# Introduction
# Perceptions of Britain in Germany: Approaches, Methods and Analytical Dimensions

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For Germans, Britain has always been a prominent and important object of perception. With the exception of France, arguably no other European state has preoccupied Germans more profoundly and lastingly than Britain (or England, as Germans have been saying since the nineteenth century). Yet German perceptions have always been highly ambivalent and even contradictory, as Britain has served both as a model and as a spectre of modernity, at least from the seventeenth century onwards.[1] When Parliament replaced monarchical rule in the Glorious Revolution, England became a beacon of hope for enlightened intellectuals in the German territories. Similarly, the rapid industrialisation during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries aroused admiration and awe in the emerging German bourgeoisie. As the nineteenth century proceeded, however, the ideology of an allegedly superior German 'special path' towards modernity (*deutscher Sonderweg*) led Germans to depreciate the political reforms and the special type of industrial capitalism which Britain seemed to embody. Similarly, 'western' civilization, which nineteenth-century German observers largely associated with Britain, became the object of derisive statements. These attitudes, which did not prevent the Nazis from admiring British imperialism, influenced German perceptions as late as the years immediately following 1945, when the defeated people had to come to terms with the experience of Nazi dictatorship and total defeat. In the face of the British occupation authorities, the Germans' rejection of 'western' civilisation took on a compensatory function once more.[2]

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1 As 'Britain' is often replaced by 'England' and 'English' is substituted for 'British' in the German sources, these terms are used as synonyms in this introduction.

2 Bernd Faulenbach, *Ideologie des deutschen Weges* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1980), esp. 122-177, 293-316. See also idem, "Die These vom deutschen Sonderweg und die historische Legitimation politischer Ordnung in Deutschland", in: Karl-Erich Jeismann (ed.), *Geschichte als Legitimation? Internationale Schulbuchrevision unter den Ansprüchen von Politik, Geschichtswissenschaft und Geschichtsbedürfnis* (Braunschweig: Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale Schulbuchforschung, 1984), 99-117; idem, "Emanzipation von der Tradition? Geschichtsbewusstsein in den sechziger Jahren", in: Werner Weidenfeld (ed.), *Politische Kultur und deutsche Frage* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1989), 73-92. On the ambivalent attitudes of leading Nazi politicians to Britain, cf. Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isles. Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), esp. 60-130, 161-183, 223-226.

British perceptions of Germany also changed considerably. Admiration of German *Kultur* and administrative efficiency grew in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As in Germany, British perceptions were ambivalent and often ambiguous. Efficiency and orderliness, for instance, were considered simultaneously as a model and a threat. In a similar vein, Prussian military prowess and the adulation of the state in Imperial Germany aroused admiration and suspicion in Britain. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, German naval armament seemed to endanger Britain's position as the world's strongest trading and imperial power. It was the First World War, however, which seriously darkened British perceptions of Germany. Confronted with rumours and news about atrocities committed by German troops in Belgium at the beginning of the war, the sinking of the 'Lusitania' in 1915 and the reality of the air raids on London, which reached terrifying dimensions in 1917, British elites began to associate Germany principally with the idea of barbarism. In addition, the detention of Germans as 'enemy aliens', assaults on German shopkeepers in London and accusations of espionage reflected powerful anti-German resentments. After the First World War, British hostility to Germany only subsided very slowly. In the 1930s, however, an exaggerated sense of guilt, particularly for the harsh conditions imposed on Germany by the Versailles peace treaty, contributed to the excessive leniency shown by the Britons towards the Nazi regime and also to their policy of appeasement.[3]

However, these general trends need differentiation in specific areas, particularly with regard to individuals and social groups. The essays in this volume, which are based on papers given at a conference held at the *Europäische Akademie* in Berlin from 9th to 11th July 2004, take up this

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[3] See the contributions to Bernd-Jürgen Wendt (ed.), *Das britische Deutschlandbild im Wandel des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1984); Benedikt Stuchtey, Peter Wende (eds.), *British and German Historiography 1750-1950. Traditions, Perceptions and Transfers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Stefan Berger, Peter Lambert, Peter Schumann (eds.), *Historikerdialoge. Geschichte, Mythos und Gedächtnis im deutsch-britischen kulturellen Austausch 1750-2000* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003). For detailed studies, cf. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980); Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst: Germans in Britain During the First World War* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1991); Thomas Wittek, *Auf ewig Feind? Das Deutschlandbild in den britischen Massenmedien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005); Francis L. Carsten, "Adolf Hitler im Urteil des Auslandes – in britischer Sicht", in: Wilhelm Treue, Jürgen Schmädeke (eds.), *Deutschland 1933. Machtzerfall der Demokratie und nationalsozialistische "Machtergreifung"* (Berlin: Colloquium-Verlag, 1984), 97-118; Gottfried Niedhart, "Zwischen negativem Deutschlandbild und Primat des Friedens: Großbritannien und der Beginn der nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft in Deutschland", in: Wolfgang Michalka (ed.), *Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1984), 274-287; Angela Schwarz, *Die Reise ins Dritte Reich. Britische Augenzeugen im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland (1933-39)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), esp. 76-106, 381-394.

challenge.[4] They concentrate on German views of Britain and Britons in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Instead of making a fruitless attempt to investigate the subject comprehensively, the case studies provide exemplary, detailed, precise and concrete insights into the role of Britain as a model of political, economic and social developments during the last two centuries. In order to provide an indispensable background to these perceptions, pre-existing attitudes resulting from, say, German visits to Britain in the eighteenth century, have also been taken into account. Although British perceptions of Germany and the Germans are not systematically dealt with, the authors take interrelationships and the exchange of perceptions between the two countries into consideration.[5]

The studies tackle questions which are crucial to historical studies of German views of Britain in modern history. To what extent were Britain and its road to modernity seen as a panacea for challenges and problems faced by Germans themselves? In what constellations and contexts were specific features of British politics, economics, society and culture regarded as a threat? Which dimensions and strands of Britain's development were perceived as being suitable or unsuitable for adaptation in Germany? Which persons or groups transmitted their views on and knowledge about the British Isles to Germany? For what purposes were certain perceptions used and exploited in Germany? And why did German curiosity about developments in Britain vary over the course of time?

The contributions are also linked by four analytical dimensions. *Firstly*, they deal with institutions and processes which were taken as models by German observers. Contemporary and later observers were particularly intrigued by the political system which had evolved in the seventeenth century. The British parliamentary system, the emerging parties and the Rule of Law attracted considerable attention because they so obviously distinguished Britain from continental states.

*Secondly*, the authors investigate the different perceptions, misperceptions, images and stereotypes of Britain and its regions in Germany. The attitudes of German observers vis-à-vis Britain were usually ill-defined, ambivalent or even ambiguous. Fascinated by the onset of industrialisation, German observers seem, for instance, to have been torn

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4 On the proceedings of the conference, see the report by Gert Röhrborn, "Britain as a Model of Modern Society? German Views", online, 09 Nov. 2006, available: http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=520.

5 Helmut Peitsch, "Die Entdeckung der 'Hauptstadt der Welt'. Zur Ausformung eines Bildes von London in deutschen Zeitschriften und Reisebeschreibungen des 18. Jahrhunderts", in: Hans-Wolf Jäger (ed.), *Europäisches Reisen im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1992), 131-156. See also Hagen Schulz-Forberg, "Deutungen englischer Vergangenheit in Berichten deutscher und französischer Reisender, 1851-1939", in: Arnd Bauerkämper, Hans Erich Bödeker, Bernhard Struck (eds.), *Die Welt erfahren. Reisen als kulturelle Begegnung von 1780 bis heute* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2004), 133-159.

between awe and admiration on the one hand and apprehension and fear on the other.

*Thirdly,* the contributors identify and profile individuals and groups who spread their impressions of Britain in Germany. German travellers, merchants, politicians and journalists in Britain all disseminated their own particular views when they returned to their native country. Here they acted as intermediaries who either furthered a better understanding of Britain or created and spread negative stereotypes. In general, however, the relative importance of certain groups in the complex process of transfer varied over time. It has therefore been necessary to conduct detailed investigations into the persons who transferred their views across the sea to the Continent. Similarly, the contributions shed light on the German participants in the discourses about Britain and the British.

*Fourthly,* the contributors provide studies on the specific representations of Britain and their underlying motives. In political and social discourses, German observers often utilised and exploited views of Britain for domestic purposes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Political decision-makers repeatedly put forward certain images of Britain in order to promote their own particular – and sometimes selfish – goals. Since the seventeenth century, perceptions of Britain have not only been tied to certain interests, but have been used as tools in domestic disputes and power struggles. In general, images and stereotypes of 'Britain' and 'England' were tended to promote specific conceptions of Germany's development. Thus, German observers took the British Isles as a yardstick, which could be used for every variety of assessments. The effects of the way in which the British model was used in Germany can only be traced and assessed on the basis of concrete case studies such as those published in this volume. Because they deal with specific issues they are able to highlight Roger Chartier's general insight that representations do not merely reflect 'reality', but influence their appropriation through perceptions and interpretations.[6]

Case studies of cross-border perceptions undoubtedly contribute to the ongoing transnational extension of historical scholarship. Nevertheless they confront historians with considerable methodological challenges.[7] That said, this particular field of research is still largely unexplored. Since

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6 Roger Chartier, *Au bord de la falaise. L'histoire entre certitudes et inquétude* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998), in: idem, "Kulturgeschichte zwischen Repräsentationen und Praktiken. Einleitung"; idem, "New Cultural History", in: Joachim Eibach, Günther Lottes (eds.), *Kompass der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 193-205.

7 For overviews of the methodological issues, see Deborah Cohen, Maura O'Connor, "Introduction: Comparative History, Cross-National History, Transnational History – Definitions", in: idem (eds.), *Comparison and History. Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), IX-XXIV; Christoph Conrad, "Vergleich und Transnationalität in der Geschichte", in: Andreas Wirsching (ed.), *Oldenbourg Geschichte Lehrbuch. Neueste Zeit* (München: Oldenbourg, 2006), 317-332.

the 1980s, debates on transnational historiography have concentrated on the advantages and limits of the comparative method, on the merits of cultural transfer and entangled history studies, as well as on their mutual relationship. It is therefore indispensable to fit cross-border perceptions to the methodology of transnational history.

## Comparison, Cultural Transfer and Historical Studies of Cross-Border Perceptions

Comparative methods and concepts of cultural transfer and entanglements have lent a strong impulse to historical scholarship on Anglo-German relations because they have helped transcend the confines of national historiography. They, therefore, deserve some general considerations in this volume.

International comparisons serve a multiplicity of purposes and lead the historian to deeper insights than do single-country studies. Beyond the basic aim of identifying differences and similarities between two or more units, comparisons can be applied in order to highlight specific features and to analyse them in detail. Thus, they may lead to a more profound understanding of the particular objects of analysis, or reveal an alienating effect which may call established paradigms of national historiography into question. In the recent historiography of Anglo-German relations, comparative studies, largely been conducted by German scholars, have gradually undermined the concept of the German *Sonderweg* and begun to call its essentialist notions of what is 'British' and 'German' or 'progressive' and 'backward' into question.[8] One of the leading propo-nents of the paradigm of the *Sonderweg*, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, has therefore resorted to the notion of mere 'special conditions' which – according to his interpretation – developed into the *Sonderweg* as late as the 1860s and 1870s.[9] At the same time, revisionist studies have been directed against the

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[8] On the debate, cf. David Blackbourn, Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in 19th Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Helga Grebing et al., *Der "deutsche Sonderweg" in Europa 1806-1945. Eine Kritik* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986); Jürgen Kocka, "German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German Sonderweg", *Journal of Contemporary History* 23 (1988), 3-16; Dieter Langewiesche, "Entmythologisierung des 'deutschen Sonderweges' oder auf dem Wege zu neuen Mythen?", *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 21 (1981), 527-532; Chris Lorenz, "Beyond Good and Evil? The German Empire of 1871 and Modern German Historiography", *Journal of Contemporary History* 30 (1995), 729-765.

[9] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, Vol. 3: 1849-1914* (Munich: Beck, 1995), 470, 481, 484f. On Wehler's interpretation, see John Breuilly, "Auf dem Weg zur deutschen Gesellschaft? Der dritte Band von Wehlers Gesellschaftsgeschichte", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 34 (1997), 136-168, 167f.; David Blackbourn, "A Thoroughly Modern Masterpiece. Wehler's Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, Bd. 3: 1849-1914", *Neue Politische Literatur* 41 (1996), 189-192, 190.

idealistic interpretations and notions of the 'Whig Interpretation of British History'.[10] Altogether, the number of comparative historical investigations to Britain and Germany has grown to about 140 since 1980. These studies have dealt with a wide range of topics covering political, economic, social and cultural history.[11]

Since the mid-1990s comparative investigations have been supplemented by historical studies on the mutual influences, inter-relations and entanglements between two or more units of analysis. This approach, which was first proposed by experts in literary studies, deals with the emission and reception of objects, be they ideas, values, knowledge, goods or institutions. It also includes an analysis of the preconditions and needs of the receiving societies, the modes of (usually selective) appropriations as well as the role of the mediators involved in the process of transfer, and finally of its social impact and outcomes.[12] These studies take the obstacles and barriers to cultural transfer into account. They also analyse repercussions in the emitting societies. Because the multilateral approach relates different perspectives to each other, it has been taken up in recent debates on the concept of *histoire croisée*, which requires historians to continuously change their analytical focus in the process of their investigations.[13]

As interrelations and entanglements have been neglected in compareative studies, concepts of cultural transfer have opened up new per-

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10 Cf. David Cannadine, "British History: Past, Present – and Future?", *Past and Present* 116 (1987), 169-191; Bernd Weisbrod, "Der englische 'Sonderweg' in der neueren Geschichte", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 16 (1990), 233-252. On the close relationship between the British and German historiographies, see Arnd Bauerkämper, "Geschichtsschreibung als Projektion. Die Revision der 'Whig Interpretation of History' und die Kritik am Paradigma vom 'deutschen Sonderweg' seit den 1970er Jahren", in: Berger, Lambert, Schumann (eds.), *Historikerdialoge*, 383-438.

11 Counted on the basis of a bibliography that is permanently being completed by Christiane Eisenberg. The number of 140 does not include titles with a larger European perspective. Some social history titles on this list are also included in a bibliography collected by Hartmut Kaelble; see his "Vergleichende Sozialgeschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts", in: Jürgen Kocka, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (eds.), *Geschichte und Vergleich. Ansätze und Ergebnisse international vergleichender Geschichtsschreibung* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 1996), 111-127.

12 With regard to Britain, see Rudolf Muhs, Johannes Paulmann, Willibald Steinmetz (eds.), *Aneignung und Abwehr: Interkultureller Transfer zwischen Deutschland und Großbritannien im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bodenheim: Philo, 1998); Johannes Paulmann, "Internationaler Vergleich und interkultureller Transfer. Zwei Forschungsansätze zur europäischen Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts", *Historische Zeitschrift* 267 (1998), 649-685.

13 Michael Werner, Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. Ansatz der *Histoire croisée* und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002), 607-636, esp. 608; idem (eds.), *De la comparaison à l'histoire croisée* (Paris: Seuil, 2004); idem, "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisee and the Challenge of Reflexivity", *History and Theory* 45 (2006), 30-50. See also Christiane Eisenberg, "Kulturtransfer als historischer Prozess. Ein Beitrag zur Komparatistik", in: Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Schriewer (eds.), *Vergleich und Transfer. Komparatistik in den Sozial-, Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus, 2003), 399-419, esp. 400 f.

spectives of investigation. Comparativists have usually highlighted differences between nations and thus, often unintentionally, reinforced rather than abandoned the national paradigm in historiography. In addition, they have often overlooked the fact that the interactions resulting from exchanges counteracted the structural differences and that cross-border exchanges tied nations together more closely. At present, the function of cultural transfer studies in supplying a corrective to inter-national comparisons is broadly acknowledged. It goes without saying that both differences and similarities have, to some extent at least, resulted from cross-border exchange and that these interactions have not only led to mutual understanding and rapprochement, but also to profound enmity and even open hostilities.[14]

That said, comparisons and transfer studies have largely concentrated on structures and overriding processes. By contrast, perceptions focusing on the role of individual and collective actors in specific constellations have not yet become a recognised field of historical scholarship. Social action, too, has been neglected in transnational history. As a consequence, scholars working in this field of research are still relatively insensible to the subjective dimension of history and the necessity to re-conceptualize it as 'man-made'.

Nonetheless it is impossible to make any substantial a priori statements about the quality of cross-border perceptions.[15] One main reason is that they are not necessarily mutual or symmetrical. Neither are they simply depictions of the world as a result of input. On the contrary, external impulses and information are tied to existing cognitive structures. According to the theory of 'cognitive constructivism', this is because perceptions underlie 'framing' and 'structuration'. [16] They are integrated into specific contexts and conditions by individual or collective actors and shaped by

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14 Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Jürgen Kocka, "Comparative History: Methods, Aims, Problems", in: Cohen, O'Connor (eds.), *Comparison*, 32; Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, "Historische Komparatistik in der internationalen Geschichtsschreibung", in: Gunilla Budde, Sebastian Conrad, Oliver Janz (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2006), 137-149, 147.

15 However, the role of mutual perceptions in British and German historiography since the eighteenth century has received some scholarly attention. Cf. Peter Wende, "Perzeption und Transfers. Zur gegenseitigen Wahrnehmung deutscher und britischer Geschichtswissenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert", in: Gerhard A. Ritter, Peter Wende (eds.), *Rivalität und Partnerschaft. Studien zu den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Festschrift Anthony J. Nicholls* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1999), 13-28.

16 According to Anthony Giddens, the concept of "structuration" is apt to highlight the fact that 'structure is both the medium and outcome of [...] practices.' Cf. Anthony Giddens, *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory* (London: Macmillan 1982), 10. See also idem, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984). On the process of 'framing', see Robert D. Benford, David A. Snow, "Framing processes and social movements. An overview and assessment", *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000), 611-639.

processes of social and cultural construction.[17] In particular, perceptions are framed by collective mentalities, which can be conceived as an ensemble of attitudes shaping everyday life. Therefore, collective mentalities encompass relatively stable images and stereotypes, although these are by no means static.[18]

Moreover, perceptions usually vary according to their objects and originators. They are not only multi-dimensional, ambivalent and changeable, but also constitute a dynamic ensemble of interrelations and interchange. Moreover, self-images evolve and change as a result of other people's perceptions and interactions. Identity and otherness are therefore interrelated. At least to some extent, the portrait of the other can be understood as a 'mirror to one's own background'.[19] Thus, perceptions can turn into projections or result in outright stereotypes. They may ossify into 'schemes of thought'. These qualities of perceptions contribute to their capacity to bridge the gap between experiences of the past and expectations of the future. Altogether, the most appropriate way to grasp the complexities of perceptions is to focus on agency in specific constellations.[20]

Nevertheless, perceptions do not determine actions. This fails to occur in historical reality because they are subject to constant changes and are tied to particular temporal and spatial contexts and constellations. For this reason it is often possible to identify a series of perceptions and the resulting actions, the dynamics of which cannot be predicted. Precisely for this reason, the analysis of perceptions – particularly those of the cross-border type – is primarily a task for historians rather than sociologists and psychologists. At the same time it is an extraordinarily challenging task, for it demands the analysis of the interaction of interests and conceptions of the world (*Weltbilder*), as recommended by Max Weber:

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17 On historical studies of perceptions, see Gottfried Niedhart, "Selektive Wahrnehmung und politisches Handeln. Internationale Beziehungen im Perzeptionsparadigma", in: Wilfried Loth, Jürgen Osterhammel (eds.), *Internationale Geschichte. Themen – Ergebnisse – Aussichten* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), 141-157, esp. 144 f.

18 Robert Frank, "Mentalitäten, Vorstellungen und internationale Beziehungen", in: Loth, Osterhammel (eds.), *Internationale Geschichte*, 147-157, esp. 167.

19 Benedikt Stuchtey, Peter Wende, "Introduction. Towards a Comparative History of Anglo-German Historiographical Traditions and Transfers", in: idem (eds.), *Historiography*, 1-24, 4.

20 On "schemes of thought", see Alf Lüdtke, "Amerikanisierung – Sehnsucht und Schreckensvision im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts", in: Ursula Lehmkuhl, Stefanie Schneider, Frank Schumacher (eds.), *Kulturtransfer und Kalter Krieg: Westeuropa als Bühne und Akteure im Amerikanisierungsprozeß* (Erfurt: Erfurter Beiträge zur Nordamerikanischen Geschichte, 2000), 1-11, 1.

> Interessen (materielle und ideelle), nicht: Ideen, beherrschen unmittelbar das Handeln der Menschen. Aber: die "Weltbilder", welche durch "Ideen" geschaffen werden, haben sehr oft als Weichensteller die Bahnen bestimmt, in denen die Dynamik der Interessen das Handeln fortbewegte.[21]

The analysis of cross-border perceptions over a period of time is all the more a challenge for historians if they refuse to restrict themselves to perceptions of the political elite or top officials, and wish to include – as is standard in comparative and cultural transfer studies – social groups or even the broad general public of any particular country. All these studies of the often informal modes of exchange at grassroots levels necessitate a thorough knowledge of historical contexts and constellations.[22] For this reason the editors of this volume only invited scholars to contribute to the conference who had already undertaken larger empirical studies in their own particular areas. In this way we could be sure of a broad range of detailed knowledge. For the scholars should not only be able to identify perceptions of the British model in Germany, but at the same time link these perceptions to the structures and processes they have discovered in their area. Only under these preconditions could it be expected that the results of such case studies are linked with the latest state of research.

## German Perceptions of Britain: Some Evidence from the Contributions

With this aim in mind, the contributors to this volume have attempted to reconstruct the perceptions of the British model in Germany in as much detail as possible. Thus, some of them even dare to formulate fundamental findings on the interactions of perceptions and action. Nonetheless certain

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21 Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1947), 252, quoted from Gottfried Niedhart, "Länderimages: Vorstellungen vom anderen zwischen Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung", in: Hans Süssmuth (ed.), *Deutschlandbilder in Dänemark und England, in Frankreich und den Niederlanden* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1996), 82-84. On Weber's concept of *Wertideen*, see also Wolfgang Hartwig, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Einleitung", in: idem (eds.), *Kulturgeschichte heute* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1996), 7-13, 11f.

22 For a broad concept of "international relations", see Iriye, Akira, "Transnational History", *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004), 211-222, esp. 213; idem, "Internationalizing International History", in: Thomas Bender (ed.), *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 47-62, esp. 51. See also the contributions of Eckart Conze, Guido Müller und Johannes Paulmann to Eckart Conze, Ulrich Lappenküper, Guido Müller (eds.), *Geschichte der internationalen Beziehungen. Erneuerung und Erweiterung einer historischen Disziplin* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), 15-43, 169-196, 231-258, as well as Eckart Conze's und Jürgen Osterhammel's considerations in Wilfried Loth, Jürgen Osterhammel (eds.), *Internationale Geschichte. Themen – Ergebnisse – Aussichten* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), 117-140, 387-408. See also the observation by Neil Gregor, "Politics, Culture, Political Culture: Recent Work on the Third Reich and Its Aftermath", *Journal of Modern History* 78 (2006), 643-683, 671.

pioneering findings with regard to the historical importance of cross-border perceptions in Anglo-German relations come to light over and beyond the particular theme only when the contributions are read in connection with one another. Only then it is possible to see which conditions of perceptions have led to actions, how they arose, changed, and were abandoned, whether they were grounded in real structures and processes, or were the expression of wishful thinking. The following observations are an attempt to illustrate this.

The essay by Peter Wende provides an overview on why Germans have devoted so much interest to the British model in particular since the seventeenth century, which of its components seemed to be of especial interest, and which higher level of ideas, values and action strategies the British model represented. Wende deals with the nineteenth century, which was so essentially important for German British relationships. The first half of the century, in particular, was a time when mutual relationships between both societies began to show divergent features. Whereas Britain, a bulwark of middle-class liberties, a trading power and a major military world power, was also in the process of becoming a pioneer of industrial society, the states in the German federation were backward or even stagnating on most fronts. For this reason an inferiority complex began to establish itself amongst the Germans, thanks to their role as victims in the Thirty Years War and the military defeats inflicted on them by Napoleon. Seen in this light, the German need for a model was simply the expression of a collective psychological problem created by historical events – an interpretation which Wende underlines with explanations on the French model, which is also suitable for analysis according to this criterion. The criterion of superiority is also fulfilled here. But it would have been an offence to Germans' honour to have imitated their conqueror and later 'arch enemy'.

Wende's argument implies that the neutral to friendly foreign policy relations with Britain in the early nineteenth century, i.e. the absence of domination and distribution conflicts, was a precondition for recognizing this particular country as model. Several other essays in the volume confirm this argument. For example, in her essay on "German Perceptions of Britain as a World Trading and Imperial Nation", Julia Angster develops the argument that the readiness of German politicians and intellectuals to admire the British model declined after the founding of the *Reich*, when they began to interpret international trade as a zero-sum game. The fact that this perception of a growing lack of balance between the model 'giver' and the model 'taker' became widespread throughout Germany, explains the observable transformation from Anglophilia to Anglophobia during these years. Christiane Eisenberg describes a similar finding in a completely different aspect of German-British relationships: sport. At the very moment when the British submitted a claim to be given special privileges at international competitions and in world sporting

organisations because they had been pioneers in this area, thereby contravening the unspoken commandment of equality amongst all participants, the British model fell into disrepute and the pupils turned their backs on their teachers. At the same time Eisenberg shows that this reaction which set in at the turn of the twentieth century was not specifically German, but reflected a general growing tendency in international sport.

The absence of domination was so important for the acceptance of a model, because it could only be appropriated individually by both observers and users under this precondition. For this reason the findings of several authors – and this is no surprise – can be summed up as follows: a model which is recommended as pioneering and worthy of being copied, must be handled in a flexible and, above all, discreet manner. For its acceptance is not facilitated by a clear and unmistakable definition, possibly emphasised by a scholarly definition, but by a rough outline which opens up a variety of interpretations for observers and users and gives them scope to shape it. This mechanism is clearly shown in the essay by Holger Nehring on the British roots of the Easter marches and the anti-nuclear protests in Germany. He claims that the protesters were unable to adhere slavishly to the British model – a model which in their opinion was impossible to overestimate – because the majority of them had never been to England, nor were they able to speak the English language. Precisely for this reason, he argues, the British model was so powerfully effective. In addition, Christian Haase testifies to the mechanism with reference to the British sociologist T. H. Marshall who was commissioned to school the Germans in democracy after the Second World War, and to the Königswinter conferences at the time. Even after Marshall ceased to act as the guiding intellectual force, the conferences continued to disseminate those same British virtues which he intended to mediate, thereby contributing to their acceptance. Above all, the favourable impact of peoples' freedom to be able to shape and interpret models is highlighted in the essay by Marie-Luise Recker on the Westminster Model in the discussions on the Federal German Basic Law. Paradoxically the discussions resulted in the German Basic Law being very similar to the Westminster Model, although the fathers of the Constitution scarcely orientated their considerations around this model at all. The Germans had not sought the British model, but had found it nonetheless.

Such findings do not invalidate the idea of a model but simply prove the decisive importance of the way in which it is controlled by the recipient. That said, the importance of mediators should not be overlooked, who pre-structured perceptions and often guided them into well-known channels conforming to the already existing structures of thought. The book shows that such mediators could arise in a variety of different forms.

Firstly, there were individuals who had contacts on both sides of the Channel. One such example is given by Stefan Berger in his essay on the

British Labour Party and the German Social Democrats. He shows that time and again individual officials of the SPD, who had personal contacts with members of the Labour Party for a variety of reasons, were active in promoting debates on socialism in Britain amongst German Social Democrats. Indeed, this has been a constant feature from the creation of the German Social Democratic party to the present day. Each of these mediators determined, within their specific thematic and chronological framework, when and how the Labour Party should serve as a shining example or a deterrent to Germans. Interestingly enough no one has been able to pin down at any time a direct implementation of the British model in concrete political dealings. The mediators of British socialism in Germany remained mediators of ideas. They were never able to shape policies.

Another kind of mediator for the British model in Germany is embodied in the Königswinter conferences that were held in the context of British efforts to re-educate the Germans. Although these conferences brought together numerous politicians, there was no direct transfer of perceptions into political action, as can be seen in the essay by Christian Haase. At any rate he provides no examples to show that participants might have attempted to go beyond the conceptional boundaries of the conferences. Clearly those people who were interested in Britain as a model brought with them a measure of sensitivity which meant, in this respect, that restraint was a part of the 'game' of perception.

Finally, ready-made preconceptions powerfully influenced tourists, a subject which is dealt with by Michael Maurer in his essay "What Travellers Communicated". On the one hand these mediators reduced the vision of the British model to ways of looking at the country which had been defined by novels, myths and historical tales, not to speak of the genre of travel writing. On the other hand German travellers to Britain, who were versed in such literature, were in a position to be able to order the partly irritating impressions of the English, Scottish, and Welsh landscape, and make some sense of it. In doing so it was completely unimportant that the mental blueprints had been partially drawn from completely other countries and areas, like Switzerland in the Alps. For tourists who regarded their stay in Britain as an end in itself, had no interest whatsoever in practical and political uses.

Looked at in the long run – and Maurer's essay tends to confirm this – such preconceptions seem to have ensured that the interest in Britain was of a lasting nature, for contemporary German books and films still deal in the stereotypes and images of 'Old England', a wild, even barbarian, Scotland and the 'unspoilt' landscape of Wales. By contrast, the images of Britain which appear in other essays in the book, most of which arise in connection with concrete usages, seems to have become obsolete after a time, if not to say inadequate or at least in need of adaptation. For this reason, as is shown in several essays in the book, they were at some time

or other modified and/or abandoned. In several cases contemporaries simply exchanged the model, as is shown in subjects examined in the essays by Angster, Eisenberg, Berger and Corey Ross. By the 1920s at the latest, Britain had been replaced by America as the main model in the areas of the economy, sport, and advertising. As far as the SPD was concerned, the change took place after 1949. The more the actors used the model for a specific purpose, the more pragmatic they were in gathering elements on different countries of origin. The trend towards the undefined generalised use of the adjective 'Anglo-American', which seldom attempted to pinpoint any specific geographical origin, was an expression of the gradual rejection of the British model, a process which sometimes lasted for decades. Nonetheless, as Corey Ross shows in his essay on advertising, the British model was highly admired by people working in business and politics.

This finding is underlined in the book by the fact that there are no examples of Britain being selected as a substitute for models which had served their time. It is rather the case that several authors have chosen to make a thorough study of the basic difficulties of using the British model in Germany. Here we should mention Arnd Bauerkämper's essay on how German National Socialists perceived the British Union of Fascists. The Nazis' own well-developed and confident self-image of being in the vanguard of an alternative modernity was not simply a stark contrast to their perception of their British counterparts, it was also, and primarily, a contrast to the continuing influence of nineteenth-century anti-British stereotypes from the nineteenth century. Even if Oswald Mosley and his party had not been so unsuccessful, they would scarcely have been able to break through the German mindset.

The variability of German views of Britain is also underlined by Dominik Geppert. He demonstrates that Margaret Thatcher's conservatism did not strike a strong chord among West German Christian Democrats in the late 1970s and in the 1980s. When economic growth declined in the latter half of the 1990s, however, the economic reforms initiated by Margaret Thatcher met increasing support in the Christian Democratic Party. Its defeat in the *Bundestag* election propelled this gradual change. Yet the 'Thatcher Revolution' never assumed the status of a model among Christian Democrats, who emphasised their German roots and traditions.

Sven Oliver Müller describes a similar phenomenon in his essay on German commentaries on concert life in 'England, the Country without Music', where for lack of their own eminent musicians authorities the middle classes were forced to 'buy up' composers of German origin, whose works they then proceeded to consume in a 'happy-go-lucky' fashion like any other goods. According to Müller, it was not only the anti-commercial philosophy of German music lovers which became manifest in this context. He also makes clear that national approaches to classical music on both sides of the Channel (and elsewhere in Europe) were

necessary to demarcate national identities. Under these circumstances, the British model of consuming music was, from the start, taboo to any Germans who were interested in the arts.

Helmut Weber's article on the "Rule of Law and German *Rechtsstaat*" provides us with a further example of the difficulties experienced by Germans with the British model. Weber uses this specific theme to bring to light a few basic structural differences between English and German law, and shows that every attempt to adopt the Rule of Law directly was doomed to failure because of the incompatibility of the two legal systems. But whenever attempts were made in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to transfer 'English' legal structures to the German system – and this occurred time and again – in order, for example to push through specific reforms, these either occurred in ignorance of the Common Law or were based on a somewhat audacious isolation of specific features which had been torn out of their context. This finding demonstrates that misunderstandings and one-sided, even distorted, views must not only be taken into account in historical studies of perceptions, but that they also offer particularly valuable insights into their mechanisms.[23] Weber only acknowledges a reasonable German perception of the English Rule of Law in recent years, with the establishment of Comparative Law studies that restrict themselves to the analysis of both systems without favouring one against the other.

Altogether, the case studies published in this volume highlight the complexities of perceptions. They have frequently been characterised by projections, crossovers and misinterpretations. The contributions also demonstrate that perceptions are different from processes of reception, which may ultimately lead to transfers. Most importantly, the road from perceptions to transfers, which transcends mere reception, has generally not so much been a straightforward process, but rather a distorted and crooked one. Thus, even positive views of aspects of British politics, economics, society and cultural life did not necessarily lead to cultural transfer. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries national differences, in particular, conditioned transfers from Britain to Germany. In general, the prevailing needs as well as the values and interests of the perceiving actors proved to be crucial intermediating factors. They served as pre-formative lenses.[24]

Similarly pre-existing images proved to be relatively stable and durable, even in the face of new perceptions. Thus, perceptions were filtered in specific constellations. Future studies of the role, features and development of Anglo-German relations will provide further insights into the dynamics and complexities of perceptions and social action between contingency and prevailing conditions. The present volume shows that

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23 On this issue see Stuchtey, Wende, "Introduction", 16.

24 For general remarks on this issue, see ibid., 7.

neither historical comparison nor the history of transfers and entanglements can afford to dispense with studies of these mechanisms.

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