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978-0-521-42715-9 - *Belonging in the Two Berlins: Kin, State, Nation*

John Borneman

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Belonging in the two Berlins is an ethnographic investigation into the meaning of German selfhood during the Cold War. Taking everyday life in the divided Berlin as his point of departure, Borneman shows how the practices of kin, state, and nation were constructed through processes of mirror-imaging and misrecognition. Using linguistics and narrative analysis, he compares the autobiographies of two generations of Berlin residents with the official version of the lifecourse prescribed by the two German states. He examines the relation of the dual political structure to everyday life, the way in which the two states legally regulated the lifecourse in order to define the particular categories of self which signify Germanness, and how citizens experientially appropriated the frameworks provided by these states.

Living in the two Berlins constantly compelled residents to define themselves in opposition to their other half. Borneman argues that this resulted in a *de facto* divided Germany with two distinct nations and peoples. The formation of German subjectivity since World War II is unique in that the distinctive features for belonging – for being at home – to one side exclude the other. Indeed, these divisions inscribed by the Cold War account for many of the problems in forging a new cultural unity.

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86

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BELONGING IN THE TWO BERLINS

Kin, state, nation

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

For

SALLY FALK MOORE

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> x
<i>List of tables</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
Introduction	1
1 Naming, categorizing, periodizing	8
2 Clarification of concepts	36
3 Demographics of production and reproduction	57
4 State strategies and kinship	74
5 Victimization, political reconstruction, and kinship transformations in East Berlin: Generation I	119
6 Sentimentalization, fear, and alternate domestic form in East Berlin: Generation II	155
7 <i>Hausfrauenehe</i> and kinship restoration in West Berlin: Generation I	202
8 Politicized kinship in West Berlin: Generation II	237
9 Marriage, family, nation	284
Postscript: unity	313
<i>Notes</i>	335
<i>References</i>	356
<i>Index</i>	372

Figures

- | | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 1 | The two Berlins, 1989
(source: <i>In Brief, Berlin</i> , ed. Karl Heinz Gehm and Wolfgang Kruse, Berlin, Presse- und Informationsamt des Landes Berlin, 1982, p. 94) | page 9 |
| 2 | Germany and Berlin at the end of World War II
(source: <i>Outlook Berlin</i> , ed. Udo Wetzlaugk, Berlin: Information Centre, 1988, p. 24). | 13 |
| 3 | The Wall, December 1989
(courtesy of Martin Patek) | 23 |
| 4 | U- and S-Bahn map of Berlin, 1988, East Berlin
(source: Berliner Verkehrs-Betriebe) | 26 |
| 5 | U- and S-Bahn map of Berlin, 1988, West Berlin
(source: Berliner Verkehrs-Betriebe) | 27 |
| 6 | Size of German/FRG households, from 1900 to 1981
(source: Davenport, cited in <i>Vierter Familienbericht</i> , 1986, p. 37) | 69 |

Tables

1	Classification of discussion partners in East and West Berlin	<i>page</i> 56
2	Berlin population, 1939–1988	58
3	Employed women as a percentage of working-age women, 1939–1985	59
4	Aging patterns in the FRG and the GDR, 1970 and 1983	60
5	Non-working plus non-employable people as a percentage of working-age, employable people in the FRG and the GDR, 1970 and 1983	60
6	Unemployed people in West and East Berlin, 1946–1986	61
7	GDR citizens (<i>Zuwanderer</i>) who resettled in West Berlin, 1950–1986	62
8	Age-breakdown of persons resettling from the GDR to FRG, 1970, 1982, and 1989	63
9	Growth in employed guestworkers in the FRG (including West Berlin), 1950–1980	64
10	Marriages and divorces in East and West Berlin, 1945–1986	65
11	Nuclear family status in West Berlin, 1950–1986	68
12	Nuclear family status in the GDR, 1964–1988	68
13	Household types in West Berlin, East Berlin, the FRG, and the GDR, 1971 and 1981	71
14	Percentage of multi-person households, with and without children, in West Berlin, East Berlin, the FRG, and the GDR, 1981–1982	72

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978-0-521-42715-9 - Belonging in the Two Berlins: Kin, State, Nation

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)**xii** *List of tables*

15	Narrative strategies of the East and West German states, 1949–1989	77
16	Narrative strategies of the East German state, 1949–1989	121
17	FRG apartments with bath and toilet, 1950–1978	209
18	FRG apartments with bath, toilet, and central heating, 1960–1982	209
19	Private automobiles per household in the FRG, 1950–1985	233
20	Length of vacation in the FRG, 1975 and 1985	234
21	Narrative strategies of the East and West German states, 1949–1989	286
22	Narrative tactics of Generation I in East and West Berlin	286
23	Narrative tactics of Generation II in East and West Berlin	287

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978-0-521-42715-9 - *Belonging in the Two Berlins: Kin, State, Nation*

John Borneman

Frontmatter

[More information](#)xiv *Belonging in the two Berlins*

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