 1990s. Frank Bajohr describes this development as follows:

For a long time, Germans were not very occupied with the Jewish victims, more often it was classic research on the perpetrators. These classic national perspectives on the Holocaust have not completely disappeared, they are still virulent, but they have grown weaker. There is perpetrator research in Israel and we've developed victim research in Germany. That didn't exist in this form earlier. And that's why in fact the Holocaust is, like no other topic, an international field of research. (Bajohr Interview 2016, 7)

Andrea Löw also emphasizes the opening up of German Holocaust research since the middle of the 1990s to questions about Jewish victims of persecution and their scopes of action (Löw Interview 2016, 10). However, according to Frank Bajohr, there is still a kind of cooperative division of labor in the internationalized field of research. While aftermath history is increasingly gaining international attention, he sees it as a task of German Holocaust research—also because of the German-language sources—to place the focus on classic approaches to Holocaust history, such as the genesis of central decision-making processes and structures. Against a backdrop of increasing debates throughout Europe about the responsibility of European societies, he sees it as the task of future German research to bear in mind the correlations between the center and the periphery (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 7). For Peter Klein, too, the development is such that Holocaust research in Germany first opened up recently with the history of mentalities and structural history of Eastern Europe. In his view, there is still a tradition in Germany that places a strong focus on individual perpetrators and on the history of Jews in Germany (cf. Interview 2016, 10). The historians interviewed nevertheless largely agree that national boundaries, which have long determined research priorities, are now less dominant, especially for empirical Holocaust research.

Significant country-specific features can be seen, however, in the area of historical-political reappraisal and conveyance discourses. Martin Lücke thus describes differences in history didactic research in Israel, the US, and Germany. In all three countries, the Holocaust is a central topic of historical learning. However, a comparison of the approaches shows that, in Germany and Israel, the question as to why the subject matter is important is asked far less often than in the US. The focus in Germany, rather, is on how something that is undisputed can be didactically implemented, while in the US it is much more necessary to justify why the topic is relevant (Lücke Interview 2016, 9).

Christina Brüning places the country-specific differences in relation to, among other things, the respective social narratives that are connected with the Holocaust:

In Israel, Holocaust education is even more important. With Yom Hashoah [Holocaust Memorial Day] and the sirens sounding, children have logical questions that need to be answered somehow at the much earlier age of three or four years. There are many more obligatory visits. In Germany, it's still not compulsory to visit a memorial site with the school. And in the US too, I had the feeling that colleges and even schools really do a lot on this topic, but from a different perspective, of course. They are the country that defeated Hitler and they produce a different narrative about it, but there's definitely a lot of teaching. (Brüning Interview 2016, 11)

The example of teaching the Holocaust in schools shows that different national perspectives, social contexts and historiographic developments in the field of reappraisal and conveyance continue to be significant.

These different approaches also become clear when dealing with oral history interviews, for example, as Christina Brüning explains. While she notes that there is a “sacralization of testimonies” (ibid., 4) in Israel, which includes an “unassailable interaction” (ibid.) with the testimonies of survivors, research in the US is, for example, much more open to comparing the testimonies of victims of different genocides. In Germany, a more cautious approach could be observed, which differs “because survivors’ testimonies are always dealt with differently in the country of the perpetrators” (ibid.). The comparison of different research cultures in the field of oral history makes it clear how strongly these are related to the specific national history and the respective socio-political conflicts. The example of the different approaches of researchers who are descendants of victims, or descendants of perpetrators, or who are only indirectly or not at all biographically linked to the Holocaust shows that, despite the internationalization, biographical references, particularly in Germany and Israel, are still part of the discourse.

The importance of different national narratives about the Holocaust is also particularly clear in relation to the different possibilities of reception and representation that Susanne Rohr addresses.

In America, the liberation of Europe from fascism, from dictatorship, is celebrated as a great victory for democracy, a victory for freedom, for liberal thought. The Americans have very much acquired this discourse. And you also see, something that irritates many people to this day, that Washington D.C. has a huge Holocaust Memorial Museum. In a way, Americans [apart from survivors who emigrated to the US] have nothing to do with the Holocaust. Holocaust discourse is nevertheless dominant and very influential in the US. The discourse in Germany, the so-called “coming to terms with the past,” is completely different. In France there is yet another discourse: What do you do about certain acts of collaboration that you’d rather not think about? These are national discourses that strongly color the different representations of the event. (Rohr Interview 2016, 2)

In summary, it can be said that research on the Holocaust is perceived as an internationally connected field of research in which a lot is published in English. The interviewees emphasize that German historical-empirical Holocaust research has been successful in connecting with international research since the 1990s and that the previously strong focus on perpetrator research is decreasing. Despite country-specific focal points that still exist in the work, national boundaries, which for a long period defined the research, are perceived as less dominant and interviewees emphasize an international willingness for cooperation and exchange.

It is noticeable that despite the very international discussions, national narratives remain in focus, particularly in dealing with aftermath history, reappraisal, and the cultural-academic research topics of reception and representation.

4.5.2 Publications as an Example of the Development of Holocaust Research in Germany

As a key indication of the ongoing development of Holocaust research in Germany, various experts highlighted the large body of relevant research literature published over the last 25 years. According to interviewees, the large number of publications, journals, and large encyclopedias and ongoing publication projects demonstrates an increased academic interest in the topic and the expanded international relevance of German Holocaust research.

The importance of numerous monographs on the Holocaust in Eastern Europe published since the 1990s partly as theses for academic qualification by researchers who have acquired appropriate language skills is particularly emphasized. Several interviewees cite the works of Dieter Pohl, Thomas Sandkühler, Christian Gerlach, Christoph Diekmann, Andrej Angrick, Peter Klein, Sybille Steinbacher and Götz Aly as examples of this development (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 8; Berg Interview 2016, 15). Norbert Frei accounts for this “boost of empirical Holocaust research in Germany” with, among other things, the changed travel and archival research possibilities in the successor states of the former Soviet Union (Frei Interview 2016, 4).

In addition to these individual publications, various series of journals emerged in the 1990s that decisively shaped the development of Holocaust research in Germany. Nicolas Berg describes the emergence of the journal *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus*⁸² as an example of the development of Holocaust research in Germany:

This can be seen wonderfully in this magazine, whose founding by Götz Aly in the late 1980s, almost hand-copied originally—as a kind of resistance to the academic establishment—where he illuminates the social and demographic policies of the Third Reich. The volumes have had a great impact on the discussion—controversial, but greatly influential. These volumes have now been relaunched and revamped with a new group of editors and contributors and a less cumbersome title and has become one of the major reference organs of Holocaust research. (Berg Interview 2016, 16)

Furthermore, the series *Dachauer Hefte* (cf. Benz/Distel 1985–2009), published by Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel from 1985 to 2009, and the *Jahrbücher zur Geschichte und Wirkung des Holocaust*, published by the Fritz Bauer Institute⁸³, are cited as examples of the establishment and institutionalization of Holocaust research in Germany in the 1990s.

Various interviewees thus emphasize how various lexicon and publishing projects have emerged and developed since the year 2000 that are important not only for research, but also for university studies on the topic of the Holocaust. There is, first of all, the comprehensive encyclopedia *Der Ort des Terrors*, published by Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel in nine volumes with entries for a total of 24 main camps and 1,000 satellite camps (cf. Benz/Distel 2003–2009). Sybille Steinbacher describes the work in a review of the first three volumes as “a nearly unsurpassable lexical collection in terms of both information and detail” (Steinbacher 2006) and emphasizes its significance for experts on the topic at universities, institutes and memorials, but also for students, pupils and the general public (cf. *ibid.*).

The two-volume *Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, published by Wolfgang Benz between 2008 and 2015, is also lexical in character. (cf. Benz 2008–2015).

In addition, there is the *Encyclopedia of Jewish History and Culture*, published from 2011 to 2015 by Dan Diner in seven volumes at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture at the University of Leipzig (cf. Diner 2011–2015) “the goal of which [...] is the development, systematization and conceptual saturation of Jewish life in Europe.”⁸⁴ Nicolas Berg, who worked on this project, points out how the immanent role of the Holocaust for Jewish culture is expressed in the *Encyclopedia*:

You don't have a main entry for “Holocaust”—the entry “Holocaust” doesn't comprise the de facto event, but rather the meaning that the film series had for the public discussion in America and Germany—but you have hundreds of long entries per volume that make topics of Jewish places of memory, for example, either because they were destroyed or because they were central to the Holocaust. And from this, a memory formation—a negative memory formation—has emerged, so to speak: Babi Yar, Riga, Kovno [Kaunas] and, of course, Auschwitz too. At the same time, there are also terms in the lexicon, events with which we have tried since 1945 to cope with in some form, intellectually too. You have an entry “dialectic of enlightenment” and thus a reference to the critical theory of Adorno

82 Cf. www.beitraege-ns.de/, May 30, 2018.

83 Cf. www.fritz-bauer-institut.de/jahrbuch.html, May 30, 2018.

84 Quoted after: www.saw-leipzig.de/de/projekte/europaeische-traditionen-enzyklopaedie-juedischer-kulturen, May 30, 2018.

and Horkheimer. But you also have an entry “genocide,” telling the story of Raphael Lemkin and his efforts to find a legal term to portray what happened. (Berg Interview 2016, 16)

In addition to the encyclopedias and lexica mentioned above, Holocaust research publication projects that have emerged in Germany in the recent past are of international significance. Nicolas Berg characterizes them, as well as the encyclopedia and publication projects cited, as “large institutionalized publishing projects, from which one can see what happened between the 1990s and today: keeping up with international research” (ibid.).

Two examples of publication projects are presented here that have been specifically mentioned in the interviews: They are (a) the publication project “The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews by Nazi Germany 1933–1945” (VEJ) and (b) the *Chronicle and Encyclopedia of the Lodz-Litzmannstadt Ghetto*.⁸⁵

a) The Publication Project “The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews by Nazi Germany 1933–1945”

The publication project “The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews by Nazi Germany 1933–1945” is published as a commission of the German Federal Archives, the Chair of Late Modern and Contemporary History at the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, and the Chair of Eastern Central European History at Freie Universität Berlin. Susanne Heim, who has been the head of the publication project since 2005, was interviewed as an expert in this study. Susanne Heim, Ulrich Herbert, Michael Hollmann, Horst Moeller, Dieter Pohl, Sybille Steinbacher, Simone Walther-von Jena, and Andreas Wirsching are the joint editors. Work began on the edition in 2004, comprising 16 volumes structured by chronology and territory, and is expected to be completed by the end of 2019. About 300 central sources per volume on the history of the persecution and murder of European Jews are edited and translated from the original languages into German and English. The project is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).⁸⁶

Susanne Heim discusses the preliminary considerations for the edition, which are also relevant to the state of research on the Holocaust, since such a comprehensive documentation of the murder and extermination of the Jews hadn’t existed previously. The idea arose at a time when research was also expanding due to the open archives in Eastern Europe and the fact that fundamental interpretational controversies were no longer so central. “For a long time before, it was all about the dispute between functionalists and intentionalists” (Heim Interview 2016, 5). Studies based on well-founded source information have also become more important again, because in the course of increasing digitization, many sources were accessible on the internet without any commentary or context. A comprehensive overview with commentaries on the sources is therefore provided. For the publication project, however, we don’t resort to previously edited documents “because we’ve had the experience that edited documents are often not completely edited, and omissions haven’t necessarily been identified, or changes had been made that are distorting in other ways” (ibid. 2). Instead, the sources have been translated anew from the original language. The approximate 5,000 documents are selected according to specific criteria and the respective conditions in the individual countries are explained. This allows for the possibility of making comparisons between different countries (cf. ibid.).

We try as much as possible to cover all of the regions of a country, and the most important events, of course. In the occupied countries, the fact that the initiative emanates from Berlin should not suddenly be swept under the table because we’re only looking at regional events, but the attitude of the local population, the members of the occupation regime, and the collaborationist government or administration has to be documented at the same time. It also deals with churches’ attitudes, what happened to the non-Jewish majority, what role the economic plundering of Jews played, also how Jewish organizations and institutions behaved, how countries abroad reacted to the persecution of Jews in occupied countries, and how the Vatican responded. (Heim Interview 2016, 3)

According to Susanne Heim, the publication project aims to use the sources to depict the European dimension of the Holocaust and lay the foundations for a less country-focused Holocaust research:

This edition is intended as a starting point for getting a good overview of the overall events of the Holocaust through documents and very extensive introductions. We always find that there are big differences between countries, but on the other hand, there are many similarities, and the fact that we compile these documents according to certain criteria gives us the possibility of making comparisons. (Heim Interview 2016, 3)

85 Cf. www.holocaustliteratur.de/deutsch/Edition-der-Enzyklopaedie-des-Gettos-Lodz2Litzmannstadt-1984/, May 30, 2018.

86 Cf. www.edition-judenverfolgung.de, May 30, 2018.

In addition, Susanne Heim emphasizes that the publication of the original sources from different countries is also about “moving towards grounding” (ibid., 4) the discussion of Holocaust research in Germany again and loosening the focus on the meta level of memorial politics and literary representation. Furthermore, she emphasizes—and this is important for the topic of this study—that researchers are not the sole target group. The publication is explicitly directed towards an informed but non-specialist public (cf. ibid.).

b) The Chronicle of the Lodz-Litzmannstadt Ghetto and the Encyclopedia of the Lodz-Litzmannstadt Ghetto

The main research focus of the Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature in Giessen in recent years has been on the development and publication of texts from the Lodz/Litzmannstadt Ghetto. For example, the first complete edition of the so-called Ghetto Chronicle was prepared in a multi-year German-Polish project that was funded by the DFG in cooperation with the university and the State Archives in Lodz. The Ghetto Chronicle was created from 1941 to 1944 in the archive of the Jewish ghetto administration by victims in the Lodz/Litzmannstadt Ghetto. The events in the ghetto were documented “like a daily newspaper without a reader” (Feuchert Interview 2016, 1) on about 3,000 pages here. (df. Feuchert/Leibfried/Riecke 2007).

Sascha Feuchert emphasizes that, regarding the philologically-stipulated long and elaborate publication process, that it is a philological project with an additional historiographical approach: “This is an advantage over historians. Historians use this publication today, but we are the experts for producing the editions” (Feuchert Interview 2016, 1).

In the meantime, Feuchert and his colleagues have dedicated themselves to the publication of the *Encyclopedia of the Lodz-Litzmannstadt Ghetto* in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Jörg Riecke and the Center for Holocaust Studies in Munich. With the publication of this work created in 1943–1944, the authors of the ghetto’s chronicle wanted to document life in the ghetto for posterity by means of a lexicon containing entries on the central concepts of ghetto language, institutions of administration, important personalities and events.⁸⁷

Sascha Feuchert explains the particular features of this lexicon:

The authors who made this ghetto chronicle made an interesting decision in 1944, namely that they changed the kind of document and said, “We’re going to make a lexicon about the ghetto experience.” And now you can make a philological observation: in the chronicle, the present tense is often used, the same way you would report in a daily newspaper. In this encyclopedia, there is a simple past tense: “The little red house was the building of the criminal police.” Even in the linguistic treatment you had already anticipated the aftermath, and the focus is once again more clearly placed on conveying to posterity what kind of extreme experience that was. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 1)

As has already been made clear, the numerous publications, encyclopedias, and edition projects published since the 1990s are not only an expression of intensified research on the Holocaust, but also illustrate an improved starting point for learning and teaching about the Holocaust. According to Nicolas Berg, this is where projects came into being that did not exist in the 1980s and 1990s and “which we, as students, could only dream about” (Berg Interview 2016, 16). In light of the results of the survey, the question arises as to whether these improved opportunities will be utilized and how it will be possible for more sophisticated research on the Holocaust to be reflected in teaching.

87 Cf. www.holocaustliteratur.de/deutsch/Edition-der-Enzyklopaedie-des-Gettos-Lodz2Litzmannstadt-1984/, May 30, 2018.

4.5.3 The Importance of Concentration Camp Memorial Sites for Holocaust Research in Germany

The memorial sites at locations of Nazi crimes, now institutionalized as an integral part of political culture in Germany, have a very different developmental history in East and West Germany. While in West Germany they were the result of tough civic social engagement—mainly of survivors—in the GDR they were part of the state's history politics (cf. Siebeck 2015, 21). After reunification, a state-sponsored and institutionalized memorial politics developed in the 1990s: concentration camp memorial sites became central places of political education in Germany (cf. *ibid.*, 39).

The current relevance of memorials on the sites of former Nazi concentration camps in Germany for purposes of political education is also manifested in university teaching. As the empirical examination of the courses on the Holocaust has shown, 101 of the 468 courses offered on the Holocaust included an excursion to a memorial site located in a former concentration camp (see Chapter 3.2.1).

The above-mentioned development and transformation of concentration camp memorial sites is also reflected in their relevance for Holocaust research in Germany. As historical places of Nazi crimes, they are important reference points—also for Holocaust research. At the same time, as Wolfgang Benz pointed out in his interview for example, they were largely ignored by perpetrator-centered historical Nazi and Holocaust research until the late 1980s (cf. Benz Interview 2016, 4).

Wolfgang Benz, in connection with the emergence of the *Dachauer Hefte* journal series that he published from 1985 to 2009 together with the then head of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial, Barbara Distel (cf. Benz/Distel 1985-2009), reports on the changing perception of memorials and survivors in historical research:

At the time when I, as a relatively young historian, started practicing my trade at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich in the 1970s, there was no culture of remembrance and there was no mention of commemoration. It was a sensation that, together with the head of the Dachau Concentration Camp memorial site, I had founded a journal that not only made an academic presentation of concentration camps, the terror system, persecution and the Holocaust, but for the first time contemporary witnesses and survivors were allowed to speak on equal terms. [...] I think that with the Dachauer Hefte we've made a significant contribution to the breakthrough of Holocaust research, because even up to that point, the memorial sites had been left to former prisoners. Historians who had prided themselves and were ambitious about their careers had avoided it. (Benz Interview 2016, 4 and 17)

Wolfgang Benz clarifies this previous distancing of historical research from the topic of the Holocaust with an anecdote, at the same time describing how strongly the social climate has changed in this respect:

I met a fellow study colleague at a train station somewhere in the province, and he said that he'd heard about me now and again, and that I would indeed distinguish myself with memorial work. He himself wouldn't be able to do that, as he had never been to a concentration camp memorial and nor could he bear to. In other words, that was the kind of work to be delegated to rougher types. We have people like you because we're too delicate to do that. I think that attitude is to some degree over and past. Not least because of the many young and capable people who do highly professional, good and accepted work in the memorial sites. I also noticed the aversion, the cold contempt with which the community leaders, the former mayor of Dachau confronted the memorial. Those days are long gone. (Benz Interview 2016, 14)

Christina Brüning, too, has had the experience “that for quite some time, there was an arrogance on the part of university teachers, who thought that memorial sites were offering tours by led by random people. The fact that this was not the case and that research took place there went unnoticed for a long time.” (Brüning, Interview 2016: 26).

Cornelia Siebeck describes the political relevance of memorial sites in the 1990s and how the debates about the proper handling of history polarized and thus even encouraged academic research:

In the German Federal Republic, the restoration of the German nation state once again triggered some unique dynamics. It was about a reorganization of national history from the viewpoint of a new present situation, above all the role of the Nazi past in this history, which had already been disputed in the old Federal Republic of Germany. Another question was how to deal with the ruins of the GDR history landscape and particularly the dogmatic anti-fascism that was present in Berlin and the new German federal states—and how memory of the communist SED regime should be shaped. There was a lot of debate about all this in the 1990s. Remarkably, they were particularly ignited in actual places and construction projects, that is, in practical questions. It should not be underestimated how reflexivity, including academic reflexivity, has a lot to do with practice: the moment decisions are made, let alone when

conflicts arise, it becomes obvious that decisions could be made differently, and this creates room for reflection. This has triggered not only all sorts of historical research in this country, for example on Nazi camps, but also a boom in historical cultural studies. (Siebeck Interview 2016, 4)

The interviews reflect how universities' interest in integrating memorial site visits into teaching is relatively new. Cornelia Siebeck recalls that as part of her own history studies in the second half of the 1990s, questions of memorial culture and history politics were themselves a novelty, as well as group visits to exhibitions or memorials. She felt at the time that a series of memorial site visits organized by Wolfgang Benz and Barbara Distel as part of a seminar on the history of Nazi concentration camps were an exceptional offer that shaped her subsequent research interests and professional career (cf. Siebeck Interview 2016, 5).

In the meantime, the memorials for victims of the Nazi regime are state-institutionalized places of remembrance and historical-political education, as well as places of research on the Holocaust. Accordingly, an increased interaction with universities has been reported (cf. Brüning Interview 2016, 26). As various interviewees emphasize, concentration camp memorials are increasingly perceived as occupational fields for graduates of master programs such as "Contemporary History," "Public History," and "Holocaust Communication and Tolerance" (see Chapter 4.4.4).

It should be noted that memorial sites today are institutionalized as places of research, extracurricular education as well as commemorative and memorial sites, and are also academically recognized. It becomes particularly clear, based on the accounts of Wolfgang Benz, that this was preceded by a lengthy recognition process. Memorial sites are still politically disputed places too, because among other things, various interest groups compete for interpretation privileges. This significance is reflected in courses on National Socialism and the Holocaust, in the framework of which—as will be explained later—excursions to memorials on the sites of the former Nazi concentration camps for victims of the Nazi regime are now frequently offered with different focal points (see Chapter 4.6.2).

4.5.4 The Relationship of Holocaust Research to Comparative Genocide Research

In Germany, as both the statements of experts and the results of the survey of the courses show, comparative genocide research is neither widespread nor very conspicuous. The Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Studies,⁸⁸ affiliated with the Historical Institute of Ruhr Universität Bochum, is the only institution in this topical field in Germany.

In the interviews, we did not explicitly ask about the relationship between Holocaust and genocide research, but in fact the topic was addressed by some of the experts themselves. It is noteworthy that none of the interviewees sees any competition between Holocaust and genocide research. Rather, the international incentives of Genocide Studies are seen in a positive sense as a way to embed the Holocaust in the larger context of a history of violence.

Susanne Heim states that, in her view, there is nothing to prevent Holocaust research from being extended to questions of genocide research if this happens in a qualified manner. As examples of a qualified thematization of the Holocaust in the larger context a history of violence, she mentions the work of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington D.C., which deals with a clear focus on the Holocaust within the topic of genocide, as well as the work of Yehuda Bauer on genocide research and prevention, and the chair occupied by Sybille Steinbacher (until summer semester 2017) at the University of Vienna with a focus on “Comparative Research of Dictatorship, Violence, and Genocide” (cf. Heim Interview 2016, 21).

Peter Klein also refers to Holocaust and Genocide Studies in the US—which integrate the Holocaust into a history of mass murder but do not consider the Holocaust as an isolated phenomenon—as an inspiration for recent German Holocaust research. He emphasizes that the topic also arouses growing interest among his students:

A history of mass murders that does not stop in 1945, but just continues in Indonesia, the Balkans, and in Africa. Or where there have been precursors like the mass murders of the Armenians—that’s an issue that has met with great interest and requires a considerable change of perspective and expansion from old school Holocaust researchers, so all at once from Armenia to Srebrenica, I basically have to know a lot more. That wasn’t so easy to expect 15 or 20 years ago. That’s a definite shift. (Klein Interview 2016, 8)

As already mentioned in Chapter 4.5.1 b, academic perspectives and didactic concepts in German and US research differ significantly from one another. This is especially relevant for the significance of genocide research. While US research and teaching uses comparative genocide research, German researchers are hesitant about being open in this respect. Yet this research is not perceived as competition or threat to Holocaust research, but rather as an impetus associated with internationalization.

88 Cf. www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/idg, May 30, 2018.

4.5.5 The Relationship of Research on Actual History to Aftermath and Impact History

The survey of the courses on the Holocaust has shown that questions of reappraisal, meaning aftermath and impact history, make up a relatively part of teaching about the Holocaust. 49 percent of the courses on the Holocaust had questions of reappraisal, impact and representation as topics (see Chapter 3.2.1) This result was taken into account in the conception of the interview guidelines by explicitly asking for a classification of these research topics.

The interviewees all agreed that dealing with the aftermath and impact history is a research trend that is evident at international conferences as well as on applications for fellowships and scholarships (cf. e.g. Löw Interview 2016, 11; Heim Interview 2016, 16). However, this development is evaluated differently by the historians interviewed.

Since the 1990s an increasing number of publications have appeared that deal with questions about Germany's policies concerning its past and post-Nazi society's approach to the Holocaust and National Socialism. These contemporary publications were widely positively received by the interviewees. Frank Bajohr thus describes that the eventful history after 1945 offers many respective research opportunities for reception, perception and reappraisal. The question of how a country that organized an incomparable genocide could become a democratic nation without replacing many of its elites is an analytical challenge and a very exciting question, especially for German research—which suggests that appropriate attention should be paid to this topic (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 10).

At the same time, Bajohr sees it as problematic if the focus of aftermath historical research overlooks the classical approaches to Holocaust history. German historians traditionally assume that the Holocaust has been completely researched and that they can therefore turn to other questions of historical relevance, for example, to aftermath history. This false assumption must be counteracted (Bajohr Interview 2016, 10). Bajohr also interprets the focus on aftermath history as a kind of problematic avoidance:

With this extraordinary focus on the Holocaust's aftermath, I also see a potential for dealing with the subject without having to face the actual murders. I think it's an instinctive avoidance of having to deal with absolute horror. And yet at the same time, you can sense a certain dedication in this topical area of so-called aftermath studies. (Bajohr Interview 2016, 11)

Nicolas Berg, on the other hand, argues that the critique formulated by Ulrich Herbert and others in the 1990s that the increase of discourses on questions of historical memory enables an avoidance is now no longer up-to-date. He argues that at a time when the historical basis of the Holocaust had not yet been empirically explored, this argument was entirely justified, but that today the situation is different (Berg Interview 2016, 18). Cornelia Siebeck, who researches and teaches the historical formation of meaning, history culture and history politics, also clearly distances herself from the avoidance thesis. She considers it wrong to pit reception history against event history:

Many do that indeed, mostly with the implication that reception history expands at the expense of "actual" history. Or even on the assumption that it is more comfortable to deal with reception history, that you just don't have to look into the abyss anymore. I can say for myself that I have done both and I find both important. But my current focus is on the historical culture and history politics of dealing with the Nazi past. (Siebeck Interview 2016, 7)

From her point of view, the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust and the history of dealing with this past for the last 70 years are separate fields of research. For the study of the latter,

knowledge of the so-called "causal history" is a useful but not mandatory requirement. I can study a Bismarck monument without being a Bismarck specialist at the same time. Reference to the Nazi past was and is a central cultural and political factor. And to investigate and teach this has its own justification—not least in the sense of a significant part of "post-war history," which as such is not assumed to be working at the expense of the history of National Socialism. (Siebeck Interview 2016, 7)

In response to the question "should aftermath and impact history be understood as part of Holocaust research?," several of the historians interviewed interpret these as independent contemporary history research topics and limit Holocaust research to the history of events. Wolfgang Benz thus states that the impact history—or, as he says, "mentality history and research"—is not part of Holocaust research, because "dealing with a catastrophe has nothing to do with researching the catastrophe" (Benz Interview 2016, 5). He nevertheless perceives a clear change that accompanies an intensified examination of cultural issues as well as the professionalization of commemoration and remembering. Disputes have shifted increasingly to the meta level (cf. *ibid.*, 6).

Susanne Heim also places memory-political or memory-cultural questions outside of Holocaust research: “What the climate in the countries is, how it’s dealt with legally [...] or when commemorative plaques or memorial days are introduced—that’s all post-war history [...] it’s not Holocaust research” (Heim Interview 2016, 17). Stefanie Schüler-Springorum puts it similarly: “Whether I’m doing a seminar on ‘Operation Reinhardt’ camps or a seminar on the Holocaust in film, it’s part of the Holocaust topic for students. But strictly speaking as a historian, I would say that there are clearly two different areas” (Schüler-Springorum Interview 2016, 8). At the same time, she acknowledges that the example of the Fritz Bauer Institute, which as one of the important institutions for Holocaust research in Germany places an explicit focus on impact history, shows that the dividing line is not always so clearly drawn, however (cf. *ibid.*).

Nicolas Berg, on the other hand, uses his 2003 study *The Holocaust and the West German Historians* (Berg 2003) to describe how impact history is interwoven with event history:

That was a standard approach back then. In the 1990s there was something about it in the air that I certainly didn’t invent. I thought it was an approach that made total access to the material possible. The pure historiography of telling the story would be exciting enough, but then you limit yourself so strongly epistemologically that you become quasi immanent. Look, we’re talking about a history that is itself dramatic event history, even research history is itself event history. This clearing the way for knowledge with books, essays and testimonies, that is also a form of event history, this is not just intellectual history for its own sake. These are in part, as in the case of Joseph Wulf, dramas that we have to tell here, especially when it comes to how Jewish historians apparently partake in the formation of the impression that we have of the event. And that was like the topic in the topic of my doctoral thesis. And I think that it still occupies us today. (Berg Interview 2016, 14)

Martin Lücke, in turn, emphasizes the significance of historical cultural moments for Holocaust research. Remembering the Holocaust ultimately also always determines “with what intensity it’s then respectively researched and with what interest. That means that what we know about the Holocaust is always related to the historical-cultural moments that initially make the Holocaust researchable” (Lücke Interview 2016, 11). From a history-didactic perspective, he emphasizes the importance that knowledge of event history has for the classification of political and social references to the Holocaust:

The Holocaust is still used as an argument in current politics, so historically-minded students who learn about the history of the Holocaust are enabled to speak when it comes to the Holocaust. When the German Federal Minister of the Interior says that migrants must know about Auschwitz and recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist, it is a historical imagery—that people who have researched and worked on the subject of the Holocaust for a long time can better explain, understand, and also reflect, why that is being said today in this specific historical-cultural situation. (Lücke Interview 2016, 11)

Christina Brüning also argues for a teacher education that combines the teaching of historical facts with the examination of the social and political impact of the Holocaust:

I also deal with memory and go to memorial sites with students to reflect on which narrative will be presented to us at this memorial. “What kind of interpretation of history actually happens here?” That is, I believe, a categorical insight that can be obtained in Holocaust memorial sites as well as in Bernauer Strasse [Berlin Wall Memorial] or in Hohenschönhausen in the Stasi prison, once you understand that everything that is put before you has a certain narrative and that’s what you have to deconstruct. Then you have understood how good history teaching works, because this deconstruction competence is what we need to convey. (Brüning Interview 2016, 24)

As outlined here based on interview statements, the controversy within historical Holocaust research on the relationship between event history and aftermath history reflects different research emphases and disciplinary approaches. It shows that Holocaust research in Germany is diverse, but also that the field of research is not as clearly defined as, for example, in US Holocaust Studies.

The question of defining what should and what should not be considered Holocaust research was also relevant to the research design of this study. We included all courses on aftermath history and impact history in the sample. This decision significantly influences the results, since otherwise far fewer courses would have been surveyed. At the same time, the difficulty of demarcation described in the chapter is also reflected in the courses. Thus, there were numerous courses that included event-historical as well as impact-historical and educational teaching components and which were not clearly assignable to one of those categories.

4.5.6 The Discussion about Cultural Studies Research on the Holocaust

As the survey of the courses confirmed, the Holocaust is a subject of study in numerous disciplines. 45 of the 468 courses held still took place in cultural studies courses, in addition to 80 courses in literary studies and another 20 in foreign language philologies (see Chapter 3.2.2). As stated above, around half of all Holocaust-related courses dealt with questions of reappraisal, impact and representation (see Chapter 3.2.1). Thus, the assumed increasing importance of cultural studies topics in teaching about the Holocaust has also been confirmed.

In the interviews, the experts' opinion on the increasing relevance of remembrance culture and the literary and media treatment of the Holocaust was therefore explicitly asked.

The reactions of the interviewees overlap in part with the above-described positions on the increasing importance of research and teaching on aftermath history and impact history. Many of the historians interviewed strongly associated cultural research with a "boom" of research on remembrance culture, which they are largely skeptical about. This skepticism mainly refers to the trend towards memorial cultural research topics in history itself, but also to the study of the Holocaust in other disciplines. At the same time, however, various interviewees stressed that greater interdisciplinarity is perceived as an enrichment to Holocaust research.

In numerous interviews, research on the memory of the Holocaust is referred to as "being in great demand" (Frei), a "boom" (Brüning), in "fashion" (Feuchert) or a "trend" (Bajohr), which after a high point in the 1990s is now in decline. Norbert Frei describes this development as follows:

When I was writing my habilitation dissertation, the term "remembrance culture" was practically nonexistent. And because the term has often been abused, I see with some relief that the peak of the boom seems to be over. Ten years ago, almost everything in the field of history of National-Socialism and its aftermath was viewed only in the medium of memory and reception. No longer the thing in itself, but the memory of the matter was at the center of research and, in part, of teaching too. I saw the latter very critically, because many of our students were able to boast breezily about how the remembrance culture of the Holocaust in the German Federal Republic supposedly or actually evolved, but they knew very little about the Holocaust. In the meantime, this has calmed down a bit. (Frei Interview 2016, 5)

Despite the fundamental emphasis of the need to open up historical Holocaust research for new research perspectives raised by cultural studies questions, the interviewees expressed a general skepticism. The following assessment by Stefanie Schüler-Springorum is paradigmatic for the attitude of the historians interviewed:

I think it's all very interesting. I listen to this with open eyes and ears, but I'm an innately old-fashioned social historian of the 1980s, that's what I learned, and I do think sometimes that the banal basic knowledge is a bit lacking. (Schüler-Springorum Interview 2016, 8)

Various interviewees formulated the criticism that many cultural-historical works lack a historical-empirical basis. Frank Bajohr thus stresses that Holocaust research must open up to current historiographic trends and not be allowed to isolate itself. At the same time, however, he argues that cultural-historical works stand fundamentally under the suspicion that "in the end they're not academic at all, but rather a morally charged fact-checking" (Bajohr Interview 2016, 12). Precisely for this reason, Holocaust research cannot afford to neglect methodological standards in favor of moral approaches, as he observed in some cultural-historical research (ibid.).

The discomfort described on the part of various historians is juxtaposed with the perception of American studies academic Susanne Rohr, who problematizes an unwillingness of historians to open themselves to cultural discourses. She has the impression that historians perceive themselves

as leading the master discourse, about how it really was. And we literary and cultural academics entwine ourselves around it and can make our nice statements and discuss our artworks. And I think it's really difficult that there are still so many colleagues among the historians who insist that there is this master discourse. (Rohr Interview 2016, 16)

In her opinion, this controversy is ultimately about mutual recognition and the legitimacy that you attribute to the respective other research approach (cf. *ibid.*).

Overall, however, the interviews in this study do not paint a particularly confrontational picture. Some of the historians also stressed that they find cultural-academic questions and interdisciplinary cooperation fruitful. Peter Klein, for example, emphasizes that the cultural-academic questions that his students bring to him are definitely also an asset:

Some of my students' questions would not have occurred to me, but they are enriching. Yes, I really evaluate that as an innovative boost. I love empiricism. I come from such a very dry, empirical school of historians, where the truth in the archive is written on paper, but that doesn't stop me from reading very different things on the topic that are of value. (Klein Interview 2016, 13)

Andrea Löw also makes it clear that Holocaust research benefits from multidisciplinary research in which different questions and methods are implemented:

And it is also something else, if for example a psychologist deals with how memory works and why the contemporary witness's memory of these things changes over time. This is research from which we have massively benefited, but which we ourselves cannot do so well because we simply lack the craft. I think it's about different questions and methods, and as a historian I may be interested in other things than a cultural studies specialist. (Löw Interview 2016, 12)

Nicolas Berg, in particular, emphasizes that he does not want to participate in a discourse on demarcating the disciplines, and argues in favor of interdisciplinary Holocaust research because he had already “as a student and up to this day wondered again and again: Why should I deny myself the opportunity to read Paul Celan? It is, so to speak, a bundle of texts that are incorporated into the testimony. And if I can use that, then it's a historical text like any other” (Berg Interview 2016, 17). From his point of view, specialist divisions make it impossible to learn from other disciplines and their approaches:

I don't like this sort of allocating—that's literature, it belongs under literary studies, that's a sociological text, it's what sociologists should research, that's history, I'm a historian, it's mine. I think that's inappropriate and unworthy of the matter. This limits you in a completely arbitrary way and doesn't convey anything for anyone. This is not even about divided responsibilities, there would still be an argument for having divided responsibilities. That's perfectly legitimate, but defending disciplinary boundaries is a problem for me. I believe that, for example, you can learn to read texts or define or understand concepts from literary studies in history. If you keep the subject boundaries it's a defensive discourse from which I find nothing to gain. (Berg Interview 2016, 19)

Sascha Feuchert notes a growing interest among historians in matters of remembrance, and advocates the interdisciplinary expansion of Holocaust research:

How will it be remembered, what is being remembered, and what are the consequences? A broad specialist discourse has emerged and Holocaust research has been extremely broadened overall. Above all, interdisciplinary approaches have increased significantly and I think that's also very good. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 9)

Using the Research Unit for the Study of Holocaust Literature as an example, he makes it clear how such interdisciplinary research can work:

We also always have a historian at the Research Unit. We couldn't do that without a permanent specialist discourse with the historiography. I'll show you this with the Ghetto Chronicle. Of course, there are a lot of philological commentaries—that's purely an editorial philology, so to speak. But then you see here: there is a huge historical annotation to some of the historical circumstances. We couldn't do our work appropriately without historians. And of course, the same applies to our research on other texts and memories. The things that historians have researched and found out about respective matters always play a role. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 14)

The question of how a well-founded historical basis can be ensured in literary and cultural studies courses is discussed by Sascha Feuchert and Susanne Rohr. Using the example of one of his courses, Sascha Feuchert underlines the necessity of a historical basis for the literary examination of the Holocaust:

I had a seminar on camp literature about Buchenwald and memorial work. This was prepared in two intensive block seminars, and one of these block seminars was dedicated exclusively to the history of Buchenwald Concentration Camp and concentration camps in Germany. So this basis has to be there, otherwise they can only discuss literary representations meaninglessly, to a great extent, because they don't know how the presentation actually relates to that which is represented. For this they need this historical knowledge. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 16)

The American studies specialist Susanne Rohr also affirms this necessity, as well as the concern of historians stated above that the facts could be overshadowed by the forms of representation. "I think you can have this fear, you must have it, and you should have it" (Rohr Interview 2016, 17). She describes how, for example, she builds her classes on Holocaust comedies, and that she begins with an exploration of documentary representations like *Night and Fog* in order to have the opportunity of taking "the distance that the comedy form creates between itself and the events" (ibid.). In the interview, Susanne Rohr deals proactively with the problem of possible evasion described above:

In class, I also noticed that it is important here in Germany to pull away this protective layer that certain forms of representation offer us, such as the comedy. It may also be a psychological question, that we like to get into it because it is easier to bear. You always have to make sure that you take this protection away and expose oneself to the horror. Without that it is not possible, that is my experience after many years of dealing with this topic. (Rohr Interview 2016, 18)

The statements of the interviewees on the increasing importance of cultural studies in Holocaust research make it clear that Holocaust research in Germany is traditionally dominated by historical-empirical approaches. In the course of the increasing general significance of cultural-historical research, a cautious opening for corresponding questions seems to take place. Several interviewees also highlight the relevance of interdisciplinary cooperation, with cultural and literary scholars particularly emphasizing the need to incorporate the historical perspective into their research. For university teaching, this results in the challenge of ensuring a sound historical basis for literary and cultural studies courses.

4.6 Teaching about the Holocaust in Germany

In order to be able to illustrate the current state of university teaching about the Holocaust in Germany, the results of the empirical study of academic calendars described in chapter 3 are supplemented below with experts' individual teaching experiences as expressed in the interviews.

One of the central assumptions of this study was that teaching the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust in the country of the perpetrators poses special challenges. This assumption, which was explicitly taken up in the interviews, is confirmed by almost all interviewees and substantiated in various aspects.

After a presentation of what is described by the interviewees as the particularities of the academic examination of the Holocaust in Germany (1) a second section is devoted to the resulting special teaching scenarios and activities described in the interviews (2) The following describes how the interviewees perceive the interest and motivation of the students (3) and what forms of defense mechanisms they encounter (4). Finally, the research-leading questions on the role of family biographical connections (5) and the importance of migrant backgrounds and experiences in the interviewees' day-to-day teaching are addressed (6).

4.6.1 Teaching about the Holocaust in Germany

Most of the experts we surveyed generally agree with the statement that teaching the history of the Holocaust in Germany poses particular challenges not only for students, but also for teachers.

German responsibility for the Holocaust has implications for conveying the topic. For example, Nicolas Berg emphasizes the peculiarity that the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust in Germany is about their own history, about the "we-history." The fact that the history is about parents, grandparents or great-grandparents makes the approach special: "We do not get it into an enclosed space, in which it is sitting almost archivally. It is the inheritance, there is a presence, as it were, up to the materiality of the traditional—through the places or through the traditions that are connected with them" (Berg Interview 2016, 29). Norbert Frei also points to a "political-moral difference" in dealing with the Holocaust in Germany, which is due to the—albeit now less significant—biographical references: "The subject is still, now as before, not just any old historical topos" (Frei Interview 2016, 5).

In this context, Frank Bajohr emphasizes the challenge of analyzing the moral implications of historical responsibility academically:

At the same time the academic claim must, of course, be that of being able to approach such a topic, even with a correspondingly distant, analytical perspective. These things need to be clear so that they can be included in the historical analysis or even made the subject of analysis: to what extent are there family ties and traditions that still determine the approach to this topic today? You can make that a topic analytically as well. (Bajohr Interview 2016, 24)

Some of the interviewees regard dealing with emotional reactions as a special challenge for teaching. Using the example of the master program at Touro College, Peter Klein describes how when designing courses about the Holocaust, it must generally be taken into consideration that dealing with the topic can be both emotionally demanding and overtaxing for students.

We have a topic here that you have to approach with a certain emotional budget. During the study we had two persons who said: Although I'm doing exactly what I imagined, I have to tell you honestly now that I cannot endure it. It takes a certain emotional attitude, and if I put something like the working with survivors' memories into focus right away in the first semester, then it can backfire. (Klein Interview 2016, 14)

Sascha Feuchert describes this particular feature with the example of his perception of different reactions of German and American students during a visit to the Buchenwald Memorial:

While German students are tense and try to classify that emotionally, the American students I was there with often went according to the motto "We Americans ended this. We freed this camp." They had different interests, and they therefore even dealt with the texts quite differently. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 21)

The fact that every examination of the Holocaust requires thinking about German responsibility affects not only the students, but the teachers too. Susanne Rohr thus addresses the importance of dealing with the question of guilt and emphasizes that for her, as a German who teaches in Germany about the Holocaust, it is a particular challenge to take up this question meaningfully in teaching:

Of course this is a question that is very different in Germany than, for example, in the US. That's the key difference, and I think it's important that it's not forgotten or put aside. For me this is also the challenge in terms of my own position as a teacher, how do I take this up and not flee into the representation form. (Rohr Interview 2016, 26)

4.6.2 Methodological Challenges in Teaching

The particularities of examining the Holocaust in Germany outlined above are met by the interviewees with various methodical teaching scenarios. Didactic aspects were not explicitly addressed in the interviews. Nonetheless, exemplary methodological questions and approaches can be worked out that show how the interviewees deal specifically with the described particularities in teaching. Here (a) the tension between emotional involvement and academic distance is taken up and (b) special challenges in teacher education are addressed. In addition, (c) excursions are highlighted as an important methodological approach.

a) Dealing with the tension between emotional involvement and academic distance

The moral implications of the topic and the resulting emotional responses of students are simultaneously perceived as positive and challenging. Frank Bajohr thus emphasizes the need to consider emotional responses and to deal with them competently. The emotional involvement of the students has a positive impact because it generates interest in the topic. At the same time, a certain emotional distance is necessary to assume an analytical position. The teaching must do justice to this tension (cf. Bajohr Interview 2016, 24). Dealing with this tension is brought up in various interviews.

Norbert Frei reasons similarly to Bajohr and emphasizes that it is important that he himself, through analogous questions such as family connections, not introduce “a sentimentalization or simple prescientific emotionalization, which the students certainly bring along in many cases” (Frei Interview 2016, 10) into the lectures. Instead, it is up to the instructor to convey that it is also about treating the topic of the Holocaust with academic professionalism. He clearly points out that this does not mean that he “wants to have a ‘cold talk’ on this topic” (ibid.), but rather that he would like to convey to the students that the topic is to be dealt with precisely and not with an everyday vocabulary (cf. ibid.).

Peter Klein describes an example of how, in teaching, he deals with emotional involvement and students' feeling overwhelmed by leaving room for discussion and processing in order to then be able to continue working on the topic:

How can you describe “Operation Reinhardt” or the uprising of the Sonderkommando in Auschwitz without getting really close to the topics? At such fixed points or crystallization points, you notice that they are majorly struggling with the text or the situation. And then you just have to leave room for something like that to be silently accepted and then articulated. So especially for individual documents that are really particularly brutal, you also want to address, as a historian, what is behind it. I'll then ask to take a break and then I open the windows. Then you notice how they all get back on their feet again. (Klein Interview 2016, 19)

Nicolas Berg emphasizes the importance of students' first encounter with the topic of the Holocaust. Using the example of a course he taught at Goethe University Frankfurt, he describes his approach of enabling students to place their personal approaches and personal experiences on an academic level:

People's first encounter with the topic of the Holocaust should be taken seriously. In the process, you also realize that you yourself as a teacher don't know everything either. Since the students chose the topics in my seminar, a very special canon of topics and texts was created that I could not have planned for. I did not want to duplicate my own 1990s canon, and so I had more foreknowledge than the speakers at about half of the sessions; at the other half of the sessions, I sat down and made an effort to get up to speed with the students, so to speak. I call this seminar “basic questions”[Grundfragen]—basic questions, not foundations [Grundlagen]—and have concluded every session and tried to distill from the presentation something like the basic question that can be applied again on other occasions. People were worried about their choice of topic and then tried, encouraged by me, to understand it, to make it academic, and to see it in a more detached way. (Berg Interview 2016, 22)

Christina Brüning emphasizes that the fact that the Holocaust still plays a special role in the public sphere, in social debates and also in school lessons in Germany, has consequences for its conveyance in university teaching (cf. Brüning Interview 2016, 21). Andrea Löw accordingly sees a key challenge in, for example, finding a way of narrating that ensures that interest in the topic is aroused. “So to find some way of teaching that will make sure you do not arrive at this ‘But I know it all, I know that and I cannot bear to hear it anymore.’ That’s the very special thing about this topic, because it’s so important” (Löw Interview 2016, 24). According to Löw, in terms of methodology it functions thus, for example, with access through biographies and individual cases.

Susanne Rohr too talks about the need to arouse interest in the topic. She explicitly mentions the medium of film or graphic novel in order to attract students of American and cultural studies to the topic. “In my opinion, students are very interested in the topic, but only if they are involved with the topic in a very specific way. And that works especially well if you stay in the forms of presentation that the students know” (Rohr Interview 2016, 22).

The challenges that faculty face in higher education also affect teacher education, which is discussed below.

b) Special Challenges of Teacher Education

Chapter 4.4.8 was already dedicated to institutional questions about teaching the Holocaust in teacher education. The following section describes the challenges and concrete teaching practices mentioned in interviews with three didactics experts. The aspect of “arousing interest” is particularly relevant for students studying to become teachers. It is necessary to arouse interest in dealing with the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust so that teachers will later be able to teach the topics in an up-to-date way in school lessons. In principle, it cannot be the goal of teacher training to treat all specialist topics in the study in detail. Rather, students should be enabled to acquire knowledge on various topic areas themselves and to prepare this knowledge didactically.⁸⁹

According to the history didactics experts interviewed, for many aspiring teachers the topic of the Holocaust is burdened with concerns that high social expectations are placed on history teaching on the topic, and that school students may react both defensively and as if oversaturated with the topic. There is therefore a desire to teach a solid basic knowledge on the topic. Christina Brüning describes that prospective lower and middle secondary school teachers, who later have to teach many different subjects, particularly require a very broad knowledge of various topics and disciplines that is difficult to cover during their studies. “This leads to the school-teaching being very book-heavy sometimes, because a teacher who is insecure picks up a book, sticks to it, and says now we’re learning on a page-by-page basis” (Brüning Interview 2016, 17).

Martin Lücke describes how the discourse about students’ alleged lack of interest in the topic of the Holocaust influences the approach of students, who in principle have a great interest in getting to know didactic concepts of conveyance:

The students know this is a relevant topic, that’s important, and then they’re just thinking about how they can teach it so it flashes and crashes and then somehow rains feathers from the ceiling of the classroom. You then have to say, “No, take the topic seriously and try to develop realistic didactic concepts.” And then they are also very motivated to go to school with the concepts. They are then actually surprised that the students’ interest is so great. There is indeed a great interest in school to do something that sounds conservative at first sight: first of all, to convey data and facts about the Holocaust. The students have all already read the Diary of Anne Frank, but they lack a basic overview knowledge. (Lücke Interview 2016, 15)

⁸⁹ The relationship between academic and didactic competencies expected of history teachers and the reality of university teacher education has long been criticized (cf. e.g. Pandel 2005, 45-48).

Sascha Feuchert subsequently describes the challenge of literary didactics using the example of one of his seminars, in which three novels were examined to determine whether they were suitable for school lessons. He stresses the need, as Martin Lücke explained earlier, to convey historical facts before students can turn to the fictional text and later use it in the classroom:

So the seminar had a clear didactic focus. We watched David Saffer's 28 Tage lang ["For 28 Days"] [Saffer 2015], Gudrun Pausewang's Der einhändige Briefträger ["The One-Handed Postman"] [Pausewang 2015] and John Boyne's The Boy in Striped Pajamas [Boyne 2009]. We have evaluated whether these texts are suitable for school or not. And especially The Boy in Striped Pajamas, which is currently being used heavily in schools and, as I fear, is being dealt with in an unreflective manner, caused some really controversial discussions to emerge, which I think is very good. If you are not very careful with this novel and work very well with the learning group, you convey a completely false picture of the Holocaust. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 17)

Martin Lücke and Sascha Feuchert make it clear that in particular, the different points of time at which the Holocaust is addressed in various school subjects poses a challenge: Only in grade 9 [students between the ages of 14 and 15] does the syllabus include history lessons on National Socialism and the Holocaust. At this point, students have already dealt with the topic in other subjects, such as German and religion. For the teachers of these subjects, the challenge arises to teach historical basics on the topic. For this reason, history teachers are often confronted with students' feeling oversaturated. This problem cannot be solved in higher education. Interdisciplinary offers for teachers of various disciplines could however at least lead to teachers who are better qualified.

c) The Importance of Excursions to Places of Nazi Crimes

As the survey of the courses showed, an excursion was offered in almost a quarter of the Holocaust courses (see Chapter 3.2.1). The importance of excursions to memorial sites for the victims of Nazi Regime is also evident in the interviews. Nicolas Berg, Susanne Rohr, Sascha Feuchert, Christina Brüning, and Cornelia Siebeck report about their experiences with excursions in their interviews. Although the descriptions show that the excursions were associated with very different approaches and issues, the interviews show how important topographical references are for teaching. In order to clarify the different approaches, in the following examples, different goals and issues of memorial visits mentioned by the interviewees in the context of courses are presented.

Nicolas Berg describes the meaning of the sites of National Socialist crimes for the conveyance and understanding of history:

The crazy thing about the topic of the Holocaust is that no matter where you are, you can make an excursion to original sites. You don't have to go to Auschwitz, you can stay in the vicinity: forced labor camps in the city, concentration camps, Gestapo prisons. In Bremen as well as in Überlingen on Lake Constance or from Freiburg to nearby Alsace, where Natzweiler-Struthof Concentration Camp is located. That alone is an insight that has to be acquired. This is not just a lesson in a seminar session, but it suddenly comes to mind that there are remnants of the event everywhere. There is a pre-linguistic element: of course, you prepare an excursion and give a presentation and listen to a lot and read a lot, that's all verbal, but then to inspect such a place, that's something else, something that remains partially pre-linguistic and is sustainable too. (Berg Interview 2016, 27)

Christina Brüning also refers to the sustainability described by Berg. She addresses the criticism of some history didactics experts that historical-political learning at memorial sites for victims of the Nazi Regime is problematic because students are so overwhelmed by the "erratic" places that the emotional distance necessary for a reflected historical consciousness is no longer available. She counters this:

I know that shock is not a goal of learning, but in fact being emotionally affected when entering a memorial can also be a good starting point for historical learning. But what has to be done afterwards is the critical reflection of this concern." (Brüning Interview 2016, 25)

When she visits memorial sites with students, she is less concerned with conveying historical facts than with “reflecting: which narrative is presented at this memorial? What interpretation of history is actually taking place?” (ibid.). For her, it is important to give her students the insight that “everything that is presented as historical culture, whether it is a museum or a memorial or a radio piece, has a certain narrative [...] that you have to deconstruct. Then you have understood how good history teaching works. Because this deconstruction competence is what we have to convey” (ibid.).

Cornelia Siebeck, whose courses focus on the historical formation of meaning in public space, also describes “understanding the non-self-explanatory nature” of memorial sites as the central goal of her courses:

I do not tell stories about places in my classes, as you might do on an excursion with a historic topic that can be illustrated at specific sites. My aim is to teach the students a reflexive-analytical view of spatial memory practices. This means to understand that monuments and memorials are not self-explanatory. In the sense that it becomes clear that such sites do not exist, because their existence is the most natural thing in the world. But that they have emerged under certain historical and historical cultural conditions and that there are always socio-politically motivated actors who have specific agendas and want to tell certain stories and incorporate them in the public space. (Siebeck Interview 2016, 13)

The three challenges extracted from the interviews and the methodological approaches described exemplify how teachers deal practically with the particularities of teaching about the Holocaust. In particular, the tension between emotional involvement (and possibly being overwhelmed) and the necessary academic distance is emphasized as a special challenge. In addition, the educators interviewed emphasize the special difficulties they face in teacher education about the Holocaust because prospective teachers are afraid of the topic. This situation made it all the more urgent that basic historical knowledge and didactic concepts of conveyance on the topic of the Holocaust be taught to students of various disciplines studying to become teachers. In addition, the interviewees confirm the great importance that topographical references have for teaching about the Holocaust. It is interesting that the descriptions of the interviewees make it clear that excursions to memorial sites for victims of the Nazi Regime are associated with very different goals and issues.

4.6.3 Student Interest and Motivation

In the interviews, the experts were asked how they perceived the interest and motivation of students attending their classes. The fact that the interviewees regard the students as fundamentally interested and open-minded towards the topic may be related, among other things, to the fact that virtually all the courses offered by the interviewees about the Holocaust are not compulsory but elective.

Norbert Frei states that “intrinsic motives” are strong among students in courses on the Holocaust and “that compared to an averagely attended advanced seminar, interest in such a topic is still above average. So I would not say that topics like the Holocaust or the Nazi era are more attractive than any others, but they attract more than average. That is my impression” (Frei Interview 2016, 10). Various interviews illustrate how this intrinsic interest is expressed. For example, Sascha Feuchert reports that he sees a great deal of student interest in his seminars.

This can be seen in the evaluations “and also by the fact that quite a few come back. You often have that in courses like this. For example now, five or six students from the last seminar, who simply want to participate, have just registered for the new seminar” (Feuchert Interview 2016, 19). Susanne Heim reports similar in the field of political science, where students took part in her seminars without the need for a certificate of achievement (Heim Interview 2016, 23).

Another particular feature that becomes clear in the courses is students’ pronounced extracurricular commitment in the museum and memorial area. Students often bring a great deal of prior knowledge with them that they have attained in internships or activities at memorial sites for victims of the Nazi Regime. Cornelia Siebeck summarizes the importance of this aspect:

There are actually always three or four people who already know a lot and are sound theoretically too. They can give great support to a seminar. And these are students who often give the impression that they are moving towards a doctorate and who then do internships at memorial sites and museums—who are very active in this area. (Siebeck Interview 2016, 15)

Christina Brüning also emphasizes the interest and socio-political commitment of students outside the university “which brings another level of reflection into the seminars” (Brüning Interview 2016, 14). This working atmosphere also makes it easier and more interesting for her as a lecturer to teach the subject (ibid.). “I have the impression,” explains Frank Bajohr, “that there is a particularly dedicated type of student at these courses, people for whom the topic is not just any old topic, but one that they consider important in a special way.” (Bajohr Interview 2016, 21). He also has the experience that this commitment manifests itself in activities in extracurricular institutions such as memorial sites in Dachau or Hadamar. Susanne Heim confirms these statements with her experiences at the Otto Suhr Institute for Political Science at Freie Universität Berlin: “There are often people here who worked in the Holocaust Memorial, the Jewish Museum, or the House of the Wannsee Conference. And they are, of course, often very advanced in terms of knowledge and interest in specific issues” (Heim Interview 2016, 23).

Nicolas Berg describes how the special political commitment and special interest of the students for the academic debate in teaching can also be a challenge:

There were very informed people who were well-read and also interested in politics. It was not so easy to depoliticize that a little bit, because of course there are also discussions about Auschwitz that don't have a political character, in either a positive or a negative sense. Sometimes I have the feeling that the more epistemological interest in the Holocaust there is, the more sustainable it is. This should not invalidate the fact that to develop a left-wing identity you'll need, after 1945, to have a concept of the event context of "Auschwitz." But it's also a burden for the matter. It does not automatically help to have a leftist access to history. (Berg Interview 2016, 24)

In addition to the described intrinsic interest, pragmatic motivations are also mentioned. For example, Susanne Heim reports that political science students express the motivation to have appropriate historical knowledge for later political debates. At the same time, they would also choose the courses according to pragmatic study criteria (Heim Interview 2016, 23). The motivation of students studying to become teachers is often to be better prepared for their later work. Christina Brüning and Martin Lücke both agree that future teachers are motivated by the fear that they won't know enough about the Holocaust and thus not be sufficiently prepared for their role as history teachers, as well as having a great interest in pondering the concrete concepts of conveyance (cf. Brüning Interviews 2016, 15; Lücke Interview 2016, 16).

In summary, many of the students attending Holocaust courses have a special interest in the topic and are motivated to learn more. It often happens that students are also involved with the topic outside the university. For some students, left-wing political attitudes also play a role, and that can pose a challenge for university teachers. In the field of history didactics, the motivation of students studying to be teachers is foremost to be well-prepared for school teaching.

4.6.4 Experiences with Students' Defensive Reactions

The question of students reacting defensively against the course topics or trying to avoid them was discussed in the interviews. As already mentioned, in most cases the students chose the courses themselves. The experts interviewed reported predominantly motivated students who showed few openly defensive reactions.

Cornelia Siebeck reports on a situation in which the discussion of the Nazi past initially encountered a defensive reaction. As part of a module on social sciences didactics, she offered a seminar on the preparing of memorial site visits, in which a multi-day excursion to Buchenwald Memorial was to take place:

There were students who came here because they were interested. But for many it was a compulsory course that followed a previous course. And some of them were initially defensive. Their argument was that they had not expected it and that it was now simply required of them. They thought that this was an imposition to suddenly have to deal with this topic and then have to even spend entire days at Buchenwald. The attendance was, of course, not actually mandatory. Two or three of them did not come along either, but made a shorter trip to a memorial in the region on their own. I was able to convert all the others, so to speak. Over time it became clear to me that some of them were just afraid to go to Buchenwald. These are not people who are constantly involved with memorials and with this past. For them, a memorial on such a site is a threatening monolith that expects something from them that they cannot live up to. We then systematically dealt with what a memorial really is, how it works, and everything that you can do there. Thus it became a real place for them, and when we were there they realized that it was an opportunity for them to pursue their own questions and interests. (Siebeck Interview 2016, 15)

The fact that the course mentioned is the only compulsory course reported in this study could explain why no refusals and few openly articulated defensive reactions were otherwise perceived.

“It may well be,” Frank Bajohr remarks in this context, “that the correspondingly large commitment, which applies to some of the students, is also faced by others who do not want to have anything to do with the topic a priori. But they never come into our field of vision” (Bajohr Interview 2016, 22). Wolfgang Benz sees it similarly:

First of all, those who have reservations about the topic didn't show up; secondly, if you have something against Jews, you aren't going to say that to the director of the Research Center on Anti-Semitism. There was never a rejection from students. Of course, I don't know who may have gotten disgusted after three visits to lectures and then never came back. (Benz Interview 2016, 11)

While students who attend events that deal explicitly with the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust rarely articulate an openly defensive reaction, Cornelia Siebeck occasionally makes other observations in her thematically more general seminars:

Emotional reactions to the Nazi topic have, in my opinion, by no means been resolved. I observe this in my courses, how some feel attacked. It's more about these historical-cultural and historical-political issues. But always in the post-Nazi context. And then the topic comes through the back door, so to speak, when you look at how different actors dealt with this past at different times. And when dealing with this meta-level, these German emotional states also surface again and again. When there is a controversial discussion, some people quickly find themselves feeling misunderstood, attacked and delegitimized. This may be different in seminars dealing explicitly with Nazi history or the Holocaust. Those who want to may go there, and those who do not volunteer will know what they need to be prepared for and what the language rules are. (Siebeck Interview 2016, 17)

Even if the interviewees unanimously report that their students seldom openly refuse to respond to the courses, various hidden or more indirect forms of defense are also perceived. For example, Norbert Frei reports that the simultaneous observation of an articulated oversaturation on the one hand and the lack of historical knowledge on the other hand (cf. Zülsdorf-Kersting 2007), which is familiar from research on school teaching, can also apply to university teaching:

Young people in particular are full of normative demands and postulates, and they react to the teacher in school when he uses the term “Holocaust” by closing their eyes, because they have heard this a hundred times. But if you ask more precisely or if you start to take an interest in a particular point, you find out—contrary to the postulate “But we all know that, we have already heard it a thousand times”: they actually know very little and you can command their attention. I still think that with concrete documents, with a concrete story that is perhaps age-appropriate too, you can still arouse their interest and not just ask their opinions. This is ultimately true for university students too, not just in schools. (Frei Interview 2016, 6)

Various experts also perceive forms of guilt-based defensive reactions. Thus Frank Bajohr describes the reactions of students to questions in which the guilt and responsibility of Germans as a whole is an issue:

Particularly in courses that involve societal participation, a being part of it, students ask themselves more quickly about how they might have behaved and also accept this as a form of personal challenge. Or they may find themselves involved in a different way with regard to their own family members or ancestors. And that leads some to—as Harald Welzer has already worked out—suddenly assume strangely defensive positions that are neither asked for nor required. (Bajohr Interview 2016, 24; with reference to Welzer et al., 2002)

Susanne Rohr too emphasizes the necessity of dealing with questions of guilt and responsibility in courses when students respond defensively and formulate, for example, that “they had nothing to do with it” (cf. Rohr Interview 2016, 26). Christina Brüning reports that students emphasize the suffering of Germans during the Second World War and thus carry out exculpatory perpetrator-victim shifts:

These are stories their grandparents had experienced as children, and that's where I first experienced a tense shift, because they quickly equate the topic of the Holocaust with the war, and then these refugee stories often come out about the granny from Silesia. And that may be a terminological lapse linguistically, but you can also say that it is a sign of a shift in society that the victim status of the dominant German society is emphasized: “We indeed have suffered too,” and then the story comes out about refugee grandparents, and the focus goes away from the real perpetrator-victim perspective, and people who have worked as flak artillery assistants are equated with those who were in concentration camps. (Brüning Interview 2016, 23)

Susanne Heim has found that students approach the Holocaust in an emotional way that prevents them from really engaging with the topic: “Some say it’s all terrible, deal with it emotionally and think, with conviction and inner distancing, that they’re done. Instead of looking at it and thinking about what actually happened or even developing questions” (Heim Interview 2016, 25). She also refers to latent defensive attitudes and the downplaying of National Socialism that are unconsciously expressed by students. It happens that students in lectures are “uncertain about the vocabulary” and “unthinkingly adopt Nazi technocratic terms, and then think that eugenics and euthanasia are the same thing.”

I have never had anyone in a seminar out themselves as a Holocaust denier or right-wing extremist. It’s more of about uncertainty, lack of awareness, and not engaging in it intensively, and then such linguistic faux pas can occur. (Heim Interview 2016, 26)

Using the example of a seminar session on the topic of memorial site pedagogy in a seminar on the preparing of memorial visits, in which some students alleged in a generalizing way that Jewish memorial site visitors had “thoughts of revenge,” Cornelia Siebeck describes the challenge of encountering such resentment on a reflexive level without having the seminar participants accuse each other of being anti-Semitic or right-wing extremists:

A tense mood prevailed, even with me. At the same time, I didn’t want that to escalate. I then solved this in such a way that I discussed different experiences with the Nazi topic in various Jewish contexts. This is what other participants have done, and it became clear that at least none of us had ever come up with “thoughts of revenge,” and a single “Jewish perspective” does not exist. On this basis, we could then talk about German fear of revenge and anti-Semitic projections. (Siebeck Interview 2016, 18)

In these and similar situations, Cornelia Siebeck got the impression that students are sometimes surprised by their own resentment when dealing with the Nazi past:

I often wonder who or what is actually speaking in those moments. My experience is that when you question that and open it up for reflection, people are surprised at what they themselves said. At least those who claim to be otherwise reasonably informed. (Siebeck Interview 2016, 18)

It should be noted that interviewees report that most students were very motivated and rarely reacted in an openly negative way towards the courses. Nevertheless—and this is particular to Germany—in connection with questions of guilt and responsibility, it is possible to observe defensive and exculpatory reactions and resentments again and again on the part of students. The interviewees are also able to report on a latent defensiveness and a downplaying of National Socialism, mostly voiced unconsciously.

4.6.5 Students' Biographical Family References

One of the assumptions of the present study was that biographical family connections in the country of the perpetrators are significant for the teaching of the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust. The question arose as to what role the “communicative transmission” of victim or hero narratives from the generations of children and grandchildren, as described in the 2002 study *Grandpa wasn't a Nazi*, played with students in 2017 (cf. Welzer et al. 2002: 11). Since today's students are only linked through their families to the so-called war generation in the third or even fourth generation, the probability that many of them have had personal contact with people who consciously experienced the Nazi era is low. Assuming that family transmission of certain narratives can nevertheless be significant, the experts were asked in the interviews if students in the courses thematized biographical references.

As already stated, the relevance of German responsibility for the Holocaust in teaching the topic in universities becomes clear at various points in the interviews. Nicolas Berg particularly emphasizes the relevance of the fact that the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust in Germany is that of the parents, grandparents or great-grandparents, and thus a “we-history” and an “inheritance” (cf. Berg Interview 2016, 29). The forms of defensive reactions to remembrance and guilt described in the last chapter are to be interpreted as reactions to this “inheritance.”

Various interviewees reflect situations in which students have thematized family relationships, but at the same time describe their perception that these relationships are decreasing. For example, Wolfgang Benz reports on previous experiences with students who wanted to research family members who were Nazi perpetrators or victims. “It does not usually prove to be either conducive or stimulating to research. Of course, I have always strongly discouraged doing the state exam or master's thesis on their own grandparents” (Benz Interview 2016, 12).

Frank Bajohr had also been approached by students or visitors at public lectures because they recognized their own great-uncle in his lecture, for example. Such direct references, however, are becoming increasingly rare as the distance to historical events increases. Students do talk about their great-grandparents, “but in many cases they are no longer alive.

In that sense, the direct biographical reference has become looser, I think, but it is probably still hidden there in many cases” (Bajohr Interview 2016, 23). Bajohr reports that this hidden relevance of family relationships is particularly evident in courses that address the behavior of the German population in the Nazi era. As described above, students would often take the question of German guilt and responsibility “as a form of personal challenge” (ibid., 24). Susanne Heim also describes how in her courses, family relationships are rarely brought up, but if they are, then it is mostly about distant relatives. She had the impression that the students know biographical references “as a figure of argumentation, but not necessarily from their own family” (Heim Interview 2016, 24).

Using the example of a German-Israeli seminar in which students from both countries could exchange their biographies on an online learning platform, Martin Lücke describes differences between Israeli and German students in the thematization of family relations to National Socialism and the Holocaust: While Israeli students described the persecution history of their grandparents as part of their own biographies, German students, to characterize themselves, reported that “they are interested in critical theory, that they have a cat, and that they are now looking for an apartment in Neukölln” (Lücke Interview 2016, 19). In the subsequent discussion of how this non-thematization of family ties may be a form of concealment, it became clear that references to National Socialism and the Holocaust do not seem to be evident or have played any role in many German families. Martin Lücke emphasizes that this does not mean that German students would deny the responsibility of German society. Family relationships to it are no longer produced and have been replaced by references to historical culture. The students “criticize the way of dealing with this responsibility without withdrawing from it” (ibid.).

Lücke's description is contrasted with the experiences of other experts, who clearly answer the question of the thematization of biographical references and include them in the courses. Peter Klein, for example, reports on students at Touro College:

When I come out of the German Federal Archives with my students and they noticed that they can access all of the Nazi Party membership cards and research SS memberships there, then as a rule my forthcoming consultation hours will be full. And everyone says the same thing: we would like to get a grip on our great-grandfather or great-grandmother, so to speak. (Klein Interview 2016, 19)

Sascha Feuchert describes how he utilizes family biographical references in teaching to some extent.

Especially when we do memorial site seminars with literature, the students may undertake family research and can reflect this back into the seminar. Didactically, this is also called the creation of a reference to the surrounding world. This is very important and they can do this very directly here: the reference to the surrounding world is namely their own family. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 20)

At the same time he also mentions students who, without this activation, deal with the fact that they are descendants of victims or perpetrators. When asked whether the importance of family relationships has decreased, he answers:

Families are still families. What changes is the reference. In my generation it was our grandparents, whom we often personally knew, who were part of the generation that experienced these events. With today's students it is their great-grandparents, whom they most likely never knew personally. In this respect, however, their interest is also less burdened and more free. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 20)

The interviewees' descriptions confirm the assumption that family biographical connections in Germany are important for teaching the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust. In spite of the fact that, with an ever-increasing distance from historical events, direct family relationships are becoming rarer, various interviewees report that family history is thematized in courses and also deliberately used didactically to some extent. The fact that the history of National Socialism is "our own" history plays an important role, particularly in dealing with German guilt and responsibility.

4.6.6 A Culturally Diverse Society

The structure of German society has changed significantly since the end of the Second World War due to various migration processes. A significant number of today's students have no direct family connection to the Holocaust. On the question of how the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust should be conveyed in schools in a migrant or immigrant society, various studies have appeared in the past 15 years (cf. i.a. Alavi 1998, Georgi 2003, Hormel/Scherr 2004, Gryglewski 2013, Fava 2015). According to the 20th Social Survey of Student Services, 23 percent of students in Germany have a migrant background (cf. BMBF 2013, 520). Based on the assumption that the challenges described in the studies mentioned could also be relevant for university teaching, it was asked in the experts' interviews if the migrant background of students plays a role in the daily routine of the interviewees. The majority of the experts interviewed answered this question in the negative.

Several interviewees have the impression that few students with migrant backgrounds attend their courses. The experts interviewed who have had experiences with this group of students in their courses do not report, for example, any particular defensive reactions. Against the background of this experience, Wolfgang Benz clearly rejects taking the migrant background of students in his history course into account:

The Holocaust is a topic of German history, it is treated thus, and it must be received thus. It does not matter if I'm from Syria, Albania, or Italy. I have always made that clear and never had such a problem, for example, as if Muslims were to reveal to me that, because of their origin and religiosity, it doesn't concern them. That was never the case. On the contrary, there have always been people from Islamic or other religions who have sought contact with this institute [Research Center on Anti-Semitism] and have worked in this field. (Benz Interview 2016, 12)

Overall, it became clear in the interviews that the topic was very widely perceived as a research subject. This particularly applies to the works of Viola Georgi (Georgi 2003) and Rosa Fava (Fava 2015). In terms of teaching, however, it is above all the didactic experts interviewed—Christina Brüning, Sascha Feuchert and Martin Lücke—who emphasize the importance of dealing with the topic. Sascha Feuchert reports on his experiences with students studying to become teachers with migrant backgrounds in his courses on Holocaust literature:

We have a relatively large number of students of Turkish descent who study at the University of Giessen, where interest is much more pronounced. There are also frequently reconfirming questions if we have already completed the historic section. I clearly noticed that there is a greater interest in facts. Why this is so, I cannot say exactly at the moment, but I notice that. Anything I could say now would be a generalization and would probably be wrong. But perhaps these students' interest is greater because they attended school here themselves with a migration experience, and are now considering how as future teachers they can make it different and better later on. In any case I have not asked them yet. (Feuchert Interview 2016, 22)

Martin Lücke has also noticed that a comparatively high number of students with migrant backgrounds are studying at Freie Universität Berlin:

We have a lot of students, especially in our teacher training studies, who we would describe with the “migration background” label. But in fact almost only in teacher training studies. Teacher training courses are, classically, a bit like degree programs for the upwardly mobile. We have the largest share of non-academic children, we have the largest proportion of people with a so-called migration background. That means, it is actually a quantitatively attested phenomenon. (Lücke Interview 2016, 17)

It should be noted, however, that in total the migrant background of students plays no role in the teaching routine of interviewees: There have been neither reports of any particular defensive responses nor of any particular interest shown on the part of students with migration backgrounds. The didactic experts emphasize that according to what they see, a comparatively high number of students with migration backgrounds are studying to become teachers. As an object of historical-didactic teaching and research, however, the topic plays an important role.

5 Conclusion

Teaching about the Holocaust at German universities had up till now been inadequately researched. For this reason, we are breaking new ground with this study: for the first time, a systematic overview of the scope and content of academic teaching about the Holocaust in Germany has been provided. The two-stage survey method, which combines an empirical evaluation of the academic calendars of a total of 79 universities with a content analysis of interviews with 13 designated experts, makes it possible to gauge the status quo both quantitatively and qualitatively. The combination of the collected data with the experiences and assessments of the experts makes it possible to draw a differentiated picture of academic teaching about the Holocaust in Germany, highlighting particularities, answering questions, and showing what still remains to be done.

How extensive is teaching on the topic of the Holocaust in Germany?

The basic question of the extent to which the Holocaust is taught at German universities can be initially answered in the results of the evaluation of the academic calendars: In the four semesters studied, 468 courses on the Holocaust and 526 courses on National Socialism were offered at 79 universities. The result of around 117 courses per semester about the Holocaust appears at first like more than it is upon closer inspection. This means that at each of the 79 universities, an average of 1.5 interdisciplinary Holocaust-related courses were offered per semester (see Chapter 3.2.1, Figure 1). It should be noted that this study deliberately used a relatively broad definition of what constitutes a Holocaust-based course. The term “Holocaust” included the persecution and murder of the Sinti and Roma, and the patients of sanitariums and nursing homes. Also included were courses dedicated to the gradual disenfranchisement and exclusion of Jews in Germany during the 1930s and in the occupied territories from the beginning of the war. Furthermore, the survey was not limited to the actual history of the Holocaust, but also included lectures from different disciplines on the aftermath and impact history, as well as the pedagogical, literary and medial reappraisal of the topic. A limitation to courses that only relate to the historical events in the period from 1933 to 1945 would have produced a completely different picture: We have surveyed about 38 such courses per semester, which is an average of half an event per university per semester (see Chapter 3.2.1, Table 2). This finding demonstrates that there is no guarantee of regular and basic courses of study on the history of the Holocaust at all higher education institutions.

In the course of the investigation, we consciously focused on whether the Holocaust is addressed in teaching as an aspect of the general history of National Socialism and its system of rule, or whether it is taught as an isolated topic. Interestingly, it was relatively easy to differentiate the courses thematically and to decide whether they were courses about National Socialism or courses about the Holocaust. With some exceptions, it can therefore be postulated that the two topics are less interconnected in teaching than might be expected. A comparison of the number of courses on National Socialism and on the Holocaust shows a relatively balanced picture: around 47 percent of the courses we surveyed focused on the topic of the Holocaust (see Chapter 3.2.1, Table 1). This finding differs from the results of the investigation by Andreas Wirsching, who was able to identify only 101 courses dealing explicitly with the history of the Holocaust among the 936 courses on National Socialism and the Holocaust surveyed over a period of six years (cf. Wirsching 2012, 75). This difference cannot, however, be attributed to a rapid proliferation in Holocaust courses, but can be explained by the different data sources: our study was not limited to history courses.

Are there enough courses on the topic of the Holocaust?

The evaluation of academic calendars presents a sobering picture of the state of teaching about the Holocaust at German universities: 22.8 percent of the universities examined offered a course on the topic in none or only one of the four semesters surveyed (see Chapter 3.2.4, Figure 1). In contrast, the experts paint a comparatively positive picture of the opportunities for studying the Holocaust in Germany and note an improved basic coverage in the field of teaching.

The experts' generally positive perception probably has to do with the significantly improved institutional incorporation of the topic. With the consolidation of the Center for Holocaust Studies in Munich, the occupancy of the Holocaust professorships in Frankfurt am Main and Giessen, and the MA program at Touro College Berlin, the institutional incorporation of Holocaust research in Germany in 2017 is better than ever before. This also has consequences for study opportunities. Students who want to specialize in the topic in their studies may find, at least at the aforementioned universities, a good selection of course offerings. At the same time, however, it is not guaranteed at all universities that students can attend at least one overview course per semester on National Socialism and the Holocaust.

The evaluation of the academic calendars showed that there were a comparatively high number of courses about the Holocaust, especially at universities where the topic is institutionally incorporated with research centers, chairs, or where the courses are distributed over many different subjects (see Chapter 3.2.3, Figure 7).

In which disciplines is the Holocaust mainly taught and what are main topics?

The hypothesis that the Holocaust is a topic that is the subject of teaching and research in various disciplines was confirmed by the survey of the academic calendars: courses on the Holocaust are offered in different disciplines, and often across disciplines as well. The fact that in many cases it was not possible to assign the courses to a field of study shows how often the topic is taught interdisciplinarily. Although most courses were offered in historical studies (196), it is clear that the Holocaust is also a topic in literary studies (80), cultural studies (45), and pedagogical and educational courses (45). A comparatively high number of courses took place in the political and social sciences (26), in Jewish studies (24), and in theological study courses (24). Compared with courses on National Socialism, which focused more on the study of history, it is notable that the topic of the Holocaust is mostly taught across different disciplines (see Chapter 3.2.2, Figure 4).

The distribution of courses among the study subjects matched the results of the categorization of the main topics of the courses. Only about a third of the surveyed courses on the Holocaust focused on actual history, and nearly half of them dealt with questions of historical relevance for the remembrance and reappraisal of the Holocaust, which includes social, political, literary and media reappraisal. Impact and representation thus play an important role in teaching about the Holocaust across different disciplines (see Chapter 3.2.1, Figure 1). This finding is similar to the perceptions of the experts interviewed, who agree that dealing with the aftermath and impact history is a research trend. The differing interpretations of this trend and the controversial assessments about whether impact history should or should not be considered a part of Holocaust research show how diversified Holocaust research is in Germany—and that despite all interdisciplinarity, disciplinary boundaries and presuppositions play a role. It should be mentioned that a number of experts were concerned that increased attention to aftermath and impact history may be the expression of a need to avoid dealing with the horror of the Holocaust at the expense of dealing with actual history. These concerns are not, however, shared by all the experts. There were interviewees who clearly distanced themselves from the avoidance thesis. They attributed great relevance to research questions about the sociopolitical reappraisal and political culture, especially in Germany, and did not see these as being in competition with historical events (see Chapter 4.5.5).

The survey of the courses has shown that it was difficult for many courses to be clearly categorized in terms of the distinction between actual history and impact history. In fact, numerous courses about the Holocaust were held that not only addressed students from different fields of study, but also included event-historical as well as impact-historical and pedagogical elements. These courses are paradigmatic for an already established connection of actual history and impact history in teaching practice.

Also the increasing importance of cultural studies in the field of Holocaust research is expressed in the topics of the courses (see Chapter 3.2.1, Figure 1 and Chapter 3.2.2, Figure 4). In the expert interviews, a cautious opening up of historical-empirical Holocaust research in Germany for questions of cultural studies was expressed. The challenge is to open up new questions without neglecting historical-empirical research (see Chapter 4.5.6). This can also be applied to teaching: it is a major task to ensure a sound historical basis in courses with literary and cultural studies topics.

Particular features of the German university system

A central aspect of the study was to identify specifics of the German university system that affect teaching about the Holocaust. Probably the most essential feature of teaching about the Holocaust in Germany is that, unlike in the US and Israel, it is far less institutionally incorporated. For many years there were neither specialized chairs nor study programs on the topic. University teaching about the Holocaust in Germany is included in different courses of study in various disciplines, in particular the study of 19th and 20th century European history and contemporary history (see Chapter 3.3.2, Figure 4). The differentiation of subjects in Germany within the framework of the Bologna Process was received rather skeptically in the expert interviews. Accordingly, in the interviews an increased introduction of specialized study programs into the field of Holocaust studies is not required, but rather a thematic incorporation of the topic into existing historical master programs (see Chapter 4.4.4). The example of the M.A. program at Touro College, with 25 graduates since 2006, shows a limited demand on the part of students, who appear to be largely opting for thematically broader studies (cf. *ibid.*). This finding can certainly be explained by the very limited opportunities in the occupational field of Holocaust research and in the institutionalized culture of remembrance in Germany on the topic of the Holocaust. Graduates of the master

program “Holocaust Studies” compete with contemporary history and public history graduates for the few available positions in the museum and memorial fields (cf. *ibid.*).

Although Holocaust research topics are still attractive doctoral topics in terms of content, and these essays for academic qualification are of great significance for Holocaust research in Germany, career prospects for young researchers specializing in Holocaust research are precarious in Germany. Due to the two-tier personnel structure and chair-dependent employment conditions, there are hardly any opportunities for academics in the field of Holocaust research at German universities after completing their dissertations. Unlike many other countries, the academic career in Germany is still linked to habilitation, which requires candidates to have a significantly different habilitation topic (second book) than the topic addressed in their dissertation (first book). Researchers who have a doctorate on topics of Holocaust research are therefore forced to work on other topics. The general problems of poor planability and the long-term precariousness of academic careers in Germany is particularly evident in Holocaust research due to the few chairs specializing in research on National Socialism and the Holocaust (see Chapter 4.4.1 c).

After many years of demands from abroad to set up such Holocaust-specialized chairs in Germany, there is a clear change in this respect in 2017: In addition to the professorship at Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main for the research of the history and impact of the Holocaust, chaired by Sybille Steinbacher in the summer semester 2017, a chair for Holocaust and camp literature and its didactics, occupied by Sascha Feuchert, was established at Justus Liebig University in Giessen. Furthermore, the head of the Center for Holocaust Studies, Frank Bajohr, has been appointed adjunct professor at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich. These examples show that—if universities and the German federal states show sufficient political resolve—it is also possible in Germany to establish chairs specializing in the Holocaust. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the scope and quality of Holocaust research cannot be determined solely by the number of such specialized chairs (see Chapter 4.4.6).

At this point, key differences between the German and American higher education system become particularly apparent: nearly all of the historians we interviewed are of the opinion that integrating Holocaust studies into 19th and 20th century European history studies makes sense, and are rather skeptical about Holocaust-specific study programs. Institutionalizing the topic of the Holocaust into German university teaching does not necessarily mean that many new M.A. programs and Holocaust professorships have to be established, but lends importance to ensuring that the topic is given a guaranteed place in the existing courses of study—for example, in contemporary history and in the teacher education—and ensuring this is not solely dependent upon the commitment of individuals or upon a random or arbitrary hiring process.

Specifics of research and teaching about the Holocaust in Germany

The interviewed experts share the view that German historical-empirical Holocaust research has been successful in connecting with international research since the 1990s. They emphasize that the focus on classic perpetrator research—which was a particularly pronounced focal point previously—has declined, and that international cooperation and exchange are increasingly taking place (see Chapter 4.5.1). This development is also reflected in the large body of relevant research literature published over the last 25 years. The numerous monographs, especially on the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, as well as such large lexicon and publication projects like “The Persecution and Murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany, 1933-1945,” testify to the increased academic interest in the topic and the increased international orientation of German Holocaust research (see Chapter 4.5.2). This development provides an improved starting point for teaching about the Holocaust, because there is currently much more literature available in German and English, and many more sources from countries occupied during the Nazi era have been translated and edited. The development of Holocaust research away from a strong focus on perpetrator research is evident in the courses surveyed. The increasing importance of cultural and cultural history issues is also perceptible. Nevertheless, it should be noted that only a few of the titles and descriptions of the courses held contained references to recent research developments.

The fact that traces of the Nazi regime and its crimes are still visible today in many places is a feature specific to Germany. Particularly memorial sites, which memorialize the Holocaust at the locations of former concentration camps, have become an integral part of political culture in Germany and are important protagonists in historical and political education as well as in research. As assumed, this relevance also manifests itself in university teaching: excursions were offered in 21.6 percent of courses on the Holocaust (see Chapter 3.2.1, Figure 3). The interviews also emphasized the importance of these topographical references.

Another peculiarity that is striking in international comparison, which became clear in the survey of the courses and in the expert interviews, is the as yet negligible impact of comparative genocide research in Germany. For example, we could only find four courses with the key word “genocide” in which a comparison of the Holocaust with other genocides was the topic (see Chapter 3.2.1). This relatively minor relevance, which is certainly also due to the specifics of Holocaust research in Germany, may be one reason why comparative genocide research is not considered—at least by the experts we interviewed—to be competition or a threat to Holocaust research, but was perceived rather as a positive stimulus (see Chapter 4.5.4).

Catching up: The topic of the Holocaust in teacher training studies

Especially for prospective teachers, who make up most of the history and literature students, the fact that there are not Holocaust courses at every university every semester is a serious problem—they are required to teach this mandatory topic later in schools. There is a considerable backlog here. Society’s high standards and expectations for conveying the topics of National Socialism and the Holocaust in schools, which history and social studies teachers above all are expected to teach in their school lessons, must also be reflected in teacher training. It is therefore important for future teachers that they have the opportunity to study the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust intensively during their studies so that they will be able to offer up-to-date instruction on the topic later. This study shows that this is not always guaranteed, even for history students studying to become teachers. For students studying other subjects such as politics or German studies it is rarely the case. (see Chapter 4.4.8). According to the interviewed didactic experts, the topic of the Holocaust is, for many aspiring teachers, fraught with the concern that particularly high social expectations are placed on the lessons, and that school students could react defensively and express feelings of oversaturation with the topic. For this reason, there is a particular desire among students studying to become teachers to be provided a solid basic knowledge of the history of the Holocaust and practical instructions how to teach the topic (see Chapter 4.6.2 b).

Accordingly, the two interviewed history didactics experts strongly advocate for the introduction of regular, possibly even compulsory, overview courses on the topics of National Socialism and the Holocaust in university teacher training.

Challenge: Teaching about the Holocaust in the country of the perpetrators

Germany, the country primarily responsible for the persecution and systematic extermination of more than six million Jews and other victims of racist persecution, as well as the innumerable victims of the Second World War, has a special sociopolitical responsibility for this history. Accordingly, one of the central assumptions of this study was that teaching in Germany about National Socialism and the Holocaust faces particular challenges. This assumption was explicitly taken up in the expert interviews and was confirmed by almost all of the interviewees: German responsibility for the Holocaust has implications for the teaching of the topic, for the students as well as for the teaching staff. (see Chapter 4.6.1). The particular feature that in Germany, it is about our own history or that of our parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents, distinguishes the subject from other historical research topics. That any discussion of the Holocaust requires considerations of German responsibility is a fact that has implications for students and teaching staff. Various interviewees report a particular emotional involvement of students: this can generate particular interest, but can also lead to the students feeling overwhelmed, while at the same time confronting the teaching staff with the challenge that it makes it difficult for students to assume analytical positions (see Chapter 4.6.2 a). The interviewees also perceive defensive and exculpatory reactions as well as resentment from the students, especially in connection with questions of guilt and responsibility (see Chapter 4.6.4).

The perceptions of students’ interest and defensive reactions described in the interviews are largely similar. For the most part, highly motivated students were mentioned, who are often active on a historical-political level outside the university. There were hardly any mentions of open rejection of the topic. It should be noted, however, that in the context of the expert interviews, only one compulsory course was discussed. It can thus be assumed that a representative survey of students from various disciplines about their knowledge and ideas regarding university Holocaust teaching would lead to different, probably more critical, results. At this point, a limitation of the present study is apparent: In order to make more accurate statements about the motivation and attitudes of students, their opinions must be evaluated.

What remains to be done?

With the right-wing AfD party, a political party has entered German parliament for the first time since the 1950s that positions itself clearly to the right of the conservative CSU party and expresses itself using nationalist, racist, and homophobic terms. Björn Höcke, the AfD group chairman in the Thuringian state parliament, described the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as a “monument of shame” in a speech and called for a “180 degree turn in the culture of remembrance.” Right-wing extremist violence in Germany has increased steadily in recent years, and asylum seekers and their homes are exposed to regular attacks. At the same time, there has been an alarming increase of hate speech on the internet, promoting the spread of anti-Semitism, conspiracy theories and racist resentment (cf. BMI 2017).

This sociopolitical development shows how important education about the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust still is today. This need leads to the following central postulations derived from the findings of our study:

- (1) There is a need for the systematic improvement of teacher education in the field of conveying the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust. In order to meet the requirement of democratic education as a cross-sectional task of school education in the teaching profession as well, the introduction of general studies for students of all subjects studying to become teachers should be considered, in which, among other things, the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust, but also the basic issues of democracy education and human rights, are being taught.
- (2) It must be ensured that the topic of the Holocaust is included in average overview history courses in such a way that sufficient basic knowledge is conveyed. It is the responsibility of all universities, through their hiring policies and the development of curricula, to ensure that there is a high-quality curriculum on the topic of the Holocaust—beyond that already offered by the specialized research centers.
- (3) There is a need for fundamental, textbook-like publications, such as those planned by the Center for Holocaust Studies. Such an offer could also be implemented online. It would make it easier for teaching staff that has no explicit research focus on the Holocaust to integrate the topic into their courses. Such an offer would also be helpful for teaching staff who give literary and cultural studies courses and who would like to ensure the conveyance of a basic knowledge of actual historical events.

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7 Appendix

7.1 Figures and Tables

- Fig. 1: Content-related focus of the courses on the Holocaust in the entire period of investigation. (N = 468).
- Fig. 2: Comparison of the content-related focus of the courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism over four semesters.
- Fig. 3: Research-specific teaching methods in the courses on the Holocaust in the entire period of investigation (N = 468).
- Fig. 4: Comparison of the disciplines that offered courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism over four semesters.
- Fig. 5: Courses on the Holocaust according to state, (including the number of universities and students in the respective state (N = 468).
- Fig. 6: Average number of courses by state on the Holocaust per university in the entire period of investigation (N=468).
- Fig. 7: Universities with the highest number of courses in the period of investigation (total = 468).
- Fig. 8: Courses on the Holocaust in the period of investigation (total = 79).
- Fig. 9: Courses on the History of the Holocaust over four semesters (total = 79).
- Fig. 10: Comparison of the courses offered on the historical events of the Holocaust and National Socialism in the research period (N=79).

- Table 1: Exemplary categorization of the courses
- Table 2: Number of courses on the Holocaust and National Socialism throughout the entire period of investigation.
- Table 3: Thematic focus of the courses on the Holocaust over four semesters.
- Table 4: Average number of courses per university by state in the entire research period.

7.2 Interviews with Experts

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7.3 Guide to Interviews with the Experts

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time for us. As we already wrote to you, we are currently working on a study on the current status of research and teaching on the Holocaust at German universities. The study will be carried out as part of a project at the Center for Digital Systems of the Free University Berlin and is funded by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and the University itself. Project leader is Prof. Dr. Apostolopoulos. Prof. Dr. Johannes Tuchel is the academic advisor of this survey. It is carried out by both of us and a student assistant at Freie Universität Berlin and has the goal to ascertain, describe, and point out special features and trends in the current state of the teaching about the Holocaust.

In order to determine the number and content of courses on the Holocaust, since October 2015 we have searched the academic calendars of the last four semesters of all relevant institutions of higher education and evaluated them by content analysis (a total of about 1,000 courses at 79 universities).

In the second step, we are currently conducting expert interviews with 13 selected Holocaust researchers from various disciplines. We have planned that the interview lasts 1 to 1.5 hours. The conversation is recorded with an audio recorder and afterwards transcribed and analyzed content-analytically. Before publication of the study, we have the cited statements authorized by you.

We will ask you about your experience in three main areas: At the beginning we will briefly ask you about your professional biography and your work. A second part of the interview will deal with the development of research on the Holocaust in Germany, and a third part will address issues of teaching on the subject.

A Individual Start of the Interview

(A short presentation of the expert adapted to each interviewee)

A.1 Institution

- You have been working as XXX at the Institution/University XX.

Could you please present the history and the work of the institution to us?

- What role does the institution play in Holocaust research?
- What is the history of the institution?
- What is the role of the interviewee in this institution?

How would you describe the special nature of your institution in the German research landscape?

A.2 Main Areas of Work

- What are your main areas of work? What are you currently working on?

B Research

B.1 Questions about Holocaust Research in the respective Discipline

- Could you outline the main research areas on the Holocaust in your discipline?
- Could you please describe the development of Holocaust research in your discipline in Germany?
- In your opinion, how did this development come about?
- Are there any special features in Germany and what are they?
- What is the level of international interest on the topic?

B.2 Questions about the Relationships of History and Cultural Studies Research and/or Actual History, Aftermath and Impact History, and Memory and Representation

- Our survey of the courses shows that teaching about the Holocaust is not restricted to questions of the actual history but that questions of reappraisal and representation make up a relatively part of the courses. How do you perceive this development?
- Do you see a fundamental increase in cultural studies research topics? What is your opinion on this?
- How do you ensure that your students have some basic historical knowledge about the Holocaust? Or is that not necessary? [Especially for the interviewees without a focus on the actual history of the Holocaust]

B.3 Young Scholars and Research Perspectives

- How do you rate the possibilities to study in Germany on the subject of the Holocaust?
- If you put yourself in the position of young PhD students. Do you think it is advisable to specialize in Holocaust research if you are looking to pursue an academic career?
- Beyond that, what do you think about the prospects for young scholars who are researching the Holocaust?
- In your opinion, are there any particularities in Germany with regard to the research perspectives?

C Teaching

C.1 Experiences with the last Course Taught

- To get started, we would like to ask you to tell us about the last course you have taught?
[ask if necessary:]]
 - What was the topic/ title of the course?
 - In what context did it take place?
- How was the participation in your course (feedback, reception, motivation of students)
- Who were the students? [ask if necessary:]
 - Did the students have prior knowledge about the Holocaust?
 - How did they react to the topic of the course?
- What are other topics that you are teaching?
- Who decides about the topics of the courses you teach?

C.2 Students/Audience

- What is your impression of the students who generally attend your courses? [ask if necessary:]
 - What are they studying?
 - In which phase of their course of study are they (desired degree: B.A., M.A., teacher, age)
 - What are special interests of the students?
 - Are they motivated?
 - Do you experience defensive reactions of the students?
- Have you perceived changes in your students over the years? (Which are these?)
- The discussion about teaching the Holocaust in a migration society plays an important role in the discussions about Holocaust education in schools, is this also relevant at the university?

C.3 Specific challenges in Germany

- Did students in your courses mention biographical references?
- What does it mean for you to teach about the Holocaust in Germany?
- Do you think there are particular challenges in teaching the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust in Germany? Which are they?

C.4 Presence of the topic / institutional support

- Do you think there are enough courses on the Holocaust offered in your university?
- In your experience, what is the institutional support of the teaching on the Holocaust?

C.5 Development of the university system in Germany

- Do you think there are peculiarities of the German university system that play a role in the academic teaching of the Holocaust?
- What has changed for you because of the Bologna process?

7.4 Overview of the Universities Included in the Survey

Name of Institution	Type of Institution	Legal Form	Federal State	Students	Courses Holocaust	Courses National Socialism
RWTH Aachen University	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	43,716	3	5
University of Augsburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bavaria	19,858	6	5
University of Bamberg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bavaria	12,611	4	5
Universität Bayreuth	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bavaria	12,926	0	2
Bard College Berlin, A Liberal Arts University	Universities of applied sciences and higher education institutions without the right to award doctorates	privat, state-accredited	Berlin	139	0	0
Freie Universität Berlin	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Berlin	34,962	23	19
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Berlin	32,979	21	10
Technical University Berlin	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Berlin	33,899	10	1
Touro College Berlin	University of applied sciences and higher education institutions without the right to award doctorates	privat, state-accredited	Berlin	156	22	1
Bielefeld University	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	23,811	9	8
Ruhr Universität Bochum	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	43,049	16	10
University of Bonn	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	35,116	7	6

Braunschweig University of Technology	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Lower Saxony	19,467	3	6
University of Bremen	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bremen	18,864	9	10
Chemnitz University of Technology	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Saxony	11,051	1	3
Technische Universität Darmstadt	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Hesse	26,417	1	1
TU Dortmund University	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	32,962	6	7
TU Dresden	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Saxony	33,437	1	6
University of Duisburg-Essen	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	42,145	3	4
Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	32,050	6	10
Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	ecclesial, state-accredited	Bavaria	5,330	2	5
University of Erfurt	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Thuringia	5,686	4	7
Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bavaria	38,912	8	9
University of Flensburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Schleswig-Holstein	5,135	1	0
Viadrina European University Frankfurt (Oder)	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Brandenburg	6,501	6	1
Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt (Main)	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Hesse	45,539	16	20

Freiburg University of Education	Universities and higher education institutions authorised to award doctorates (PH)	public	Baden-Württemberg	4,764	6	0
Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Baden-Württemberg	24,698	3	4
Justus Liebig University Giessen	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Hesse	28,225	11	11
University of Göttingen	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Lower Saxony	30,274	15	22
University of Greifswald	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	10,862	0	8
University of Hagen	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	69,258	1	6
Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Saxony-Anhalt	18,921	3	11
Helmut Schmidt University / Bundeswehr University Hamburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Hamburg	2,298	1	5
University of Hamburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Hamburg	41,431	16	10
Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Lower Saxony	26,318	8	17
Center for Jewish Studies Heidelberg	University of applied sciences and higher education institutions without the right to award doctorates	privat, state-accredited	Baden-Württemberg	101	6	0
Heidelberg University of Education	Universities and higher education institutions authorised to award doctorates (PH)	public	Baden-Württemberg	4,448	4	6
Heidelberg University	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Baden-Württemberg	29,812	11	14
University of Hildesheim	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Lower Saxony	7,267	1	1

Friedrich Schiller University Jena	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Thuringia	17,794	11	13
University of Kaiserslautern	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Rhineland Palatinate	14,288	0	2
Karlsruhe University of Education	Universities and higher education institutions authorised to award doctorates (PH)	public	Baden-Württemberg	3,685	0	0
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Baden-Württemberg	24,429	0	1
University of Kassel	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Hesse	24,306	4	5
Kiel University	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Schleswig-Holstein	25,362	5	7
Koblenz University of Applied Sciences	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Rhineland Palatinate	9,056	0	0
University of Koblenz and Landau	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Rhineland Palatinate	15,592	4	3
University of Cologne	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	52,297	15	22
University of Konstanz	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Baden-Württemberg	11,292	4	4
Leipzig University	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Saxony	27,014	5	11
Ludwigburg University of Education	Universities and higher education institutions authorised to award doctorates (PH)	public	Baden-Württemberg	5,592	2	4
Leuphana University of Lüneburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Lower Saxony	9,239	3	8
Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Sachsen-Anhalt	14,427	2	3

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Rhineland Palatinate	32,928	5	8
University of Mannheim	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Baden-Württemberg	11,970	0	3
Philipps University of Marburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Hesse	26,120	8	7
Bundeswehr University Munich	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bavaria	2,938	4	3
Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bavaria	50,481	23	22
University of Münster	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	43,154	11	18
Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Lower Saxony	14,202	7	8
University of Osnabrück	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Lower Saxony	13,444	12	5
Paderborn University	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	19,897	9	9
University of Passau	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bavaria	11,833	4	5
University of Potsdam	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Brandenburg	20,592	12	5
University of Regensburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bavaria	20,818	9	13
University of Rostock	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	13,731	3	8
Saarland University	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Saarland	17,359	3	8

Schwäbisch Gmünd University of Education	Universities and higher education institutions authorised to award doctorates (PH)	public	Baden-Württemberg	2,690	0	4
University of Siegen	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Nordrhein-Westfalen	19,513	2	2
University of Stuttgart	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Baden-Württemberg	27,084	5	13
Freie Hochschule Stuttgart - Seminar für Waldorfpädagogik	University of applied sciences and higher education institutions without the right to award doctorates	privat, state-accredited	Baden-Württemberg	256	0	0
University of Trier	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Rhineland Palatinate	13,639	3	4
Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Baden-Württemberg	27,947	7	10
University of Vechta	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Lower Saxony	5,302	1	3
Weingarten University of Education	Universities and higher education institutions authorised to award doctorates (PH)	public	Baden-Württemberg	3,277	0	0
Witten/Herdecke University	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	privat, state-accredited	North Rhine-Westphalia	2,195	3	1
University of Wuppertal	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	North Rhine-Westphalia	20,815	4	5
Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg	Universities and higher education institutions authorized to award doctorates	public	Bavaria	28,015	4	3
Total				1,619,968	468	526

7.5 Glossary of English-German university positions and terms

English	German
academic assistant	akademische Mitarbeiter
academic calendar	Vorlesungsverzeichnis
adjunct professor	außerplanmäßiger Professor
advanced (graduate) seminar	Hauptseminar
associate professor (habilitated academic without chair)	Privatdozent
chair designation	Lehrstuhldenomination
chair holder	Lehrstuhlinhaber
didactic experts	Fachdidaktiker
doctoral candidate	Doktorand
doctoral candidates	Promovierende
doctoral study course	Promotionskolleg
early lower secondary level	Sekundarstufe I
emeritus historian	emeritierter Historiker
essay for academic qualification	Qualifikationsschrift
freelance assistant lecturers who do not occupy permanent positions	Lehrbeauftragte
German language studies	Deutschunterricht
graduate school	Kolleg (Promotionskolleg)
habilitated academic	habilitierter Wissenschaftler
History Didactics	Geschichtsdidaktik
historical-didactic	geschichtsdidaktisch
influencer, disseminator	Multiplikator
junior researcher in the doctoral phase	Nachwuchswissenschaftler
Late Modern and Contemporary History	Neuere und Neueste Geschichte
literary scholar	Literaturwissenschaftler
mid-level faculty at universities Mittelbau (non-professorial teaching staff)	Mittelbau
master program	Masterstudium
political scientist	Politikwissenschaftlerin
post-doctoral researcher	wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter nach der Promotion
postdoctoral thesis	Habilitationsschrift
Professorship	Professur
researcher (or research assistant)	wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter
senior lecturer, teaching at highschool and college level	Studienrat
students studying to become teachers	Lehramtsstudierende
subject	Studienfach
teacher training at a university (degree programs leading to secondary teacher accreditation)	Lehramtsstudium
teaching staff	Lehrende
tenured lecturer	Lehrkraft für besondere Aufgaben
university of applied sciences (college)	Fachhochschule
upper secondary (highschool) level	Sekundarstufe II
visiting academics / visiting scholars	Gastwissenschaftler
visiting professor	Gastprofessor

